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Pennsylvania Dutch

Kutztown Folk Festival

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38th Annual Celebration

SUMMER 1987

Pennsylvania Folklife
Joseph G. Beck was born and raised in Mechanicsville, Bucks County, Pa. He studied at Drexel University before serving as a first lieutenant in the U.S. Army in Vietnam. He attended Oklahoma Farriers School and practiced as a farrier for seven years. Now a fulltime blacksmith, he and his wife have a retail shop and he wholesale sales his wares across the country. He is a juried member of the Bucks Co. Guild of Craftsmen and the Pa. Guild of Craftsmen. He has been a member of the Kutztown Folk Festival family for the past seven years.

Bill and Veon Becker were both born and raised in Allentown, Pa. They now reside in Schnecksville, Pa. about twenty miles northeast of Kutztown. Bill was a produce manager for A&P for 23 years and now is in business with his wife Veon as food caterers. They have been associated with the Kutztown Folk Festival for the past nine years although Mrs. Becker was involved ten years prior with her father who originated the Ox-Roast-Stand.

Janice Berry was born and raised in Huntington, West Virginia. She was graduated from Huntington East High School, Huntington, W. Va., and married to her husband, Bob, while they were both seniors there. After raising four sons, she received her B.A. degree from Marshall University, Huntington, W. Va., in English and business administration. She has been working with cornhusks since she was a child and has won many awards with them. She has been part of the Kutztown Folk Festival for the past three years.

Stephen C. Breininger was born in Allentown, Pa., and now lives in Kempton, Pa. He grew up in Kutztown, and was graduated from the Kutztown Area High School in 1968. He has been a teacher there, having a Bachelor of Science degree in biology. He has been at the Kutztown Folk Festival for two years.

Philip D. Gothshall is a fourth generation Pennsylvania Dutch craftsman. He has been making chalkware for eight years and participating in the Kutztown Folk Festival for ten years.

Allan and Nora Johnson live in Crawford County, Pennsylvania near the village of Blooming Valley with their two sons, Allan, age 8, and Daniel, age 7. They own and operate a small herb farm and retail herb shop. Both hold multiple degrees in the fine arts and art education from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. They became interested in herbal lore and soapmaking out of necessity and made their first batch of herbal soap for their own family needs. Over the past ten years they have developed more than 30 varieties of herbal soap using fresh herbs and flowers for different skin conditions and fragrance. They have been herbal soap makers at the Kutztown Folk Festival for the past two years.

Martin and Bonnie Kessler live with their family on a small farm tucked away in a valley in the Tuscarora Mountains in Pennsylvania. He attended Calvin Coolidge High School and then served in the U.S. Navy. He received a degree in Gemology from the National Institute of Gemology, and then studied basic metal at Maryland University. After being a hobbyist for several years, he became a professional silversmith. He has been a professional craftsman for approximately 20 years, and during that 20 year period has exhibited at juried craft shows on the East Coast. He was also the resident silversmith at the Pennsylvania Dutch Craft Barn in Hershey Park, Pennsylvania for a three year period. During that time he had a working shop and he and his family demonstrated silversmithing continuously on a daily basis. He is a juried member of the Pennsylvania Guild of Craftsmen, and is currently active in several Art Alliance and Craft Guilds. He has demonstrated his skill on the Commons at the Kutztown Folk Festival for approximately 20 years.

Janice Berry was born and raised in Washington, D.C. He was graduated in 1971 from Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School and worked as a plastic farmer and spray painter until attending Goddard College in Vermont. At Goddard, Eric was introduced to glass-blowing and fell in love with it. Glass became his major course of study, with education and theatre, his minors. After graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree, he opened a small glass studio in Sperryville, Va. in 1979. Since that time, he has developed the portable glassblowing studio and has made some equipment innovations being used by other glassblowers. Now, with 13 years of glassblowing experience, Eric is continuing his quest for beauty in glass. He is now enjoying his third year at the Kutztown Folk Festival.

Geoffrey L. Mehl was born and raised in the Chicago, Ill., area and worked there for a variety of newspapers and radio stations. Fifteen years ago, he moved first to New Jersey and then to Delaware Water Gap, Pa. A former newspaper editor, he began woodworking as a hobby, and soon settled into the specialty of white coopering, a trade practiced by less than a dozen people nationwide. He is self-taught, and has been with the Kutztown Folk Festival.

Norman M. Ressler, Jr. was born March 31, 1942 in Lancaster, Pa. Educated in the public school system through the high school level, he then went directly into the family pretzel business. He attended vocational schools taking courses in electricity & heating maintenance, along with the study of maintaining automatic machinery. Ephrata, Pa., has been his home for three years. His profession is pretzel baking which he has been involved since his early teens when he began helping in the family business which he now heads.

"All of the authors are participants at the Kutztown Folk Festival and are available on the grounds."

William R. M. Ritter was born in Macungie, Pa., and raised on a 200 acre dairy farm in New Smithville, in Lehigh County, Pa. He was graduated from Northwestern High School. He received his B.S. and M.Ed. from Pennsylvania State University and his D.Ed. from the University of Pennsylvania. He and his wife now reside in Maple Glen, Montgomery County, Pa. He has been employed by the Upper Dublin School District since 1964. He has served as biology teacher, science coordinator, elementary school principal, high school principal, and director of an environmental center. Bill began wood carving in 1971. He prefers to do decorative carvings of waterfowl and birds. His wife, Barbara, helps with sanding and finishing. His father, Myron, and son, Bill, also carve. Myron specializes in farm animals, especially pigs, while Bill, Jr. chooses to put his carvings on fine furniture. William has exhibited his carvings from Connecticut to Virginia and won many ribbons. He also shares his knowledge and love of carving with others by teaching various wood carving classes. Recently he opened a carving shop which stocks all kinds of carving tools and supplies.

Peter Schnore was born in Latvia just prior to World War II, and came to America at the end of 1949. By the age of seven he had decided to be an artist. He has a BFA from Syracuse University and a MFA from C.C.A.C. in Oakland, Calif. He also studied four years at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia. Since then, along with painting, he has had teaching jobs with many area art departments. Currently he lives in Colebrookdale Township, not far from Kutztown, with his artist wife and two sons. Recently they have been painting murals for restaurants. Their eventual goal is to be fine artists. They have been with the Kutztown Folk Festival since 1964.

Bruce Stebner is a native resident of Ohio. His childhood interest in various art forms led him to receive a BFA in crafts from Kent State University. Having done museum work and taught art, he presently operates his own pottery with his wife, Maureen, in Harville, Ohio. Maureen, born in Susquehanna, Pa., did her undergraduate work at Bowers College, Western College, and Kent State. With the birth of their two children, she left teaching English in high school to be at home. Their mutual interest in things beautiful and old have led them through much self-investigation which has taken them particularly to many museums and potteries in the regions of Germany where salt-glazing originated. This is the Stebner's third year at the Kutztown Folk Festival.

A. Daniel Valois was born in Woonsocket, R.I., and grew up in N.E. Philadelphia. He attended Drexel University, Lebanon Valley College, and Philadelphia Textiles Institute. He acquired mechanical skills through apprenticeships in textile mills. Knife making and engraving are self-taught. He resides on a small farm in Cherryville, Pa. near Allentown. This will be his fourth year at the Festival.
The Festival and its Sponsorship

The Kutztown Folk Festival is sponsored by the Pennsylvania Folklife Society, a nonprofit educational corporation affiliated with URSINUS COLLEGE, Collegeville, Pennsylvania. The Society’s purposes are threefold: First, the demonstrating and displaying of the lore and folkways of the Pennsylvania Dutch through the annual Kutztown Folk Festival; second, the collecting, studying, archiving and publishing the lore of the Dutch Country and Pennsylvania through the publication of PENNSYLVANIA FOLKLIFE Magazine; and third, using the proceeds for scholarships and general educational purposes at URSINUS COLLEGE.
Somewhere in the Middle East about four thousand years ago, a campfire was built on sand that just happened to have exactly the right minerals to melt a rough glass. In the morning, under where the hot coals had lain, a rough glass was found.

This mysterious material intrigued early man, and through years of experimenting it was discovered that a clay pot in a very hot fire would hold a whole pool of this melted sand. Early objects made were beads and other small ornaments that could be worn or traded.

Over time, it was discovered that by adding metals and chemicals different colors could be produced. The cobalt used to make rich blue glass has been in use for at least 3500 years, and probably longer. Iron in sand would produce a green; copper, a red or green, depending on how it was used.
As glass working techniques improved, larger objects were produced. The methods that really advanced glass from just beads to actual vessel forms, were sand core glass methods. Using metal rods with a sand-clay mixture shaped on one end, early glass masters could dip glass onto the sand/clay form making a layer of glass cool around it. Once it was completely cool, the sand was chipped out leaving the glass form hollow. In this way, vessels such as vases and essence bottles could be made. During this period, glass was so valued that it was considered treasure. Glass objects made up a large portion of the Egyptian treasures.

Glass blowing started during Roman times when the blow pipe was invented. Glass could be filled with a bubble of air and inflated to the desired size. To this day, glass blowing has remained mostly unchanged. All the shaping, forming and blowing methods are the same.

Glass is “gathered” onto a blow pipe and shaped with a wet wooden cup shape called a block. The 2000°F hot glass instantly turns the water in the block to steam and the glass rides on a cushion of steam in the cup, much like today’s hydrofoil rides on a cushion of air. The cup shape rounds the glass and smoothes it, the glass blower inflates it some, shapes it some, then blows again. Through various manipulations using ancient tools, gravity, skill and luck, the glass blower guides this hot, moving blob of glass along a path that has many steps, and many pitfalls. If all works out well, the glass blower ends up with a piece of glass that was like honey at 2000 degrees F, like taffy as it was worked, and like glass as we know it; frozen in the desired shape.

Frozen? Yes. Glass is a super cooled liquid and like ice it freezes solid. Its natural state is liquid, like water.

Glass blowing was the first industry in America. First done in Jamestown, Va. in the 1600’s, glass houses sprang up in several areas of the colonies, but southern New Jersey area hosted much glass industry because of the particularly pure sands found there.

Americans have made the most profound advances in glass in the last two centuries. American glass masters were the first to use simple wooden molds to speed production and to standardize their wares. But molds could only help in one step of the glass blowing process. Every other step still had

*Eric demonstrates his ancient art four times daily, at the Festival.*
to be done the same as it had been done since Roman times.

To this day there are only two ways to make a piece of glass: a glass blower, or a huge machine that very roughly imitates the hand blowing process with a massive furnace of hot glass, lots of hissing, and constantly moving molds and manipulators, which finally plop a little jar, bottle, or glass onto a conveyor belt and into a cooling oven.

Until 1900, only a glass blower could make a piece of glass, and through the boom of mass production, the skill of glass blowing almost became a lost art. Nobody wanted to spend the years and years it takes to be a master glass blower any more. Still, some did continue and in the late 1960’s a resurgence of interest in glass blowing took place. Today most glass blowers are over seventy or under forty. The old masters are sadly passing on now, and the new group of glass blowers are now finally attaining the full amount of time that it takes to be a master glass blower.

Today’s glass blower still follows the time-honored methods used throughout the two thousand years of blown glass. We are more fortunate in many ways. Today’s chemicals and glass sands are very pure. We use gas to fire our glass furnaces instead of the six cords of wood it took to fire an early American glass house each day.

The fire brick and high temperature cements in our glass furnaces help stretch their life to a year or more. Hot glass eventually destroys anything it comes in contact with; furnaces and blow pipes alike.

But throughout history the glass blower’s methods have remained the same. If a glass blower from, say, 12th century Venice, Italy, sat at my glass bench today, he would recognize all the tools there, and I would his. The skills are a special language that have not changed much in two thousand years of glass shops, glass houses, and glass factories.

Glass itself is very interesting. It’s liquid when very hot and in its natural state, and when liquid it’s very corrosive. Like an acid, it eats away at everything it touches. And after a year of exposure to glass the inside of a furnace looks like a dentist’s nightmare. Glass, in fact, does eat every known material. Not one modern material can withstand its corrosiveness: not platinum; steel; diamonds; not even the heat shields space ships use. This is why in a pot furnace, where an actual clay pot filled with glass is inside a furnace, the pots often are eaten through or crack from weakening and spill the contents into the bottom of the furnace.
The glass is shaped with a wet wood cup shape, called a "block."

Glass conducts electricity when its liquid. It is one of the best insulators, when it’s cold, but electricity passes right through it, when hot.

Glass, when it cools, has no crystalline structure. This means it really is a liquid rather than the solid it appears to be. It’s frozen in the shape it was worked to be. There has been a long running debate whether glass is slowly moving when it is solid. It has been noted by some that antique windows are thicker at the bottom then the top and it has led some scientists to believe that it very slowly has been sliding down in the window frames. Other authorities have stated that this is not true, so even in our modern times, no agreement between scientists has ever been reached; there just isn’t an answer to the question of whether glass slowly keeps moving. If it is true, then it means that the glasses in your kitchen are slowly getting shorter.
The author's skill can be seen in the varied size, shape, design and color of his beautiful glass pieces.
Throughout history glass blowing has been a very secretive trade. Color formulas and handling techniques have always been very closely guarded. During certain times in glass history, secrets were so well kept that glass industry people (in Venice Italy in the early middle ages, for instance,) were forbidden to leave the glass district for the rest of their lives. Glass masters back then were among the noblemen of their time, but if they ever tried to leave the glass district of Venice, they were killed by specially trained assassins that were trained to kill glass blowers. Needless to say the public never ever saw the glassblowers working.

Another danger to glass blowers was invading armies from other countries always made a point to capture the glass masters because they made nice presents for the king. Unfortunately for the captured glass blower, this usually meant he would be tortured into revealing the secrets he knew.

Today there are still many secrets that are well guarded, mostly the color formulas. Most of the working techniques are well-known. Most of the old glass masters are very tight lipped about what they know and that makes it a little hard for those of us in the new generation of glass blowers. But that's just how the glass blowing world is.

Yesteryear's glass blowers usually worked in a small factory and were good company men. They, like today's glass blowers, worked long hours and always strived to improve their skills. Today's glass blowers mostly work in small glass studios and are the owner, glass blower, designer, equipment designer, builder, and sales staff. In a way, it's much the same as when the glass blowers worked in small groups in isolated glass houses.

We still take pride in the product we produce. Here at the Kutztown Folk Festival we have our glass furnace set up and demonstrate the age old art of glass blowing.

It's rare these days to get a chance to watch glass when it's 2000 degrees, moving like a thick honey.

You can come watch as the glass is shaped and blown in a manner that has changed very little through history.

You can see it in its liquid form, moving much like taffy as it's formed, bending and moving to the tune the glass blower's tools create.

It's a magic material, and to really appreciate it fully, come watch it created before your eyes.

Each year at the Kutztown Folk Festival we involved the portable glass furnace I have invented, set up a glass shop next to our booth, and share the magic with the crowd that gathers round.

Don't miss it!
Before I talk about portrait painting I first have to explains a few things about art as it applies to painting in general.

Art to most people means little, to some it means a great deal. For the first group it is generally a picture or sculpture with which they can empathize on a subject matter level. That is an image which conjures up nostalgia for a landscape, person, etc. Art images may also be a part of the accepted decor within ones circle of family, friends, and acquaintances. Less common is the status symbol, the investment, or the art work that serves to define the individual, as in, “I am the leading collector of the early works of James Carroll, the artist.”

To the true artist art is the major source of spiritual communion in life. Here I want to add that among the public are what Tom Wolfe might call the caring art lovers. These people have more than the general sensitivity to what can be called the music of paintings. James Whistler named his paintings in terms usually used for music; e.g. “A Symphony in White.” Let me add that not all who paint are interested in a spiritual expression. There are other motivating factors which simply reflect human nature: money, status, power, inertia, a sense of community, mischievousness, vanity, searching, approval, etc. This may explain why someone once invented the test of time.

A few more words about art. To understand better what art is it will help to start at the very beginning, that is the word art. We must realize
that it is a word, a noun, and that as such it is
used to refer to concepts, objects or ideas with
certain properties. It all depends on who is using
the word, akin to who is playing quarterback.
Lurking somewhere near art. An art object is Art
(capitalized for clarity) as the essential idea that is
expressed in art works. It is this Art that needs
a further explanation. As mentioned before Art is
the expression of the human spirit — in sickness
or in health, in youth or in old age, in talent or
out of, with skill or without, etc. Studying the
examples of human endeavor that have accumulated
over the centuries knowledgeable, dedicated, gifted
people have designated some to be art works and
put them into museums for the rest of us. In
these art works we can look for Art by finding
their common properties. The entire process is
simply a highly logical use of gut reaction. The
common properties are: 1) an extremely high level
of integration (opposite of "all askew"); 2) a
vitality (however subdued or even static) of the
artistic (also known as "plastic" or "formal")
elements, independent of subject matter — these
elements being colors, shapes, edges, stresses, etc.
Not exactly 3) — certain specialized art forms,
such as portraiture may have tangent requirements.
Before moving on to the subject of portraiture
it is necessary to add an "I hate to say this, but."
I hate to say this, but we must accept the fact that
in this imperfect world many paintings are made
without a regard for Art. But I must also add that
in the case of a subconsciously motivated individual
Art may have entered the picture without a
conscious striving on the part of the artist. The best
common examples of this are the Christmas seals
with examples of children's art work.
Speaking for myself I can say that I'm still
trying to be an artist. Or, I am an artist who is
still trying to put Art in his art work; always?
yes; to the Nth degree? not always — so I leave
them unfinished. They aren't perfect but maybe
someday they'll be very good.
About portraiture. Portraits by their nature con-
tain a significant element that limits the artistic
freedom of the painter. Yet each face holds a
story, figuratively speaking, which, combined with
an artist's perception, can become a valuable image.
Each of us may have as many as twenty easily
distinguished appearances. Of these we may be
pleased with no more than a few or perhaps
just one. This is the one we put on when we
look into the mirror. I refer to mine as "my
Gregory Peck look." Once I photographed it while
looking into the mirror. In that photograph I had
captured my image of myself. That was how I
saw myself. Yet when I showed the photo to
my friends they all said that it did not look like
me. Each year in school my 14-year-old son has
been photographed for the usual school picture.
I know that they are all pictures of him, yet
not one really looks as I see him.
Working under these difficult conditions the
easiest thing for the artist to do is flatter the
sitter. To be able to do this without feeling as
though you have "sold out," it is necessary to have
a genuine liking for the sitter. Usually this is not
any problem because humans are such a wonderful
example of the flora and fauna of the earth. This
helps the artist want to present the subject in the
best possible light. Nevertheless it does not
guarantee that the painted image will please the
subject. (See Gregory Peck phenomenon above.)
Along with the power of positive seeing the artist
can try to get as much of the story of the face
into the portrait as is possible. It is a matter of
balancing the need for selling the portrait against
the artistic intuition that the painter wants to put
into the portrait. Ideally, there would be no
financial need to sell either a portrait or any other
type of painting. At the same time we can't
forget that most of the great paintings of the
past were done either on commission or with at
least one eye on the market.
In the end it is a matter of doing one's very best
under the given circumstances, which I always try to
do at the Folk Festival. Please come and see the
results. I am located in Folk Arts & Crafts Building
II.

Sit for a portrait by Peter Schnore and have
a Festival memory to treasure.
The ox is quite a noble animal. They originated in Asia and were brought to North America by the Neolithic man in their migrations. Modern breeds today like the Jersey, Shetland, and Brown Swiss show a resemblance to the Neolithic type.

The ox were only used for farming and highly regarded as a religious animal and unfit for human consumption. Breeding and rearing ox for the primary purpose of supplying meat is a modern development.

When the male is born he is called a bull calf. If the bull is emasculated (castrated) he becomes a steer. In about two to three years he grows to become an ox. Emasculation was performed to make them quieter and more tractable in working the fields.

In the 16th century eight oxen were needed to pull the first heavyweight plow made up of three parts — the blades — colter and plowshare and moldboard thus the name “moldboard plow”. The farmers shared the team of oxens and plow because they each could not afford to own one. It was very slow farming with oxen and eventually draft horses were used after a collar harness was invented that didn’t choke their windpipes.

Picnics were originally held by the early Pennsylvania Dutch country churches after the harvest of their crops and before the planting in the fall. Farmers worked very hard and long hours in the open and after combining the equipment and helping each other work their land they had husky appetites!

While the women cooked, baked and prepared beverages, the men put the ox on the spit to roast. This became an annual picnic for all to celebrate and have a grand time. They ate “til they ouched!” Thus the tradition continued throughout history. After their crops were harvested, rest was indeed needed.

Now — granges, churches, and any group gatherings might hire a band to entertain them, balloon ascensions, fireworks, dancing, etc., but whatever entertainment they arranged — none drew more crowds to the picnics than the lure of the tantalizing aroma of the ox roast. Yes — we Pennsylvania Dutch swarm together like bees to honey wherever food is being prepared!

The ox roast stand which is located next to the quilt building, is an unforgettable sight to see. A fresh ox is brought every day by Peter Brothers of Lenhartsville. It takes four to six men to carry the ox and secure it on the spit. Charcoal is then placed in the pit and gradually the embers roast this magnificent animal to a golden crispy brown. Basting and turning often, the aroma will surely tantalize you and draw you nearer to satisfy your hunger.

All of the preparation, hard work and carving of the ox is handled by Al Spatz of Fleetwood, Pa. who has been associated with the operation of the ox roast stand for 18 years. Any questions are welcomed by Mr. Spatz to explain the cooking and carving procedure of the ox. Come and see once and enjoy! Just follow the delicious aroma and Kumm esse (come eat).

BY WILLIAM & VEON BECKER
Al Spatz is in complete charge of the ox-roast, the frequent basting, the butchering of the final finished roast and the carving of the pieces ready for the dinner guests.
Many people have reported to us that their mother or grandmother made soap. When questioned, “Have you ever made your own soap?” the answer is always, “No, I never tried.” Thus soapmaking can easily be regarded as one of the lost arts of our forefathers. Recipes for baking bread, butchering techniques, planting lore, and all aspects of rural life have been passed through generations, but the art of soapmaking was left behind.

Making soap as far as our forefathers were concerned was primarily women’s business. Cooking oils and grease as well as all animal fats were saved and stored. Hardwood ashes were collected from the fireplace and stored to make the lye. The ashes were placed in a wooden container or “ash hopper” with holes in the bottom such as a barrel, wooden box, or hollowed out log. Straw, leaves, and twigs lined the bottom of this container and kept the ashes from sifting out. Water was trickled through the ashes to leach out the potassium salts they contained. This lye solution was the catalyst for the soapmaking process. A fresh egg was used to determine whether the lye was of proper strength. If it floated on the top of the lye solution the woman found the lye to be much too strong and harsh on the skin. If the egg dropped too quickly to the bottom of the lye bucket, the lye solution was too weak and the lye water was then run through the ashes again or boiled down over an open fire. But if the egg sank slowly to the bottom of the lye bucket, the lye solution was just right for the soapmaking process and the hard work would begin!

Animal fats would have to be boiled, skimmed, and strained to remove unwanted dirt and debris, existing pig hair, and left over spices from cooking. This rendered fat and the lye solution were stirred together and the result was a crude soft soap that seemingly served the purpose of cleaning everything from body to basket. Usually soapmaking day took place early in the spring after all the winter’s fats and ashes were gathered and before planting time.

Common sense tells us that it preceded “spring cleaning” for the supply of soap made had to last a full year.

Surprisingly, the commercial aspect of soapmaking began as an entrepreneurial enterprise which parallels our own endeavors and the rebirth of a more “homegrown, handmade” American culture. Soap was sold door-to-door and cut from huge blocks at the local general store, in the same manner as we make soap at the Kutztown Folk Festival. This handmade soap can never be compared to store-bought soap. As with all handmade things, this soap is genuine. It has integrity and it leaves you feeling good! A handmade bar of soap has character, it’s different, it’s personal, and it makes you feel alive!

The introduction of fresh herbs and flowers into soapmaking is nothing new. Before chemically produced scents were ever thought of, soap contained “infusions” or teas of spearmint, yarrow, chamomile, and strawberry (all readily available natural ingredients), hand-picked by the children on the farm and brought to their mother to add to her soap. Cowslips, elderflowers, red clover, and slippery elm bark may have been added for dry skin types, while witch hazel and rose petals were added for oily skin. When a case of poison ivy erupted in the family, a wash with oatmeal was used to soothe and stop the itching.

Some of the ingredients used in herbal soap making.
On our own farm comfrey soap is used for sunburns we often receive while working in the herb gardens and many times during the day we will send our two little boys, Allan and Daniel, to the comfrey bed to pick a few fresh leaves to use as a poultice for soothing our sunburns. We use the herbs that we grow daily for medicinal purposes, for cooking, and for preparing hot or cold drinks. Our interest in herbs grew from our basic desire for a more natural approach to living.

Most people at some time dream of breaking away from the shackles of society, of living a life as free as that of the pioneers. Few have either the opportunity or the will power necessary to pursue those dreams beyond the late-night musings from which they spring. Not so with the two of us. We met in graduate school and three weeks later we married and moved to the rural site that is now our home. Surrounded only by the trees and wildlife, life was not easy. A small camping trailer was home. We worked and plucked diligently to clean the land comprising our little Eden.

Gradually the camping trailer was transformed into a house, with the help of lumber from old box cars and stones from nearby French Creek. "It's a recycle dwelling, for sure." Rooms and a sleeping loft were added and when two sons joined the family, a special addition was created for them.

The space around our handbuilt home was turned into vegetable and flower gardens and herb beds. For a time we were nearly self-sufficient, growing and preserving our own food, making our soap, carrying water from the hand pump outside and forgoing the luxuries of the 20th century.

In undergraduate school Nora had earned a degree in art education and she was studying textile design in graduate school at the time she met Allan, a fine arts major with special credits in photography and lithography. In connection with the graduate work in textiles, Nora gathered wild-flowers for dye and studied the properties of the various wild herbs that grew natively. Her interest shifted from the colors of the herbal flowers to their other benefits — fragrance, medicinal qualities, beauty. And when the two of us met it was a natural communion of talent and interest!

We have taken courses about herbs and have collected a varitable library of books dealing with the plants that grow in our woods, fields, and gardens. In two old volumes we found "receipts" for teas, remedies, and bath preparations. One author, Dr. Chase, had traveled throughout Pennsylvania in 1864, interviewing the residents and collecting their directions for folk medicines. Dr. Chase's Recipes and Dr. Voak's Pocket Doctor, published in 1914, became the base for our expanding line of herbal products.

Using our knowledge of design we began creating delicate wreaths for decoration and scent. Tiny rosebuds are nestled in some of our wreaths along with ansemesia, lavender, sweet annie, and strawflowers which hang in our barn and workshop. Inside our home dried herbs hang from the ceiling and are reflective of what could be called a way of life. We realize though that it is very difficult to escape modern life. It may be that one makes one's peace with its demands and finds it possible to be true to dreams and ideals without foregoing some of the conveniences for which our forefathers yearned so much to have. Our handmade herbal soaps and herbal products are a bequeathal to our sons of our love of nature and the beautiful, as well as a willingness to sacrifice for the important things and the fortitude to pursue a goal. We feel this to be a noble heritage.

Share this heritage with us at the Kutztown Folk Festival. The scent of fresh herbs wafting over the festival grounds will draw you to the Commons where we will be demonstrating and sharing our method of making 27 varieties of herbal soap using fresh infusions of herbs and wildflowers.
Fly fishing and fly tying have a rich history in Pennsylvania. Samuel Phillippe of Easton is credited with the first complete split and glued six-strip bamboo fly rod. Jimmie Leisenring of Allentown, Pennsylvania, was a keen student of wet fly fishing who authored the first great American work on the subject. Pennsylvania anglers opened the eyes of the angling public to the effectiveness of fishing terrestrial (landborne insects) patterns.

Frank Keim, Cliff Zug, Chauncey Lively, Vincent C. Marinaro, John Crowe, Tony Skilton, Al Troth, Ed Shenk, and Charles Fox are all Pennsylvania anglers who have gained national notoriety.

Fly fishing involves the use of a fly rod, reel, line, and leader to present a fly realistically to a fish. Modern fly rods are constructed of fiberglass, graphite, boron, or bamboo. Fly rods used in fly fishing in Pennsylvania range in size from six to nine feet. Traditionally, rods possessing the qualities preferred for dry fly work are called stiff action or fast action rods. Rods used for wet fly or nymph work are often called medium or slow action rods.

A fly reel has only three functions in life and one is not always employed. It is a spool on which to wind the line, it is a counterbalance for the rod, and, sometimes, it is an implement in playing the fish. Most fly reels are of the single-action type. Simply defined, this means that one full 360 degree turn of the handle results in one 360 degree turn of the spool. Most single action reels on the market today feature a ratchet of some sort that produces an audible click. The better ones also have an adjustable drag.

A fly line is a major element in success in fly fishing. Of all the components, more progress has been made on lines than in any other area, leaders excepted. This is due primarily to advancements in synthetics. Most fly lines are categorized by weight (2-9 weight lines) and by type: sinking, floating, tapered, level, etc. The variation in weight is to accommodate the different actions and sizes of rods.

Motion is imparted to the rod and line by the caster in the form of a series of back casts and forward casts. The weight of the moving line pulls against the rod and causes it to bend, thereby creating a situation of dynamic power. This power
is relative to the amount of pull exerted. The release of the power built up by the back cast, coupled with and amplified by the inverse motion of a well-timed forward cast, causes the line to shoot out and the leader and fly.

The primary responsibility of the leader is to camouflage the relationship of the fly to the line, or specifically, to create an impression of detachment. It must also, of course, be able to complete an accurate delivery of the fly, meaning that it must lay out fairly straight, in order to maintain the optimum distance between the fly and the line. Basically, a tapered leader is a continuation of the fly line. It is normally between seven and twelve feet in length and graduates from a fine tippet, where the fly is attached, to a fairly thick butt section, which is not a great deal smaller than the end of the fly line itself. The material is semi-transparent monofilament.

The fly is the lure that attracts the fish to strike. Fly tying is an evolving art that probably couldn’t quit even if it wanted to. There is too much momentum, too much inertia, too many inquisitive minds, too many fish that plain won’t take.

Flies can be categorized into the following types: dry flies which float on the surface, wet flies and nymphs which sink, and streamers and bucktails which also sink. Most flies imitate aquatic insects or minnows on which gamefish feed.

The tools and materials for the fly tyer are many. Space does not permit me to list all the materials that can be used, so I will list only the essential tools and common materials.

The tools most commonly used by the tyer are a vise, bobbin, scissors, hacklepliers, dubbing needle and whip finisher.

The materials most commonly used by the tyer are hooks, tying silk, hackle, body materials, wing materials, and lacquer.

Hooks in sizes No. 10, 12, 14, 16 in regular length shanks are most popular. Most quality flies are tied on hollow point hooks having turned down, tapered eyes.

Body materials used for the construction of flies are tied fast with tying silk. This is now mainly pre-waxed nylon. Sizes 2-0 to 6-0 fill the needs of most popular fly patterns. 2-0 thread is used for larger flies (bucktails and streamers) and 6-0 thread for the smaller dry flies and nymphs. The body materials most commonly used by the tyer are silk floss, chenille, spun fur, dubbing, peacock herl, quills, and tinsel.

Many different varieties of feathers and hairs are employed in the construction of flies. Hackle from domestic chickens and other birds is often used to either float the fly or represent legs of an insect. Ninety percent of all commercial flies are tied with the following colors: brown, ginger, light ginger, cream, grizzly, black, and dun. Duck quills, breast and side feathers from mallard and wood duck, plus deer hair are most commonly used to represent wings on flies. Streamers and bucktails, imitating small minnows, use large saddle hackle, bucktail, and marabou in their wing construction. Often flies have tails, and small quantities of hackle or stiff hair will be used for this purpose.

A fly tyer always finishes off a fly by half-hatching or whip finishing. These techniques involve special knots that secure the material to the fly. To finish off a fly a tyer will use a fast drying lacquer to cement and bind the whip finish.

It is not in the context of this article to totally describe all the steps involved in tying a fly. It is my hope that you will stop by and see our demonstration. My partner and myself are located close to the “Hanging” and the “Wedding” on the Commons of the Folk Festival grounds. We will be demonstrating the art of fly tying, from 9 to 7 every day as all craftsmen are. Please feel free to ask any question concerning fly fishing and fly tying. Hope to see you there.
Chalkware is molded figures. Made of a gypsum cement type base, the molds are made of plaster of Paris or sometimes of rubber with a plaster keeper.

Chalkware figures date back to the third quarter of the 18th century. Much of the chalkware was made in the Pennsylvania German territory. Figures were made depicting the royalty of the period. Primitive animals such as deer, sheep, lions, cats, dogs, parrots, and birds were also made.

The Staffordshire china figures were popular with the wealthy. Chalk figures to imitate the Staffordshire pieces were made and were known as "poor man's porcelain." Vendors of the chalkware would ply their wares by fastening them to a board and hawking them in the towns and cities.

Early chalkware was painted with oil paints but later pieces were painted in pure vivid colors of watercolor. The colors of these early pieces have become subdued with time.

In the Reading, Pennsylvania area a chalkware artist comes to mind. He is Oreste Brunicardi an Italian immigrant who pursued his artform from the late 19th century to 1930. Some of the figures familiar to area residents would be the cherry box and cherry girl, Indian figures, the goose girl, girl with wheat. He made Santa faces to be used as store decorations. His studio was on North Ninth Street in Reading. His wife helped him with his
work, doing a majority of the painting. His wife died at an early age for using lead pigmented paints.

Santa figures in all arrays of costumes were popular. They were painted in every color imaginable red, blue, green, yellow, white and mauve. These santas were sometimes decorated with mica dust for snow, chenille for the sun and displayed with fine dried natural twigs and flowers to simulate trees and natural surroundings.

Chalkware was sometimes cast to resemble the carvings of Wilhelm Shimmel, in particular the eagle with spread wings. Picture frames were made of plaster, or plaster over a wooden frame. Cases of chalkware were made to hold a pocket watch in the opening resembling a mantle clock, when incorporating the two pieces.

Some of the chalkware most familiar to the masses would be the Staffordshire dog, the prancing deer and fruit arrangements.

My favorite chalkware figures to cast and paint are the old fashioned Santa Clauses and Saint Nicholas'; they carry a charm all of their own. For these santas I often buy an old santa and cast a mold over it.

*Phillip’s favorite chalkware figures are old-fashioned Santas and Saint Nicholas’.*
Jewelry making is one of the oldest arts. Even before clothing was used, primitive men and women wore jewelry because it made them more attractive to members of their tribe, especially to a possible mate, and they believed it protected them from peril. As clothing came along, jewelry proved useful for holding it together. As the ancients found and combined precious stones and precious metals, jewelry became a convenient form of capital. It could be used to buy almost anything in any land. Jewelry also became an insignia of fraternity, a badge of rank, a trophy for a victor, a symbol of authority, and most important of all, the supreme token of love and esteem. All of this is behind the great lure of jewelry today.

Stones used in modern jewelry fall into three classes. The first and oldest are the natural gemstones created by heat and pressure or sedimentation in the earth and mined therefrom. The four most valued of these — diamond, ruby, emerald and sapphire, are considered precious stones. Others attractive enough for jewelry are known as semi-precious natural stones. Next are synthetic gemstones made by men in laboratories and factories. The synthetic stones have the color and appearance of their natural counterparts and are of the same chemical composition. Last, there are imitations which have only a superficial resemblance to natural stones.

Pearls — organic rather than mineral gems — used for jewelry have three corresponding classes also. The most valuable is the natural or oriental pearl. Next in value is the cultured pearls. These are grown in pearl oysters, principally in Japan, but the center is a man-inserted bead which may have only a few outer layers of natural pearl nacre. Finally, there are vast quantities of imitation pearls.

Beauty in gems, as in everything else, is “in the eyes of the beholder;” it is a matter of personal taste. But traditionally there are five factors upon which a gem's beauty is dependent. These are color, luster, brilliance, fire, and in most but not all cases, transparency. Turquois, malachite and lapis lazuli, for example, are completely opaque yet are considered quite beautiful. In addition to the above factors, there is also the skill and artistry with which a gem has been cut, polished, and mounted.

The precious metals, like precious stones, have been credited with magical powers. Gold, the glamorous yellow metal, was one of the earliest discovered by man. The ancient Egyptians buried their kings in gold to guarantee their arrival into the after-world. Silver was also discovered very early, for the Egyptian stone decorations of 2500 B.C. depict the process of working with silver. Heavier and more valued than gold is platinum, a metal whose remarkable properties have been appreciated only in recent decades. While a platinum alloy was found in an Egyptian tomb dating from 700 B.C., the metal was long overlooked by

by Martin & Bonnie Kessler
miners. Usually found with platinum are other heavy metals that belong to the same group. Of this group, palladium is sometimes used for jewelry also.

Silver, while the least expensive of the four precious metals, is probably the most popular of all, for in addition to being within the means of almost everyone, its beauty, durability, and malleability almost equal that of gold. Through the centuries, silver has been used to produce or decorate almost any article one can name. Ornaments made of the metal have been found in grave mounds dating back to both the Bronze and Iron Ages. Bowls and beakers of silver were used as far back as 1000 B.C. The scarcity of silver and the value set on it paved the way for its use as money. Originally it was used for money by weight. In the Old Testament times, for instance, the shekel wasn’t a coin but a weight; and in Saxon days and long afterward, the standard measure of value in England was a pound weight of silver.

The silver riches of the Old World, however, were scant compared to those Spain found in the New World. The supply of silver of the Aztecs and the Incas was apparently inexhaustible, and the Conquistadores sent shipload after shipload of it home.

Among the qualities of silver that make it valuable for jewelry are its comparatively low melting point, its resistance to acids, its ability to take a high polish, and most important, the ease with which it can be worked.

Modern silversmiths tend to utilize technological advances in an ancient profession, especially in casting. The technical aspects of casting have been greatly advanced in the metalsmith’s favor as a by-product of dental research and science. Commercially prepared waxes for use in the casting procedure are available in a variety of hardnesses in sheets, rods, blocks, and other shapes. Casting is a fascinating procedure, reminiscent of alchemy, and it is difficult to become involved with it without finding yourself occupied with all of the aesthetic imagery that the method is capable of producing. Technically, it is no longer a difficult procedure. In the lost wax method of casting, you “spruce” the wax model with wax rods. After the spruces are attached for the venting of gasses and the flow of metal, the wax model is mounted on a stand which will support it in the flask. Next, a substance much like plaster of Paris (called “investment”) is brushed on the model. This should be applied with great care so that no air bubbles are trapped between the investment and the wax model. Having accomplished this, the investment is allowed to dry slightly and then the entire model is checked for error in coverage. Then, if the coating has been sufficiently applied, the model is inserted into the flask and investment is poured over the assembly until the unit is full. It is then allowed to dry and set. When the drying is completed, the flask is placed in an oven. This oven is especially constructed for wax elimination. During the final minutes of wax elimination, the centrifugal casting machine is prepared for the casting procedure. As with all endeavors, practice makes the results progressively better.

The beauty of Kessler bracelets and rings, can only be appreciated by seeing them at their Festival demonstration.
Martin carefully crafts one of his fine silver rings.

The handwrought approach is also essential to the creation of form for the metalsmith. It is by this means that castings are finished and objects are created directly in and with metal. When working with this method, there is little room for error. Soldering is also a necessary technique to learn if you wish to produce any reasonably complex piece of work. Regardless of which technique you use working with metals, the finishing of any piece of work is extremely important. Most metalsmiths develop their own favorite technique for finishing their work.

In the high school I attended, I developed an early interest in metalsmithing as a result of a class taught by Rufus Jacoby. Mr. Jacoby crafts fine sterling silver chalices and bowls and is renowned for his expertise. As a student, I began by crafting several small rings out of silver and eventually progressed to an ornamental candy dish as a project. Little did I realize the effect this metal shop teacher would have on my later years.

Settled in family life, my wife and I decided to purchase a rock tumbler kit for our daughters as a Christmas gift. They enjoyed polishing the stones and creating jewelry from them so much that our family decided to join a rock and mineral club. We were one of the original members of the Prince Georges County Rock and Mineral Club and actively participated in all its activities. I became field trip chairman in the club and even our vacation time became centered around gem hunting expeditions. While we were members, one of our fellow members taught us how to cut and polish gemstones. I then decided to study gemology at the National Institute of Gemology and I enrolled in a basic class of metalry at Maryland University. As a result, our family was extensively involved with collecting and polishing gemstones, and creating jewelry as a hobby in our spare time. During those years we were a young family trying to move ahead, and my wife and I both held jobs to accomplish this goal. When I experienced a brief lay-off, a friend telephoned and suggested we take our gemstone jewelry to a small festival. We contacted the “Revolutionary War Days” being held at the General Smallwood State Park and the committee said they would enjoy having us participate. We were amazed at the response we received from the festival patrons. After such a positive response, my wife and I decided to supplement our incomes on a part-time basis with our craft. We contacted and participated in several festivals that year. At one of the festivals, a dentist took an interest in us and offered to sell us a casting machine, burn out oven, tools and waxes for a very reasonable fee of $50. This thoughtful offer enabled us to add castings to our hand wrought work, and moved us one step closer to the lifestyle we have enjoyed the past 20 years. We have been able to practice our craft on a full time basis, and each year we are one step closer to self-sufficiency on our small farm. We have experienced a lot of growth as part of the Kutztown Folk Festival family over the years, in developing our skills and also as a family. Our children have also grown with each passing year. Although our daughters are now only involved with our craft on a part-time basis, our son (who has been working with metal since his early years) will be a second generation silversmith also demonstrating his skills at the Festival.

The design and finish on a Kessler bracelet is important to his craft.
Festival Focus on Pennsylvania Dutch Food
FOLKLIFE SEMINARS ON THE PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH CULTURE

11:00 A.M. ..... **HEIDELBERG POLKA BAND**
Old songs and traditional marches are presented by Lancaster County's finest musical group which is directed by James K. Beard.

11:30 A.M. ..... **Pennsylvania Dutch Costumes, Plain and Fancy**
An introduction to the Pennsylvania Dutch through their historic and present-day costumes is presented by John E. Stinsmen.

**NOON ..... THE MENNONITE PEOPLE**
The traditions and customs of Kutztown's "Plain People" are presented by Dr. Theodore Jentsch. Also, some of the distinctive beliefs, practices, and music of the entire Mennonite culture are presented by Michael W. Rhode.

12:30 P.M. ..... **Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Art and Home Handicrafts**
Interviews and demonstrations of fraktur, schreneschnitte, and other decorative arts are presented by John Dreibelbis.

1:00 P.M. ..... **Metal Craftsmen**
Experts in various metals discuss and display their different products and techniques in this program which is hosted by Thomas Loose.

1:30 P.M. ..... **"Gut Essa," Down-to-Earth Eating!**
Delectable Pennsylvania Dutch foods from "Ponhaws" (scrapple) to "Schnitz un Knepp" (dried apples and dumplings) are explained by Jane Stinsmen.

1:30 P.M. ..... **Quilts of the Pennsylvania Dutch Country**
An explanation of the quilter's art and examples of traditional Pennsylvania Dutch motifs are presented by Ann S. Burrows.

2:00 P.M. ..... **Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Music**
Dialect songs and other Pennsylvania Dutch folk music are presented by Karlene and Keith Brintzenhoff.

2:30 P.M. ..... **Skills of Wood-Working**
Experts in whittling, carving, and turning of wood discuss their different techniques in this program which is hosted by Barry McFarland.

3:00 P.M. ..... **Life Among the Amish**
An intimate view of Amish life is presented by their neighbor, Mel Horst.

3:30 P.M. ..... **Snake Lore**
Tall stories and fascinating demonstrations about snakes in the Pennsylvania Dutch culture are narrated by Daniel T. Kohler.

4:00 P.M. ..... **Heidelberg Polka Band**
A concert which highlights all the traditional Pennsylvania Dutch favorite tunes is directed by James K. Beard.
Programs on the MAIN STAGE

1

12:00 Noon ..... HEIDELBERG POLKA BAND
The band is directed by James K. Beard.

12:30 P.M. ..... FOOD SPECIALTIES AT THE KUTZTOWN FOLK FESTIVAL
This program is hosted by Jane Stinsmen.

1:00 to 2:30 P.M. ..... MUSIC AND SONGS AND THE PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH HUMOR
The music and songs are presented by Leroy Heffentrager and his Dutch Band. Mel Horst, as "Jakey Budderschnip," presents the Pennsylvania Dutch humor.

2:30 to 4:00 P.M. ..... COUNTRY AUCTION
Veteran auctioneer, Carl C. Groff, sells a variety of articles from the Pennsylvania Dutch Country.

4:00 to 5:00 P.M. ..... PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH FOLK MUSIC AND SONGS
Keith and Karlene Brintzenhoff join Leroy Heffentrager and his Dutch Band to present some Pennsylvania Dutch folk music.

IN MEMORY OF HAROLD W. SIEGFRIED  June 3, 1917 - February 21, 1987
He did not seek or require recognition for his many helpful deeds. However, without his valuable assistance, the Folk Festival would not have run as smoothly as it did. While visitors did not know him, most Festival participants welcomed his assistance. Throughout the year, Harold worked tirelessly to insure the Folk Festival's success. His loss is keenly felt by all who knew him and the void his death created is impossible to fill. I personally shall truly miss him.

Mark R. Eaby, Jr.  Director, Kutztown Folk Festival
Welcome to the 38th Annual A CLOSER LOOK AT THE WON June 27-28-2

5 SHEEP SHEARING
Place: Hoedown Stage
Time: 12:30 P.M.
Experts demonstrate and explain various sheep shearing techniques.

6 HORSE-SHOEING
Place: Hoedown Stage
Time: 11:30 A.M. & 3:30 P.M.
Come watch the actual shoeing of horses as still done in the “Plain” Pennsylvania Dutch Country.

A CELEBRATION OF EDUCATIONAL METAL CASTING IN SAND
Place: Across from School
Time: 12:30 P.M., 2:30 P.M., 4:30 P.M.
Expert craftsmen transform molten metal into beautiful objects with the help of molds made from sand.

METAL CASTING IN SAND
GARDEN TOURS
Place: Across from School
Time: 11:00 A.M., 1:00 P.M., 3:00 P.M., 5:00 P.M.
Expert craftsmen transform molten metal into beautiful objects with the help of molds made from sand.

GARDEN TOUS Place: Herb Garden
Time: 11:00 A.M., 1:00 P.M., 3:00 P.M., 5:00 P.M.
Garden tours include explanations of various herbs which are popular with Pennsylvania Dutch Cooks.

A DAYTIME GATHERING. COUNTRY KITCHEN
Place: The Country Kitchen
Time: 9:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M.
Preparation of typical Pennsylvania Dutch meals includes daily menus with favorite recipes.

HANGING
Place: The Gallows
Time: 11:30 A.M. & 3:30 P.M.
The hanging of Susanna Cox for infanticide is a re-enactment of Pennsylvania’s most famous execution in 1809.

COUNTRY KITCHEN
PA. DUTCH COOKING & CANNING
Place: The Country Kitchen
Time: 9:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M.
Preparation of typical Pennsylvania Dutch meals includes daily menus with favorite recipes.

NUMBERS REFER TO MAP LOCATIONS OF SPECIAL EVENTS, SE
CHILDREN’S
PUPPET SHOW
Place: Puppet Lore Stage
Time: 10:30 A.M., 12:30 P.M., 2:30 P.M., 4:30 P.M.
Pennsylvania Dutch puppets perform for young and old.

PENNSYLVANIA
RIFLE SHOOTING
Place: Rear of Gunsmith’s Tent
Time: On the Hour
Gunsmith demonstrates the loading and firing of a Pennsylvania (Kentucky) flintlock rifle.

GLASS
BLOWING
Place: At the Glass Blowing Furnace
Time: 11:00 A.M., 1:00 P.M., 3:00 P.M., 5:00 P.M.
Veteran glass blower demonstrates this ancient art.

SCHOOL
Place: One-Room School
10:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M.
writing and arithmetic, taught as in olden days.

BEHIVE
GAMES
Place: Between Tavern & School
Time: 10:30 A.M., 1:30 P.M., 4:30 P.M.
Children of all ages, one to ninety-nine years old, learn the fun dance of the honey bee in the hive, while playing this game.

AMISH WEDDING
Place: Big Green Chair
Time: 12:00 Noon & 4:00 P.M.
Visitors may watch the re-enactment of the wedding of Jonathan Beiler and Annie Fisher.

DR. BUMSTEAD
MEDICINE SHOW
Place: The Windmill
Time: 11:00 A.M., 3:00 P.M., 5:00 P.M.
A M.D. purveys his celebrated medicine to Folk Festival visitors.

CHURCH
Time: 9:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M.
Place: Old Oley Union Church & Cemetery
See the harvest home display, hear the pump organ playing and join in the singing of oldtime favorite hymns.

BUTCHERING
Place: Country Butcher Shop
Time: 1:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M.
This demonstration of hog butchering includes the making of Ponhaws (scrapple) and sausage.

ACK COVER 1 3 4 see page 23. 2 see page 22. 10 see page 26.
23rd Annual Quilting Contest
Festival Focus

on 200
Folk Arts and Crafts

BOBBIN LACE MAKER
LEATHER
WOOD SCULPTURE

TINSMITH
FURNITURE GRAINING

BABY BIBS
ANTLER LORE

WOOD TURNING

COUNTED CROSS STITCH
WEAVING
Once one of the nation's most common and important trades, coopering has fallen victim to technology and has nearly vanished in the last few decades. Say the word, and most will give you a blank stare. But identify the product, and folks are right at home with yesteryear. Coopers, of course, made barrels, kegs, casks and utilitarian objects to be found in virtually every home and on every farm - buckets, pails and churns.

Technically speaking, coopering is the practice of shaving the edges of wood into angles that, when joined with others, create curved surfaces. From a practical standpoint, the humble barrel and ordinary pail have played an important role in history and a critical one in the development of this country.

It can be traced to Central Europe at about the time civilization really began to develop - perhaps in Germany or Czechoslovakia. Man needed large and sturdy containers; metals were precious and far too expensive, clay was too fragile in large sizes, glass was impossible. What happened was the idea of using a readily available resource - timber - to construct containers of virtually any size by shaping wood and holding it fast with a variety of hoops. The barrel, as we still recognize it today, was made to store and ship the goods that broke down the tribal culture of Europe and permitted widescale trade to develop.

Good ideas stick and travel; by the year 1200, there was in Paris a trade guild made up entirely of coopers to protect their industry, and every ship that set to sea had a cooper on board. The reason: the kegs carried fresh water, and the worst place to be was a long way from land with a leaking barrel.

John Alden, one of the original settlers at Plymouth in 1620, was a cooper and later immortalized in "The Courtship of Miles Standish." But the first cooper in the New World was John Lewes, at Jamestown in 1608.

With the influx of Germans into Pennsylvania came the coopers. The area could not have been more perfect: vast stands of timber, especially pine, cedar, beech and poplar gave an endless source of staves. Oak, hickory and maple were there for the hoops.

The goods of young America demanded the means to ship, and towns along the Delaware River abounded with cooperages. These same tradesmen made pails, buckets and churns for household and farm use.

There are actually three types of coopers: wet (or tight), dry (or slack), and white. They specialized in barrels to hold liquids, dry goods, and pails, respectively. The primary difference between barrel and pail construction is that a barrel stave is the same width at both ends, curving outward slightly to the center of the stave. This makes the barrel fatter in the middle... and a lot easier to roll and turn when full of perhaps 50 gallons of molasses. White cooperage (which may have gotten its name from use in dairy operations), uses staves that do not curve, and are wider at one end than the other. It has, of course, a single bottom rather than a fitted top and bottom.
There were virtually no design rules for buckets and the like (in contrast to barrels, which had fixed volumes); whatever was needed was made. Lacking a local cooper or the money to pay him, many farmers made their own crude pails — but proper coopering has some critical requirements.

First, the bevelled edges must add up to a perfect circle. In a bucket of perhaps 15 to 20 staves, the tolerance for error is no more than one tenth of a degree... or the pail will surely leak. The staves must be true end-to-end (or it will never seal), and the bottom of the pail must be just tight enough to swell to a water seal, but loose enough not to crack the staves. In short, it is not a terribly difficult trade to learn, but rather an exercise in joinery.

The pail becomes water tight because wood expands when wet. The greatest expansion is across the grain (that is, between the growth rings of the tree). Thus, proper staves are "quartergrained" — i.e., the growth rings of the tree are pointing toward the center of the finished pail. When the pail gets wet, the wood expands, pushing the staves tight together. Because of bevelling, the staves cannot collapse inward, and sturdy hoops prevent the staves from falling outward.

In the meantime, the bottom, which is "flatsawn" (just the opposite of quartergrain), gets thicker when wet. The groove holding it in place is filled tighter. Wood also expands slightly along its length, which means the bottom gets larger in diameter, pressing tightly against the staves, while the staves themselves

Geoffery demonstrates his craft at a specially built bench at the Festival.
The quality workmanship can be seen in Geoffery's old craft.

pinch the bottom. It's a lot like holding your fingers tight together. You can hold water in your hand like it's a cup.

Many folks stop by and immediately recite the familiar phrase, "The Old Oaken Bucket". Some likely were — but more often than not they were made of softwoods, which expanded more and quicker, and were only half the weight. This was important in the "liberated" households of yesteryear; after all, when the wife had to haul a couple gallons of water from the creek, why ask her to carry the extra weight of oak?

Pine pails, properly cared for, can have a useful life of between 100 and 125 years. Oak pails can go 200 years. Those who own a fine old pail do it a disservice by not periodically getting it thoroughly soaked. Eventually, especially in winter, the staves will shrink and the pail will fall apart. Putting one back together is like assembling a puzzle — but once hoops are on and tapped or driven fast, a good soaking restores the pail to its proper and intended condition.

Hoops could be virtually anything handy. Wooden hoops with arrowlock connection or Shaker style tacks have been joined by willow withes, leather, rope, and steel. Few people know that the Revolutionary War army of George Washington used pails made with wire hoops tacked on, and fewer yet know that the first organized labor dispute, involving a strike, was caused by the coopers of Philadelphia in the late 18th century. Then, as now, coopers had to eat.

There are currently three dozen or so barrel makers and less than a dozen bucket makers left in the country. Galvanized metals, plastics and metal drums spelled doom to what was once one of Pennsylvania's busiest industries. For those of us who hang on to the tradition, there's still nothing finer than to hear the shuddering and groaning of hand worked pine setting a seal, and filling a good bucket with water... or perhaps more interesting beverages.
There's something special about knives, a mystique of tradition and purpose. You can see it in the gleam of a young boy's eyes when he's given his first knife, whether it's a chunky Swiss Army model or a slender pearl handled penknife handed down from granddad. It's a mystique that carries over into the feel of a knife... the balance and graceful lines of a fine filet knife or the security of an awesome survival weapon. Perhaps that's why I take great pride in my self-taught skill as a custom knife maker because every blade I design and build, whatever its purpose, captures some of that mystique. Hold a finely crafted knife and you've got a grip on a rich legacy!

The first metal knife was introduced to the American continent some 990 years ago by Viking adventurers such as Leif Ericson and Biarni Heriulfson. It was called a scramasax and, with a blade up to twenty inches long, it was actually an all-purpose sword equally useful for cutting meat or enemies. The scramasax was worn in a scabbard on the belt at all times and was such a highly prized and personal accessory that it was usually buried with its fallen owner.

The Viking forays, however, had no cultural impact and the knife wasn't introduced in force until the Spaniards explored the South and Southwest in the 1500's. The essential weapon of these conquistadors was the dagger, an extremely popular style from the mid-14th century throughout the 16th century. It was used for thrusting, stabbing, and cutting of all sorts. The mid 16th century saw an addition to the dagger — a guard was placed between the handle and the blade allowing the user the option of blocking his opponent's weapon. As the art of knife fighting was refined, the dagger developed an even wider knuckle guard; also, single-edged blades were sometimes found with notches near the guard allowing one to snag the enemy's weapon and twist it from his grasp. Blades constructed in this era saw simplicity in design with functional wood, bone, or metal handles. Engraving and fancy metal inlays were to be had only by nobility or the very rich.
With the establishment of the first permanent English colony at Jamestown in 1607, the influential Spanish and Italian styles began to give way to the English designs, especially the kidney knife, a simply constructed all purpose tool. The metal knife by this time did not go unnoticed by the native Americans whose own blades were crude and ineffectively fashioned from stone, hard wood, animal teeth or bone. Readily trading their furs and corn for European knives, the Indians then traded with one another and the knife which was primarily a tool and utensil in their culture became a weapon as well.

Knives themselves underwent continual change. In 1650 soldiers used a French invention called a plug dagger which enabled them to force such a blade into the muzzle of a musket and create a pike weapon. Fifty years later a socket bayonet was developed which turned the dagger into a more efficient pike but which ironically rendered the knife by itself too awkward to use. Thus the soldier prudently carried a separate knife once more! (It wasn't until Civil War times that a combination knife-bayonet was designed that was truly efficient both ways.) Such knives, known as jack knives, had one blade between four and eight inches long which folded into its handle. These forerunners of our folding pocket knives gradually replaced the belt knives as people found their settlements becoming more secure and populous.

In the 1800's jack knives not only featured a second smaller blade but a variety of options such as corkscrew, fork, spoon, hoof hook and saw... further testimony to that tool's assimilation into society.

Knife designs came and went as the flow of immigrants and the push westward necessitated. German immigrants, mostly farmers and artisans, brought with them special implements one of which was called the Hauswehre (literally meaning "home defense"). This large butcher knife was a direct descendent of the Viking scramasax and ancestor of the American bowie and hunting knives of the 19th century. German soldiers called Hessians who were stationed in the Colonies during the Revolutionary War period brought with them the landsknecht dagger, a double bladed style which sometimes was hollow handled and which might even sport engraving. Of course, as the immigrants opened new territories, their tools and bladed implements became more and more the work of local blacksmiths.

Some of these homemade designs became standard, and at least one, the bowie knife, became a legend in its own time thanks to the prowess of owner James Bowie. With a blade nine to fifteen inches long, the bowie was equally at home digging, clearing brush or carving meat. Members of Congress carried it; Confederate soldiers relied upon it; the bowie, however, declined rapidly as the frontier shrank shortly after the Civil War.

The 19th century saw the greatest use of knives as well as the greatest amount of American-made blades, one of which was John Russell's Green River knife. Finally America had a knife to be used by all, made by Americans. The butcher knives found in our Pennsylvania Dutch kitchens and farms owe their design to Russell who pioneered this field.

As the frontier grew smaller, the variety of knives grew, as did materials. Imitation bone and ivory appeared in the 1870's; hard rubber, celluloid and plastics were discovered to make serviceable handles. Knives were machine stamped out of technically advanced purer steels that matched or exceeded the strength of the famous Damascus forge-kneaded steel of old. People bought their knives at the country store or emporium and later at department or sporting goods stores. But no matter their source, the knives you use for eating, carving, hunting or dressing, all owe much to their earliest counterparts.
For the last forty years, knife collecting has become a popular hobby, and with it has come a resurgence of handmade, personally designed knives. I began making knives in 1969... it seemed to naturally follow my childhood interest in cowboys and Indians (not to mention helping an older brother fashion "tomahawks"!). I did research and quickly became fascinated by the knife's mystique... how my personal skill and attention to detail could transform hard raw materials like metal and wood into functional implements of great beauty and purpose. The simple knife is the most valuable hand tool invented by man!

Handmade knives are very precisely made tools; the methods and steps used in building them varies widely from maker to maker. Quality and utility must be highly evaluated when viewing the art. In the past when tool steels were not readily available most blades were individually hand forged from iron billets; the amount of forging and the skill of the blacksmith decided the value of the steel produced. Most of the handmade knives produced today are built using the stock removal method. This means that metal is ground away from a rough piece of steel leaving the knife blade desired. I use this method most of the time because, when you start with a fine piece of tool steel, it does not change the characteristics of the metal by forging extra carbon into the steel; it also allows me to more precisely heat treat the blade.

Each knife will begin with a piece of steel called a blank. I prefer 440-C surgical stainless tool steel because it is highly rust and tarnish resistant and holds a very keen edge. The steel I use comes in random lengths and has been hot-rolled and annealed to the width and thickness specified. To begin a knife, I will first cut the steel to a proper length, scribe the design and any fine points onto the teel, grind away (stock removal) any metal that is not needed, thus shaping the blade desired. I will then drill any holes needed in the handle for fastening the handle material.

Three types of grinding now can be used to shape the cutting edge. Beveled, flat, or hollowed grinding are used by the handmade craftsmen in the United States today; I hollow-grind most of my blades. Although hollow grinding is felt to be the most difficult to do properly by hand, it will give you the strongest and best cutting edge. All the work done on my knives is done without the aid of gigs or fixtures, therefore I must have an extremely steady hand at all times. The finished knife must be balanced, symmetric, pleasing to the eye and fully functional. When most of the basic shaping is done, my blades are professionally heat treated to between $54^\circ$ and $58^\circ$ on the Rockwell C scale. (Too hard and the blade will be too brittle and difficult to hand sharpen; too soft and it won't hold an edge.)

Heat treating is a two step process: Hardening leaves the steel very hard but brittle, while tempering relaxes the steel, giving it a flexibility to withstand stress.
After blades are heat treated, there is still much to do requiring a critical eye, especially during polishing. Overworking the finish leads to a smeary gloss that obscures or softens what should be sharp design lines; underfinishing will make the blade look crude and amateurish. I generally offer two finishes: field grade (about 80 grit) which requires seven steps for a consistently smooth finish and a high luster; and collector grade mirror finish, which takes double the steps and the time. After the blade is finished (except for the final sharpening which is absolutely last for obvious reasons), the handle is readied. If there is a guard, it is press-fitted or silver soldered into place. I solder with silver because it looks best and cleans up the smoothest. Most handles are glued by a special hot melt system and/or riveted into place and are then ground down and polished. Finally the blade is sharpened, and again, there are choices: the angle used will range from 30° to less than 15°. The finer the angle the more delicate the cutting edge; a surgeon’s scalpel will be sharper and much more delicate than a soldier’s survival knife.

Because I am a custom maker, I offer my own designs such as my Vantage Belt Buckle Knife which is as useful as a pocketknife and handily sheathed inside its own belt. I’ve also designed a classic hunting and camping duo, the Venture Outdoor Series, plus the bowie styled Victor II Survival System with an ingenious pouched sheath containing seventeen essential tools. All my leather sheaths are hand cut from top grain cowhide and machine stitched for strength. But of course, the word “custom” means I love challenges and will fashion a blade to your specifications and needs as well, from petite folders, push daggers, filet and steak knives to wood carving tools, throwing knives and stilettos. One of the newest knives added to my line is the all purpose kitchen knife with copper wrapped wood handle, designed especially for the Kutztown Folk Festival. I also offer engraving (initials, motifs and pictures), and precious metal inlays, as well as handles made of ivory, wood and a Pakkawood laminate which is durable and polishes to a carefree luster. It will be my pleasure to meet and talk to you during the Festival.
The art of creating dolls from natural materials dates back to pre-history. For hundreds of years American Plains Indians wrapped grasses, straw, or cornhusks into doll shapes. Forest dwellers used wood, bark, and roots. Indian children played with dolls made of corn cobs, cornsilk hair, and husk clothing. These early dolls were strictly functional — that is, children played with them. Today’s versions made by Janice and Bob Berry are used more for decoration than anything else.

Cornshucks can be crocheted or woven into mats, but dolls are much more fun to make according to Janice. “Believe me, with a little practice most people can become adept enough to make a beautiful corn-husk doll.” From a handful of cornhusks to a finished doll should not take anyone, after they have mastered the task, over 20 minutes, says Janice. There are several different procedures to follow in making the various cornhusk dolls. Simple lapel ornaments can be put together in a few minutes. Extremely complicated tree ornament dolls with layers of petticoats and skirts take considerably longer.

Janice’s interest in cornhusk dolls began when she was a child and would visit her grandmother, Angle, in Reading, Pa. Her grandmother taught her how to make the dolls during her summer visits which became a life-long ardor for them. At home, when she was a child, she would put the dolls in cheese boxes to create little scenes, make the Christmas angels for the tree, and make decorations for the table at Thanksgiving time.

Now considered an expert after making dolls for all these years, Janice demonstrates her art at fairs and festivals such as the Kutztown Folk Festival. She also has done numerous workshops showing children and adults how to make the dolls.

For Janice, the most difficult part of making cornhusk dolls is finding the proper materials. She mostly uses husks from field corn, although, it’s possible to make dolls from sweet cornhusks. The husks from the sweet corn are so fragile and small that work with them is often wasted. They tend to curl up tightly when dry, and don’t hold up well under handling. Therefore, these husks are used for the faces only. Most corn is now picked by machine, so getting the husks can be a difficult process. Timing is important. You must wait until the corn is fully matured, but you have to get there before the machinery does. When the har-
vesters go into the fields and start picking, the machinery strips everything and grinds up what isn’t used. Corn pickers harvest the ripe ears of corn; field choppers chop the whole plants (ears, stalks, leaves) into silage for feed. Many times Janice cannot get enough field corn and has to purchase some of the husks. On special dolls she often uses Indian corn which produces colored husks of pink, red, maroon, or brown. Even though she usually uses a special yarn for the hair on her dolls, she sometimes makes a “pure, natural material” doll and uses cornsilk for the hair.

Janice, with the help of Bob, makes most of her dolls during the long winter months. The husks must be kept moist while one works with them because they become brittle and unmanageable when dry. It usually takes overnight for the doll to dry when finished, or you can, as Janice does, put the dolls in a gas oven with only the pilot light on. As soon as the doll is perfectly dry, the little lady is ready to decorate. Many people like corn-husk dolls with no features, but Janice puts two dots for eyes as it is easy to do and the doll looks good.

Janice’s craft is far more advanced from the days when she would make scenes in cheese boxes. She places dolls in individual shadow-box environments and writes little poems to illustrate themes. Bob makes the shadow boxes and many of the accessories that they use for the themes. They now have over one hundred different themes for the boxes.

The Berry family spend much of their vacation time working fairs and festivals during the summer, and especially enjoy coming back to the homeland of Janice’s grandparents to the Kutztown Festival.
Salt-glazed stoneware has recently experienced a revival in popularity in America, and for good reason; the practical yet simplistically beautiful forms which were essential to our predecessors still evoke a unique charm and usefulness in almost any home today.

The process of salt-glazing was first developed in Germany in the 14th century. In fact, there are still thriving potteries in Germany today run by the same families which founded them 600 years ago. German and English immigrants subsequently brought the technique to America where it took on a flavor all its own, making old American pieces extremely collectable today.

Small one-or-two-man shops begun as early as the late 1700’s began to thrive in America in the early 1800’s, and by the second half of the century had developed into factories. In the small shops, each piece was made from start to finish by one person, so the pottery reflected the character of the individual potters. One became a potter by apprenticing for seven years to a master craftsman. By contrast, the factories operated on crude assembly line principles: one man turned the pieces, another applied handles, another glazed, another decorated, another fired, and so on. Thus, the pottery took on a much more uniform, mass-produced appearance.

The area of Ohio in which we live and work, about 20 miles southeast of Akron, was once the salt-glazed stoneware capital of the Mid-West. Here there was a ready supply of clay, and most importantly, easy access to the Ohio canal for shipping. Barges once travelled the canal loaded with blue-decorated crocks, each filled with its own cargo: vegetables, grain, molasses, whiskey. Not only was the produce sold, but the crocks themselves were an equally valued commodity.

One has to imagine a world without plastic, cardboard, or inexpensive glass to fully appreciate the role of pottery in our forefathers’ lives. The proper housewife never used salt-glazed ware on her table; there she displayed her fine china, if she was lucky, or perhaps redware plates, made from clay dug closer to the surface of the earth than stoneware clay, but less durable. But for the tougher jobs of mixing, storing, churning, baking, and canning, her buttery or dairy house would be full of salt-glazed stoneware.

Because of its practical nature, most old pieces were practically decorated: abstract stripes, squiggles, or numbers to indicate capacity were most common. Some potters used stencils with their names incorporated into the design as a means of advertisement. Less often, some artistic potter would take the time to paint elaborate flowers or animals and sometimes whole scenes on his pots; these are by far the most sought-after and dearly-priced antique pieces today.

by Bruce Stebner
Shape is another indication of an old pot's value. A simple rule-of-thumb is "the straighter, the later." Early pieces were often bulbous in form, while the straighter pieces, being easier to make, stack, and clean, were more profitable for the turn-of-the-century factories to make.

The actual process of making salt-glazed ware has changed little in 600 years. Stoneware clay, dug approximately 20 feet underground, is formed on the potter's wheel or by hand into various shapes. When these shapes dry to the consistency of leather, handles are applied, if necessary, and a liquid clay, or slip, is used to coat the insides of the pieces. This slip, while not necessary to make the pieces waterproof, does form a smooth inner surface, making cleaning easier.

The pottery is then completely air-dried before being decorated. Cobalt blue was almost always used, historically, because it retained its vivid color even at the high temperatures to which it was fired. The decorations are most commonly applied either with a slip-cup or a brush. The slip-cup is a pottery vessel filled with cobalt slip which flows through a bird quill inserted into an opening in the cup. This provides a steady flow of slip-glaze, making it possible to produce long fine lines and elaborate designs. Brushed decorations, by contrast, are shorter, bolder, and simpler, but no less appealing. Cobalt slip also is sometimes sponged or stencilled onto the pots, and more variations can be obtained by scratching, or incising, designs into the clay.

The decorated pieces are then stacked into the kiln to be fired. Nineteenth Century potters often had huge kilns which took up to a week to fire, using ten or more cords of wood! One woeful French potter wrote of running out of wood just as his kiln was almost at peak temperature, and in desperation tearing the floor boards out of his house to finish it rather than lose all his pots. Thankfully, we need no longer rely on wood, although some potters still use it. Our kiln is fired with propane gas and requires about 24 hours from preheat to full temperature, and about another 24 hours to cool down.

When the kiln reaches full temperature, about 2200°C, salt is thrown into it through openings near the firebox of the kiln. The salt immediately vaporizes because of the intensity of the heat, and the sodium in the salt is freed to combine with the silica in the clay to form a glass, or glaze coating on the pieces. It takes much experimentation to discover how to place the pots in the kiln so that all will get the right amount of glaze, how much salt to use,
and how long to continue heating the kiln after the salt has been thrown in.

Even after many years' experience, we are always anxious to open the kiln to see what kind of character the salt produced on each piece. Some have an orange-peel texture, some are smooth as glass, some turn dark, others are light, but each one has its own unique beauty; it's virtually impossible to duplicate any one piece. This is the charm, and sometimes the curse, of salt-glazing as opposed to other, more predictable methods using liquid glazes.

One of the liabilities of salt-glazing is that the salt, while producing beautiful effects on the pots, corrodes the kiln each time it's used, so that the kiln must be continually repaired and eventually replaced. This, along with its unpredictability, is one of the reasons why, in spite of its revival, there are only a handful of potters making salt-glazed stoneware in America today.

I first became interested in making pottery when I was twelve years old and saw a potter demonstrating his craft at an art exhibit. I pursued this interest throughout high school and college, always wanting to find the secret of making pieces like the old gray and blue crocks which graced the 19th

The salt-glazed pottery is beautifully decorated and comes in many sizes and shapes.
The display of pottery is pleasing as well as varied.

century house in which I was raised. When I became the potter at a "living history" museum, I finally had opportunity to explore the secrets of salt-glazing. My wife and I are continually challenged as well as rewarded as we produce salt-glazed stoneware at our 19th century Ohio homestead.

The ware itself is very durable, deserving the name "stone-ware," and is as usable in conventional ovens, microwaves, and dishwashers, as it has been in brick bake ovens and Dutch ovens for centuries.

The salt-glaze factories which once thrived in America saw their doomsday with the advent of the Mason canning jar and inexpensive tin storage containers. By the early 1900's, housewives no longer needed the more cumbersome pottery, and it became obsolete. Fifty years later, however, those who appreciated true folk art began to see the old crocks as valuable pieces of Americana, a reminder of another way of life, and worthy of conservation. We, along with a small number of other American artisans, desire to carry that conservation further than just collecting old pieces. It's our purpose to conserve the tradition of making old-style salt-glazed ware, as well as to expand and explore the place of salt-glazed stoneware in the last part of the 20th century.
“Under the spreading chestnut tree the village smithy stands...”

Oh, those romantic words of verse by Longfellow conjure up images of times past! The men that hammered things of utility and beauty out of such stubborn and unforgiving material as iron held a revered position in early communities. Their skill with fire and iron was the key to success for war and industry in most cultures. As with many things, iron working has undergone change, refinement, specialization and industrialization, but the basics still hold some elegant truths.

What concerns our interest here are more recent times in the age of iron. Early colonial America was when things started to shape up for us. Much of what we like to call colonial wrought iron came from Europe or more specifically England. The first blacksmiths to settle in the New World scarce as they were, kept busy repairing tools and making necessary items to get life off of a mud floor. Raw material was scarce and imports were closely regulated by England. The scrap pile of worn parts and broken pieces became an important source of supply which explains the clean and simple design of work from that time. As the colonies began to flourish, they attracted more highly skilled artisans and tradesmen. One such group was German immigrants seeking the religious freedom William Penn offered in Pennsylvania. These technicians brought their talent and knowledge cultivated in the old world traditions. Blacksmiths became numerous enough to specialize; i.e. farriers, wagon makers, cutlers, gunsmiths, and whitesmiths. The combination of old and new developed into the style we know as Pennsylvania Dutch. One of those early successes which is well known for its fine ironwork is the Conestoga Wagon. The quality and skill of those early masters has intrigued me. The attention that was given to the simplest hook or hinge showed a pride in one’s work, even though in most cases, it wasn’t believed important enough to stamp the maker’s mark on it.

I come from a combination of German and Hungarian farming stock. With a name like Beck, it’s hard to imagine my ancestors coming from any place else. You can see the kinship I have with the Kutztown Folk Festival and the tradition they are trying to preserve. Although, I must admit, I can’t recall any of my paternal family speaking what is called “the Dutch.” My mother still speaks a few German phrases from her childhood that are used in times of surprise or when I don’t do what she expects. The optimistic independence of the farmer must have stuck to me for it was easy to risk job security and regular hours to be my own boss. I was born and have spent most of my thirty-eight years in central Bucks County on the same farm. It sounds boring but I spent three years in the Army and served as an infantry lieutenant in Vietnam and that was all the excitement I could stand. After my discharge, I used the G.I. Bill to attend Oklahoma Farriers College. My two reasons for learning horseshoeing were my lifelong enjoyment of hand skills and an interest in horses. Horseshoeing school planted those basic seeds of ironworking skills; but after seven years of being...
kicked around barn floors, making a living as a full time farrier, I decided that I had one reason for learning horseshoeing, so I quit wrestling horses and went on to more artistic efforts.

Determined to make a success of this new venture, I set out to learn everything and anything I could about blacksmithing. This proved to be more difficult than I first thought. Master blacksmiths were not to be found. The American public had a long preference for mass produced inexpensive goods and style which didn't lend itself to traditional iron work; consequently we lost a generation of apprentice blacksmiths. My only practical avenue was trial and error. Early on, the error part of the avenue added greatly to my scrap pile, but persistence kept me going to museums, seeking out old books and asking dumb questions. Just learning the skill of the trade is not enough to make a business successful; so there were accounting, drawing, business management, art history, and technical graphics courses to take at night. After a somewhat slow start, things began to come together. I was beginning to match up what I could do with people that wanted to buy. Once I mastered the basic skills of blacksmithing, my own style evolved. I look to traditional ironwork of old European masters for inspiration. Colonial ironwork especially that of old German masters, has a particular interest for me, but I rarely reproduce a museum piece exactly. Much of the enjoyment of my work comes from the use of traditional motifs and arriving at my proportion, style and design. Now, after a total of fifteen years bending hot steel, I have the consistancy of style and quality that customers can recognize. This has just recently happened when a chandelier of mine was part of a room display on the cover of Country Living Magazine. Although, there was no remark as to the maker of the chandelier, several regular customers identified my work. Finding my work in homes that are featured in magazines is certainly a boost to the ego, but it also issues a challenge not to compromise my designs for fear of losing the favor I've gained thus far.

Now that I have arms like Popeye and callouses as thick as shoe leather; where to now? I continue to expand my business wholesaling to gift shops and catalog sales companies. I'm always trying to design new pieces and expand my variety of products. My wife and business partner runs our own retail store featuring my work and related colonial style items for the home; we are also gradually building up our own mail order sales.

Come and take a look at this work! The Kutztown Folk Festival is the center post of my annual schedule. For nine days, my wife Sue Ann, sister Joanne and myself, move to Kutztown just to display our wares and demonstrate iron working. It is an event in our lives which not only is part of our livelihood but a chance to renew old acquaintances and make new friends. Stop by and ask questions. See how some of these things are done . . . under the spreading catalpa tree by the College Boulevard gate this village smithy stands . . .
Wood has always been a fascination from the earliest cave man up to the present time. Every culture throughout the world has used wood as a medium for expression. You can express your religion, personal feelings, and cultural heritage in wood.

Carving is one of the most prevalent art forms worldwide. However, in the United States today, it is considered for the most part a craft, not an art. This is based on the fact that everyone can carve at some level. For many years, carving in the United States took two distinct paths; one was the classical European approach and the other a folk art approach such as the Shimmel style of carving. Only recently has an original American carving style developed with the duck as the primary object of many carvings.

In several sites, replicas of duck decoys made by the Indians from reeds have been discovered in good condition. These discoveries inspired future generations to produce duck replicas out of wood.

These early decoys had a utilitarian purpose of luring live waterfowl close enough to kill with primitive weapons. In many areas, waterfowl were the primary source of food for entire tribes. The decoy style of carving remained stable until the 1930's. At that time, two brothers on the Eastern Shore began to evolve a more realistic approach to carving decoys.

The Ward brothers carved hundreds of what are now known as shooting stools. These are decoys that are spread out in front of the hunter in the traditional method to lure live birds. In addition to this smooth style shooting stool, the Ward's began the evolution of the decoy from a working level to a completely decorative level. The Ward brothers were the first to add detail to their carving with realistic bills, eyes, and feathers. This process has evolved to the point where very expensive decorative decoys never get near water or a gun. Competitive carving exhibitions are held throughout the United States and Canada. This style of carving is still developing as an original American art form.

Our family has decided to specialize in the decorative carving of waterfowl and birds. We carve all species of ducks, geese, swans, and shore birds. We also enjoy carving birds of prey and song birds. The excitement in carving for us is to be able to create a carving and setting that will make the observer want to touch to see if the bird is real. The comment we enjoy the most is "but they look like real feathers."

Creating a complete decorative life size carving is a long involved process. A typical carving of competition quality takes from 50 to 200 hours to complete. The process begins with the selection of an appropriate piece of wood. We prefer to use basswood; however, tupelo, sugar pine, and white cedar may also be used. The best basswood is harvested from the glacial shield where the lime content is low. This produces a close straight grained

by William R.M.Ritter
wood which is white in color. It carves with the consistency of cold sharp cheese.

After selecting the wood, you can either draw your own pattern or use a commercially available pattern. We prefer to draw our own by studying live birds and taking measurements from mounted specimens. Protected species can be observed at the Museum of Natural History in Philadelphia.

Next the pattern is transferred in two dimensions to the basswood block and cut out; we prefer to use a band saw. The next step is to take the cutout from the block to a carving in the round or third dimension. The most difficult part of carving birds is to achieve symmetry and smoothness of contour as you carve for realism. After the bird is carved to your satisfaction, the difficult and time consuming task of detailing the carving must be approached with care and exactness. It is important to use all the visual aids you can find such as photographs, books, drawings, and mounted specimens. The details are both carved and burned with a type of hot knife. A detailed feather pattern is drawn on the carving as a guide to burn and carve the feather details.

After the detailing is completed, you can finish the carving naturally with stain and/or varnish or paint it realistically with acrylic paint. Painting is very difficult for many carvers. I believe this is historic; we are all carvers but we are not all painters. We must remember that carving began first as a utilitarian craft (i.e., bowls, knife, handles, forks, and spoons) and then became a decorative means of self-expression.

When the bird is completely carved, detailed, and painted, you are now ready to create a realistic setting for your carving. Driftwood, paper leaves, carved plants, and putty stones are made and used to simulate a natural habitat for the carving. Only wood and wood products may be used for competition carvings. When completed, you will have a truly decorative but realistic carving.

There are three generations of wood carvers in my family. My father, Myron, and I began carving in 1978, after visiting the Ward Foundation Exhibition in Salisbury, Maryland. After viewing all the decoys and decorative carvings, we decided we could carve like that, too. We bought new knives and started home. Much to our wives’ surprise, our first carvings were realistic enough to look like ducks. In the past eight years, an adventure became a hobby and just recently a business. Our shop, Ritter Carvers, provides not only decorative carvings of all kinds but also tools, supplies, and carving classes. My wife, Barbara, helps with sanding and painting. Our son, Bill, also carves but prefers to put his carvings on fine furniture. He is especially partial to the Chippendale style.

At the Folk Festival our family will be demonstrating the various stages of decorative wood carving. We are located in the Folk Arts and Crafts Building III. Please stop in, ask questions, and watch the chips fly.

*If you want to talk about birds and bird carving, William will be glad to oblige.*
Much has been written about the pretzel story; how it began either in southern France, or northern Italy when a monk using leftover scraps of bread dough made the first pretzel. In those days the only schools available to the masses were at the monasteries where the monks taught the local children in return for those necessities they could not make or raise themselves. The monks made their own bread which was in the French tradition (long and narrow). After the dough was rolled out to the required length the ends which were too thin were cut off before baking. It was these ends the monk used to fashion Pretiola (little reward). In addition to teaching the children to read and write, the monks also taught them the prayers of the Faith, and for those children who learned their prayers well came the "little reward." It follows then that the tasty little pretiola was shaped resembling a child with his arms crossed in prayer, and it is easy to see how the word pretiola over the years was transformed into the word pretzel as we know it.

The first pretzels were soft. The crisp pretzel came much later when an apprentice baker fell asleep at the ovens, allowing them to cool for want of fuel. The effect was that of a kiln. The drying action made the pretzel crisp and long lasting since it is difficult for damaging bacteria to live without moisture. The golden brown color was achieved by boiling rye straw and using the water to cook the pretzels before baking them. This produced a rather bland taste and it is thought that salt, which was in good supply, was added to improve the taste. The result was the distinct and unmistakable taste of pretzel. There are still some bakeries using this method to this day.

Just where the first pretzels were made in America has been debated over and over. There is on record in New York State an account of a trial held in a local court where a baker was on trial for using good white flour to make pretzels to sell to the heathen (Indians), while using the left over bran to

Norman, III mixes the dough according to an old family recipe.
bake items sold to Christians. It would seem the Indians knew a good thing when they saw it long ago.

The first commercial pretzel bakery was in Lititz, Pennsylvania. It was there one Julius Sturgis began merchandising the pretzel. He passed the business on to his heirs, and it was when N.D. Sturgis ran the family business that the Kutztown Folk Festival pretzel story really begins.

An apprentice under N.D. Sturgis named Alvin Mumma would later raise a large family in the heart of the Lancaster County Dutch Country. All of his children were involved in the pretzel industry at some time in their lives, but it is two of his daughters that figure prominently in the Kutztown Folk Festival pretzel story. The first was Laura who was married to Leroy Fitting. Leroy was the first pretzel baker to be invited to produce soft pretzels at the Festival some thirty seven years ago. The baker at Leroy's ovens was his father-in-law, Alvin Mumma. The recipe they used was the one Alvin learned many years before from N.D. Sturgis. Alvin passed away some years later, but the tasty recipe stayed and is still the Festival standard.

When Leroy died, another one of Alvin's daughters was invited with her husband to be the official pretzel bakers for the Festival. Dorothy (Mumma) and Norman Ressler Sr. continued the tradition of the now famous Kutztown Folk Festival soft pretzel for a dozen or so years until their retirement. The Resslers had two children, a boy and a girl. The girl, Diane, was the pretzel twister for many years at the Festival until receiving her Master's in English Literature, after which she went on to a career in teaching. The boy, Norman Jr., was invited by the Festival to continue the pretzel tradition.

After cooking and before baking, the pretzels are salted.

*Norman, Jr. deftly twists the pretzels.*
I am Norm Jr. and I have been the pretzel baker at the Festival for several years, but the story has not ended. I have a son also named Norman, representing the fourth generation baking the famous Kutztown Folk Festival soft pretzel. He stands at the ovens where his great grandfather stood so many years ago eager to carry on, not only the Festival tradition, but also a family tradition.

We will always keep the same recipe, for the unique taste of the Folk Festival soft pretzel is unequaled anywhere. The tradition of the single and double heart is pure Kutztown Folk Festival. It was started to commemorate the “Amish Wedding” which takes place each day of the Festival. The hearts became so popular that they have become a regular product of the Festival Pretzel Bakery so all our guests may enjoy them. It has been rumored that, “To share a single heart with a friend is an act of love, but to share an entwined double heart means matrimony is intended.” You must be sure of your intentions when enjoying this tasty treat. These hearts are not available anywhere but the Kutztown Folk Festival, so if you are thinking of popping the question to that special person, you cannot afford to procrastinate.

Come and visit us at the bakery; we love company. If there is some phase of the operation you would like us to explain, feel free to ask, and even if we are busy which we mostly are, we will take time to greet you.
DAYTIME GATHERING
GATES OPEN 9 A.M. TO 5 P.M.
ACTIVITIES 'TIL 7 P.M.

All Entertainment, Demonstrations, Exhibits and Special Events are included in the Admission Price