

The Virginia Home Educator

Home Educators Association of Virginia News Magazine

Volume 10, Issue 3

Source Team



Great EXPEDITIONS

Trips for 2004
No. 1-10
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It's summer time;
do you know where
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Virginia is for Field Trips
Time Travelers
Scrapbooking
Homeschooling as a Field Trip



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The Virginia Home Educator

Home Educators Association of Virginia News Magazine

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FROM THE EDITOR

Mary Kay Smith



For someone who grew up in another country and who still likes to travel, the ice-breaker question should have been a hard one: “If you had to choose between emigrating to another country and never being allowed back on U.S. soil, or living in your current U.S. state and not being allowed out, which would you pick?”

The mix of answers as we went around the room was fascinating. Some said the question was too hard. One person chose Switzerland; someone else picked Israel. But because of where we lived, my answer was easy—I chose to stay in Virginia.

There aren’t too many states that decorate every season so beautifully; offer thriving energetic cities, small towns, farms, or fishing hamlets; can boast mountains, forests, lakes, rivers, *and* an ocean. Our heritage includes many of the big events in the United States history books, from the earliest settlements to the Revolutionary and Civil wars and beyond. We offer Northern culture, Southern culture, English culture, military culture. In fact, with our huge immigrant population and mix of people, you can find just about any culture you want.

What a place to educate our kids! We can learn colonial skills in Williamsburg, study ecosystems in the Chesapeake Bay, hunt for gems outside Richmond, visit the Naval Base in Norfolk, enjoy geological wonders at Luray, admire architecture in Charlottesville...truly something for everyone. We even provide hands-on experience in survival skills with our heat indexes, tornadoes, and hurricanes, not to mention the occasional earthquake. And then when it comes time for college, we can choose from among the best and still pay in-state tuition!

This issue we celebrate Virginia and all it has to offer. Take a look at our field-trip suggestions and then let us know about your own favorite place to visit. Check out the Resource page and equip yourself with the right maps, field guides, and car activity books. Collect photos and memorabilia for your scrapbook. Got your passport? (Oh yes, you’ll want one even for Virginia—see page 16) Let’s go! ☺

The Virginia Home Educator

Home Educators Association of Virginia News Magazine

The purpose of *The Virginia Home Educator* is to provide a forum for the discussion of Virginia homeschool issues. The views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of Home Educators Association of Virginia.

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Submission Deadlines:

Fall 2004—September 15 • Winter 2005—December 15 • Spring 2005—March 1 • Summer 2005—June 15

On the Cover

Timothy Waldron, an ALERT team member, enjoys the ultimate field trip: a visit to HEAV’s 21st Annual State Convention & Educational Fair! For the last few years, the ALERT team has graciously volunteered to serve at the convention. Timothy is the son of Bill and Cari Waldron.

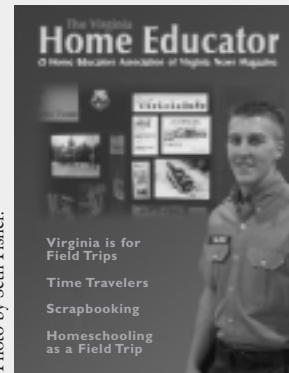


Photo by Seth Fisher.

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LETTERS

THANKS TO HEAV

From the hearts of homeschoolers everywhere, THANK YOU for all of your constant work and efforts to help us! God bless you all!

Mary Frances Miller

HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA BILL, HB 675

I am having problems understanding the bill that Governor Warner vetoed. As a homeschooling parent with only a high school diploma and a few years of college, how does this bill affect me? Will I still be able to homeschool my children under the same guidelines as before? I used the option of sending a letter of intent along with a curriculum that met the Standards of Learning. Will I still be able to do this now?

Ramona Edwards, Richmond

Thank you for your questions. You are not alone. Unfortunately, some misinformation has been disseminated by the media, creating concerns like yours.

Let me be clear. The homeschool law did not change. Anyone may homeschool in Virginia, so long as you comply with the law. The bill to which you are referring would have improved the oversight the state has over homeschooling parents who have a high school diploma. While the General Assembly passed the bill, the governor vetoed the bill. Therefore, nothing has changed in the homeschooling statute.

You may continue homeschooling just as you always have.

Joe Guarino, Director of Government Affairs

LICENSE PLATE SUCCEEDS!

Dear Virginia Homeschoolers,

Yes! You did it! Virginia will have the first homeschool license plate in the nation! We exceeded our goal and received more than 500 applications.

HEAV hand-delivered the applications and check for our "Education Begins at Home" license plate to the Richmond Department of Motor Vehicles in July. The plate now begins the development process with DMV and should be ready by October.

Until the plate is ready, we are unable to accept any more applications. We are sorry if you were unable to get through to our office with a fax—amazingly, we received more than 200 faxed applications! However, all is not lost! Once the development process is complete, you will easily be able to order the plate online or through your local DMV office.

Want to know about all the latest resources and event happenings? Sign up for the FREE HEAV Update, a weekly e-news letter, at www.heav.org

Our thanks go to everyone who participated in this project. And a special thank you to Delegate Bob Marshall (R-Manassas) who patroned our license plate bill two years ago. Much appreciation also goes to our dedicated volunteers and office staff who checked and rechecked each application. They worked many hours during the last week verifying the application information through phone calls and e-mails and preparing the information for DMV.

We're grateful for your response and will keep you posted with information as the plate is developed.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Yvonne Bunn, HEAV Executive Director

Do you have comments about the magazine's themes? Articles? Anything HEAV is doing? We'd like to hear from you! Write to us at editor@heav.org

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VIRGINIA KIDS DID IT!

Henrico County 4-H had two teams that qualified and competed at the State LifeSmarts competition at Virginia Commonwealth University in March. More than a hundred students took the on-line qualifying test and thirteen teams competed; the Henrico 4-H Titans placed second in the competition!



The Henrico 4-H Titans team members from left to right: Katrina Larson, John Cummings, Matthew Vinson, Jordan Anderson, and Coach Karie Dawkins.

LifeSmarts (the ultimate consumer challenge) is a Jeopardy-like competition about consumer rights and information. For more information, go to www.lifesmarts.org



The second Henrico 4-H team: Briana Dawkins, Coach Tresa Watson, Brandi Layton, Christi Spark, Josh Clark, Coach Ann Spark, and Jordan Watson.

Congratulations to two teams of homeschoolers who won top honors at the *Eastern Nazarene Invitational Bible Quizzing* meet, held in May in Harrisonburg. Teams came from New England, the Philadelphia area, and the Washington DC area, as well as from Virginia. Children's Bible Quizzing is a Bible-study program sponsored by Church of the Nazarene for children in grades 1-6. Churches from other denominations may also participate. This school year, participants studied the book of Exodus.

Winning first place was a team from the Lynchburg area that included **Chelsea Migner, Rayna Migner, Adam Putney, Emily Spradlin, and Gabriella Taylor**. Coming in second place was a team from the Harrisonburg area that included **Katherine Guy, Nicholas Guy, Rachel Lam, Rachel Towns, and Cassandra Weekly**. In addition, Chelsea Migner won the First Place Individual Award with three perfect rounds and a score of 300 points. Rachel Lam received the Third Place Individual Award with a score of 275 points. All praise and thanks goes to God for these kids learning His Word so well.

For more information about Children's Bible Quizzing, visit <http://nazarene.org/ssm/children/programs/quizz/>

Congratulations to the Augusta County 4-H Homeschool Envirothon Team for winning first place in the state after a

grueling day of taking written or oral tests on Soils, Aquatics, Forestry, Wildlife, and Natural Resources in Urban Development. They also had to give a 20-minute presentation. The hours of studying and field-work really paid off.

The event was held May 16 and 17, at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, and the homeschool team placed first among many teams from all over the state. The 4-H homeschool team will now compete at the national level in West Virginia.

The Envirothon Team members are: **Jill Bourgeois, Lee Kelley, Ryan Bourgeois, Josh Salatin, and Nate Salatin**. Alternates are **Leigh Robacker, Shayne Robacker, and Juliana Heerschap**.

For information on all the 4-H programs, go to www.4h.org.

Congratulations to **Victoria Landrum** (King William), who won first place in the Patriot's Pen Contest for middle-school students at the King William VFW Post for her essay on "My Dream for America." Victoria also won first place at the regional VFW competition, receiving \$300 as a prize. After she was asked to read her essay at a Memorial Day Service at the King William VFW post, she received another \$100 and a certificate.



Congratulations to **Eric Lansing** of Dinwiddie, who won first place in the Lincoln-Douglas Debate in the Pennsylvania Open NCFCA Debate Tournament in April.



There were more than 150 debate/public-speaking competitors from across the United States. This win qualified him to compete at the national level in June. He also will receive a scholarship to Patrick Henry College. For information on debate, go to www.ncfca.org.

Congratulations to **Nicolette Mann**, a fourth grader from Christiansburg, who has been chosen as a national finalist in the 2004 Craftsman/National Science Teachers Association Awards Program. This competition requires the student to combine her creativity and imagination with science to invent a tool that can solve an everyday problem. Nicolette's invention, "Piano Pedals for Young Beginners," fits over the existing pedals on a piano to extend their height, enabling a young pianist to easily reach them. Her inspiration was her younger brother, Jared, who takes piano lessons with her. Her invention was selected from

(continued on page 21)

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Yvonne Bunn



When my children would say, "Do we have to do school today?" I knew it was time to consider a field trip.

Field trips are a highlight of the school year for most homeschool students. They offer a break in the

daily routine and give an opportunity for hands-on experiences related to learning. They can be frequent and they can be very spontaneous! Parents can make it happen in the backyard or at a park or museum across town. Whether just with your family or with a support group, field trips provide up-close, hands-on opportunities to make learning memorable and fun!

Local support groups are a great source for organized field trips, and we suggest you contact your local group for more information. HEAV also works to arrange statewide field trips that will benefit all homeschoolers. Many Virginia homeschoolers—both HEAV members and non-members—look forward to participating on trips with other families throughout the state. HEAV plans regular events such as Day at the Capitol, theme park days, history tours, and an annual Homeschool Day at the State Fair.

Day at the Capitol gives students an opportunity to learn about Virginia state government. This February event is great for support groups, as well as individual families. Tours of the Capitol building and grounds provide a wonderful historical backdrop for learning how laws are made. Observing the legislative session first-hand, hearing political ideas debated, and watching bills succeed or fail provides an unforgettable experience for students. Families often have the opportunity to personally meet their legislators. Textbook learning comes alive! Free materials, games, classes, and a scavenger hunt make this a trip long to be remembered. Often both parents and students say they come away with a new interest in government.

For a fun-filled day in the spring (usually April or May), join other homeschoolers for special discount days at theme parks such as **Busch Gardens**, **Six Flags**, and **Paramount's Kings Dominion**. HEAV plans these events with the theme parks to get the best rates for homeschooling families. Park officials will often include special educational programs to enhance learning. Some even bring in special homeschool speakers for the parents. (This is a great opportunity to sit down and rest!)

Virginia's rich history is highlighted in special programs coordinated for homeschoolers by HEAV in **Jamestown**, **Yorktown**, and **Williamsburg**. A hands-on history program will be offered September 27-29, at the Jamestown Settlement, a museum of 17th-century Virginia, and the Yorktown Victory Center, a museum of the American Revolution. Classroom components will be followed by a

guided tour of the interpretive areas for students and their families. These include a re-created Powhatan Indian village, the 1607 ships, and the colonial fort at Jamestown, as well as a re-created Continental Army encampment and a 1780's farm in Yorktown.

The **Virginia State Fair** is a great kickoff for fall. It offers opportunities to view items produced in Virginia, and for homeschoolers to showcase their crafts and baked goods. Demonstrations, amusement rides, and contests make this a great field trip. HEAV has worked with State Fair officials to set Monday, September 27, as **Homeschool Day at the State Fair**. Discount tickets for children three years old and up are \$7.50. Parents receive one free adult ticket for every eight student tickets purchased together. Additional adult tickets must be ordered separately from the State Fair. For the first time this year, we expect to offer State Fair ticket purchases for children on the HEAV website.

We're always looking for new ways to serve Virginia's homeschoolers. If you have a field trip suggestion for an event that a large number of homeschoolers might be interested in attending, give us a call. We'll be glad to pursue it. And remember, many local events are listed in our weekly Updates. If you don't get them, go to our website at www.heav.org and sign up. They're free! Happy trails to you! ☺

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Homeschooling Still A Success Regardless Of Governor's Veto

Following is an abbreviated version of the statement given by Joe Guarino, director of government affairs, at the press conference held by HEAV the Monday after Gov. Mark Warner vetoed HB 675, the Homeschool High School Diploma Bill. For a complete version, go to HEAV's Web site, www.heav.org.

Last Friday, homeschoolers in Virginia were given the high distinction of being one of only seven groups to have their bill vetoed by Governor Mark Warner this session. Even though both houses voted overwhelmingly in favor of the Homeschool High School Diploma bill—60-40 in the House and 25-15 in the Senate—Governor Warner ignored the facts and rejected the bill.

When all students take nationally normed standardized tests, the results give us an apples-to-apples comparison of the various forms of education in this country. On average, homeschoolers score 15 to 35 percentile points higher on these tests than public school students, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress and the U.S. Department of Education. What's remarkable about this success is that it's being done mostly by parents who do not have a bachelor's degree or a teaching certificate.

Across the country, the consistently positive achievements of homeschooling have led other legislatures and governors to agree that we should focus on the results, not the qualifications of the parents. Over the past ten years, the trend has been to do away with qualifications. Nine states use the high school diploma as a qualification. However, the other 40 states use no barrier to homeschool. By vetoing the bill, Warner leaves Virginia as the last state to use a college degree as a threshold to homeschool.

Twenty years ago, Virginia's homeschool statute was enacted, providing four options for parents to homeschool. First, if they had a baccalaureate degree, they could homeschool. If they didn't have that but had a teaching certificate, they could homeschool. If they had neither of these, then the third option was for a parent to choose from a list of state-approved curricula. If that were unsatisfactory to a parent, then he had a fourth option: He could provide curricula which, in the judgment of the local superintendent, met the math and language arts requirements of the Standards of Learning.

The difficulty with the fourth option was that local school divisions were applying this option unevenly. Some parents had their curricula accepted while others

offering the same curricula didn't. So, when the results of homeschooling are stellar, why should parents with a high school diploma receive any more scrutiny than parents with a college degree? Why should there be any discrimination between these parents when both are producing results better than teachers in the public schools who have a college degree and teaching certification?

To alleviate this injustice, HEAV, along with the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA), decided to ask the General Assembly to level the playing field—to end the discrimination—by allowing parents with a high school diploma to have the same oversight by the Commonwealth as parents with a college degree. We approached Delegate Robert Bell to patron our bill.

The bill passed the Senate March 1. The next day, it was reported in the *Virginian Pilot* that the governor “strongly opposed” the bill. So HEAV, HSLDA, and their members began contacting the governor, asking him to sign it.

As the lobbyist for HEAV, I began my attempts to meet with the governor directly. The closest I got was his special assistant for education policy, Anna Healy. It was in my conversations with her that I discovered that Warner's staff and the Secretary of Education's staff had never worked on homeschooling issues before this bill came across their desks.

By a week before the reconvened session in mid April, we had learned that Warner intended to amend the bill rather than vetoing it or doing nothing to it. We asked several times to be part of the amendment process, especially considering we knew he did not have any experts advising him. Warner amended the bill without consulting Delegate Bell or HEAV.

When the amendment reached the House of Delegates, they rejected it 62-37.

With the bill now back before the governor, we again went to work seeking an audience with him, yet to no avail. Though he wouldn't meet with Delegate Bell or HEAV, several others did speak with him about the bill. As late as early May, Warner had shared with Senator Russell Potts, chairman of the Senate Education and Health Committee, that he was still “confused” about issues relating to the bill. Potts had met with Warner to ask him to sign the bill. He joined Lieutenant Governor Timothy Kaine and Senator Edward Houck, both Democrats, who had also personally asked Warner to sign it. Yet Warner relied on his staff's limited research and anecdotal evidence to sway his decision. ☹

HEAV CONVENTION



Photos by Seth Fisher, Liz Mitchell, and Angela Bartec.

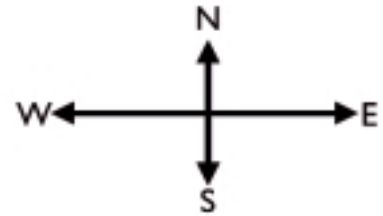
WOW! WHAT A YEAR: CONVENTION STATISTICS

Total Convention Attendance: 7,908

(Includes EVERYBODY! Graduates, guests, speakers, exhibitors, etc.)

Total Registered:	5,317	Used Curriculum Sale	
Teens:	613	Shoppers:	2,674
Children:	769	Sellers:	324
Grandparents:	121	Items for Sale	23,297
Graduates:	182	Items Sold:	14,433
Scholarships Given:	\$4,523		

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Virginia is for...Field Trips *Joy Hayden*

In the early years, field trips were a staple of our homeschool diet, but as time wore on and I wore out, the number of field trips we went on diminished. Recently the need to take school on the road and expand our horizons has been re-awakened in me.

Have you considered all that our great state has to offer? With the ocean and the mountains, its place in Colonial and Civil War history, and its proximity to the nation's capital, you do not need to look far to find something intriguing and worthwhile.

Some of the following field trips are long-standing favorites, and others are a little more off the beaten track. Hopefully, you will find some treasures among the list.

Remember, a good field trip begins with an interest in the topic or activity. If the interest does not already exist, perhaps you could stir it up with a good unit study beforehand!

NATURE-LOVER FIELD TRIPS:

Virginia Creeper Trail in Abingdon. This is a bike path on an old, narrow-gauge railway. Much of it is shaded and there is a gentle downhill grade so you can coast most of the way. It is very picturesque as you ride across trestles, over streams, and through the Jefferson National Forest. It is 33.4 miles long but you can choose to do just a section of it. You may rent bikes and arrange for a shuttle to pick you up at your ending point. www.vacrepertrailbikeshop.com/index.html or www.vacrepertrail.org.

Sandy Bottom Nature Park in Hampton. It's hard to believe that this land was once devastated by mining pits. It has now been reclaimed and there are 456 acres devoted to environmental and wildlife studies. The park has a nature facility, biking and hiking trails, and a horse trail too (bring your own horse!). You can go fishing, picnicking, and visit the Wildlife Center or gardens. The Nature Center offers many programs, but you need to make reservations. To learn more about Sandy Bottom Nature Park, or to see their program list, visit www.dawnymo.com/sandybottom, or call 757-825-4657. They are located at 1255 Big Bethel Road in Hampton.

Norfolk Botanical Garden at 6700 Azalea Garden Road in Norfolk. Be sure to bring your camera to this field trip! It is a beautiful place any time of year, with extended hours from April through mid-October. Imagine a three-acre rose garden or 250,000 azaleas! Kids will especially enjoy the butterfly garden and the fish-feeding activities. In addition to walking tours, you

can take a tram, shuttle, or a boat tour (an additional \$3). Bring a picnic lunch, or eat at the restaurant on location. The admission fee is \$6 per adult and \$4 for kids ages 6-16. Group rates are available. Call 757-441-5830 or go to www.norfolkbotanicalgarden.org for more information.

Indian Hollow Stables at Shenandoah River State Park in Front Royal. Enjoy the rolling hills, Shenandoah River, and valley from horseback. There are several packages to choose from: half-hour rides, one-hour rides, and two-hour rides. Special interpretive rides are also available on certain days, when the guide will give a nature lesson as well as a history lesson. For extra-adventurous folks, Indian Hollow Stables also offers a "Saddles and Paddles" ride. This combines horseback riding with rafting or tubing. Children have to be at least ten years old. Be aware that rides are conducted rain or shine (no refunds). This is a pricey field trip, but sure to be a memory-maker. To check out prices, packages, and requirements, go to www.frontroyalcanoe.com.

Virginia State Parks. Go to www.dcr.state.va.us/parks/ to find the park nearest you. Most parks have interpretive programs, hands-on activities, and kids programs. Check at the visitor center or talk to a ranger. Many parks will arrange programs to accommodate you if you let them know what you are interested in. Bring insect repellent and sun screen!

Natural Bridge near Salem. One of the seven natural wonders in the world is right in our backyard. Be prepared to walk a mile and carry some bottled water if the day is hot. Bring your camera because this will make a nice family picture for those Christmas cards! Along the way you will stop at the Monacan Village to watch and learn about the daily life of these Indians 300 years ago. Plan to set aside about one-and-a-half hours total for this trip. www.naturalbridgeva.com/visit

After visiting the Natural Bridge, you may want to take in more beautiful scenery by driving down the Blue Ridge Parkway. Or, for the animal lovers that might accompany you on this trip, you can visit the nearby **Natural Bridge Zoo** (540-291-2420), **Virginia Safari Park** (540-291-3205), or **Virginia Horse Center** (540-464-2950).

SCIENCE FIELD TRIPS:

Morefield Mine in Amelia County, is about 45 minutes west of Richmond. It is the only operating gem mine in Virginia. You will have a fun, dirty time digging in the dumps and rinsing the

Box Tops for Education

HEAV would like to thank everyone who participated with us in the Box Tops for Education Program in 2003-04. Of all of the schools in Virginia that participated in the Box Tops for Education Program, HEAV ranked ninth in earnings.

We invite everyone to participate with us again in the 2004-05 school year. Every support group or family that sends at least 100 Box Tops will receive a check from HEAV for half of the value of their Box Tops. The other half goes to support HEAV. Anyone sending Box Tops may also opt to donate the full value

of their Box Tops to HEAV. The next due date for submitting your Box Tops to HEAV is **October 15, 2004**. Box Tops information and submission forms will be available at www.heav.org starting in September. Also, if you like to shop on-line, you may be able to help support HEAV by shopping in the Box Tops Marketplace. For more information on the Box Tops for Education program, go to www.boxtops4education.com, or email your questions about participating with HEAV to Boxtops@heav.org. ☺

gems in the nearby sluice. This mine offers a nice variety of crystals, including garnet, topaz, columbite, and mica. The most common stone, though, is amazonite—a soft to deep blue-green colored stone. Anyone who likes gems or rocks needs to know about this place! www.toteshows.com/morefield.

Virginia Marine Science Museum in Virginia Beach wins homeschooler Nancy Loughin's "Best Field Trip in the State" award. Nancy, a veteran field tripper, says it is well worth the drive. Your kids will love the touch tanks where they can touch stingrays, crabs, and starfish. In addition to whales, sharks, and sea turtles in the aquarium, there is an estuary outside with native birds and bald eagles. The museum sponsors whale-watching trips in the winter and dolphin-sighting trips in the spring and summer. Wear comfortable shoes...you don't want to have to leave early because of tired feet! There is a cafeteria on the premises, so don't worry about lunch. If you plan to visit, check the website to see what programs are scheduled and make reservations for them. You will want to spend four or five hours here. It will cost \$10.95 for adults and \$6.95 for children, and for an extra fee you can take in an IMAX film. www.vmsm.com

Virginia Fisheries are in many counties including: Campbell, King and Queen, Smyth, Warren, Nelson, Bath, Wythe, and Craig. Five of the hatcheries are cold-water and raise trout. Four hatcheries are warm-water so you will see pike, bass, catfish, or other warm-water fish. The best time of year to visit the warm-water hatcheries is April through June or in the fall. Even if you aren't an avid fisherman, it is fascinating to learn about the life-cycle of these fish. To find out more about the fishery nearest you, go to www.dgif.state.va.us/fishing/fish_stocking/hatcheries. This website will also provide you with a contact name, address, and phone number. I toured a fishery in first grade and I still remember how interesting it was—Stinky but fun!

Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center in Chantilly. This is the companion site to the National Air and Space Museum. Newly opened, it is located on the property of Dulles International Airport. Homeschooler Beth LaRose likes the fact that the museum is easy to get to and gives you the Air-and-Space experience without going into D.C. It is nicely laid out with an education room for classes or special school programs. Here you can see the space shuttle Enterprise, and over 80 aircraft, including the Enola Gay and a stealth fighter, among other things. Eventually it will house over 200 aircraft, 135 spacecraft, and other space artifacts. Inside the hangar you will see three levels of aircraft—one on the floor and two levels suspended from the ceiling! It has a definite "WOW" factor.

The museum is open from 10 am to 5:30 pm every day. Admission is free, but be prepared—parking is \$12.00! For a fee, you may watch an IMAX film or take a flight simulator ride. Plan to spend several hours here. You'll be glad there are eating accommodations. As a bonus, you can enjoy watching the takeoffs and landings at Dulles Airport. The Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center is located at 14390 Air and Space Museum Parkway, Chantilly. Phone: 202-357-2700

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CHECK-LIST FOR A SUCCESSFUL FIELD TRIP *Joy Hayden*

Planning considerations

Take into consideration your child's age, abilities, and interests, when choosing your field trip. You may want to offer two or three places and let your child make the final choice. If possible, let your child help make the plans.

If going in a group, make sure there is adequate supervision. Some sites will have chaperon-to-student ratios that must be met. When taking a group, make sure you have permission slips for each child.

For any field trip you should find out:

- Admission prices, group rates, parking fees
- Minimum and maximum group sizes
- Ages allowed or recommended
- Availability of picnic or eating facilities
- Availability of self-guided tours or guided tours (extra expense?)
- Special seasonal activities or programs
- Dates open, hours of operation, holiday closings

If your field trip required reservations, always call to confirm them.

Learn something about the subject matter before going—whether it's a short unit study, reading a storybook, or a conversation with grandpa!

Traveling considerations:

Getting there is half the fun! So make sure you have some games, music, snacks or treats to make the trip enjoyable. Try to get the children to come up with some questions they would like answered on this field trip.

If you are taking a group, make sure you have planned for enough drivers—and a seatbelt for every person. Check your oil and gas up before heading out. And don't forget to check the weather forecast.

If you are traveling to a heavily populated area like Northern Virginia or Richmond, keep in mind that traffic will be heavy at certain times of the day.

Keep a first-aid kit in your car. Someone always needs a Band-aid or Tylenol! You may want to have allergy medicine on hand in case of bee stings, hayfever, or other allergy related situations. I also like to keep wipes in the car.

Have a map on hand. Remember your cell phone.

Other Considerations:

When you arrive, review proper conduct and expectations with your children.

Make sure you have plans for lunch or snacks if the field trip is lengthy. Children get grumpy and distracted when they are hungry.

(continued on page 25)

Pocahontas Mine and Museum in Pocahontas. Visit a coal mine where coal used to be hand-loaded into carts. Located in southwest Virginia, this mine opened in 1882 and operated for 73 years. You can visit daily from April through October (10 am – 5 pm). Tours of Mine and Educational Room cost \$6.00 for adults; \$3.50 for children 6-12; Children under 6 are free. The Museum is free. You can also walk through the historic town of Pocahontas and see the old Silver Dollar Saloon, the Company Store, and the old log-cabin schoolhouse. For a small fee you can hire a guide to give you a walking tour of the town. Go to website wwwweb.com/www/pocahontas_mine/ or call 276-945-2134.

The Challenger Space Center in Alexandria is one of the centers founded by the families of the tragic Challenger mission. This trip is only available to groups. The recommended group size is 18 to 30 students. The cost is \$425, but when you divide it among your students, it is fairly reasonable and definitely worth every penny. This is my children's all-time favorite field trip. Prior to attending the session, your group will receive an information packet. There will be some prep work on your part. Given a list of job descriptions, students will have to choose (or be assigned) jobs according to their interests. My daughter was a medical technician, my son was responsible for retrieving a probe, and another son was a communications officer. At the Center, they will simulate a real mission. To see a list of their current school programs, go to <http://launchpad.challenger.org/programs/school/index.html> or call 703-837-5640 for more information. Address: 1250 North Pitt Street, Alexandria. If you are looking for a team-building activity for your group, I recommend this field trip.

Science Museum of Western Virginia at One Market Square, Roanoke. Located on the fourth and fifth floors of the Center of the Square building, the Science Museum offers exhibits, a planetarium, and Mega Dome shows. There are even special homeschool programs. Admission prices vary depending on whether you want to go to the planetarium or Mega Dome. To do it all will cost you \$13 for adults, and \$11 for children (plus tax). To see their schedule for show times, go to www.smwv.org/vindex or call 540-342-5726. Parking is free on Saturday or Sunday. The museum is closed on Mondays.

Belvedere Plantation in Fredericksburg. Programs available for groups only. A minimum of nine people is needed for a group. In any season, there is something to be learned at Belvedere. In the spring they offer strawberry picking; in the fall, pumpkins. Their corn maze opens Labor Day weekend. Call 1-800-641-1212 (VA Toll Free), or 540-371-8494, for a taped message. Or go to www.belvedereplantation.com.

“HOW DO THEY DO THAT?” FIELD TRIPS

Nuclear Power Plant on Route 650 in Surry. Have you ever wanted to know how a nuclear power plant works? Visit the Surry Nuclear Information Center and learn the truths vs. myths of nuclear power, generate your own electricity, and learn about the initial mining of uranium to the final stages of producing electricity. If you would like to bring a group on a field trip, call in advance and they will custom-make a field trip

tailored to your interests. Best of all...it's free! Call 757-357-5410. Occasionally due to homeland security issues, the plant may be closed for tours, so be sure to call ahead. www.dom.com/about/stations/nuclear/surry/snic_print.jsp

Bergey's Dairy Farm in Chesapeake. Got Milk? Or better yet, how do we get our milk? Bergey's Dairy Farm is a real working farm with more than 200 cows as well as chickens, goats, bunnies, and Old Tom Turkey. Watch the feeding and milking of the cows, and see the farmhands clean out the stalls. At the farm store you can buy some of that fresh milk in old-fashioned bottles or better yet, eat some homemade ice cream. Wear shoes and clothes that can get muddy and dirty. Although the farm is open year-round, except on Sundays, plan a visit over Memorial Day weekend for their "Day on the Farm" open house. Enjoy free tours, special events, and music. The farm and dairy store hours vary during the year. For more information, call the office during weekday business hours: 757-482-4711. Located at 2221 Mount Pleasant Road, Chesapeake.

USS Wisconsin in Norfolk. What is it like to live and work on the ultimate warship? Highly recommended by Sally Murray of Dumfries, the USS Wisconsin is a larger-than-life field trip. There is no charge to tour the ship. You will feel extra-patriotic if you time your visit with the return of a naval ship from deployment! To see a map of the ship's tour route and to find out about its hours, go to www.hhrnm.navy.mil/wisconsin.html. If you visit the USS Wisconsin, you will also want to visit the adjacent Nauticus National Maritime Center (www.nauticus.org) Adults are \$9.95 and children are \$7.50.

Thistle Cove Farm in Tazewell. How do you turn the fleece from a sheep into a woolen blanket? At Thistle Cove Farm they raise Shetland, Romney, and Merino sheep, as well as a rare breed of American Curly horses. Sheep-shearing is always done on the third Saturday of April and is open to the public. Families or groups can arrange for a half-hour tour. You'll see and participate in wool-carding and spinning. Dress in grubby clothes and bring a sweater, since the wind often makes it chilly. You are welcome to bring a picnic lunch. Afterwards, you may want to buy woolen blankets or rugs at their farm store. Cost is \$5 per family member; children six and younger are free. Ten percent of all tour proceeds are donated to Heifer International to buy a sheep, goat, or hive of bees for an Appalachian family. Contact Sandra Bennett at 276-988-4121 to arrange a tour. Their website is www.thistlecovefarm.com.

Cocoa Mill Chocolate Company in Lexington is owned by Bob Aimone. Call him to arrange tours at 800-421-6220 or 540-464-8400. Learn how this small company makes their exclusive hand-dipped, hand-decorated chocolates. The Cocoa Mill Chocolate company is located at 115 West Nelson Street, Lexington. You may visit their website at www.cocoamill.com.

Krispy Kreme Factory at 6328 Richmond Highway, Alexandria. Doughnuts are made twice a day—from 6 to 11 in the morning, and at night. The process and equipment are fascinating and there are hot, fresh doughnuts waiting for you at the end of the tour. Call 703-768-0300 to set up a field trip. To take an online field

trip of a Krispy Kreme factory, go to www.howstuffworks.com/krispy-kreme.htm. Unfortunately, the online tour does not smell or taste as good as the real thing! Another good tour in Alexandria is the **Coca-Cola Bottling Plant**.

Route 11 Potato Chips in Middletown, near Winchester. Have you ever wondered how this favorite snack is really made? Route 11 Potato Chips uses only natural ingredients to make their chips. Visitors can watch the "spudmasters" at work, and then sample the chips as soon as they're done. Yummy, hot, and delicious! To see their chip menu, go to www.rt11.com/pages/chip_menu.html. Open to the public on Fridays (10 am - 6 pm) and Saturdays (10 am - 5 pm.) Located on Route 11 south of Winchester in Middletown on Main Street; 540-869-0104.

www.fieldtripfactory.com Use this site to help schedule certain store field trips in your area, such as Petco, Sports Authority, and others. The tour of the Stafford Petco received very high marks from one family. These trips can be scheduled close to home and won't cost a lot of money.

HISTORY FIELD TRIPS:

Gunston Hall in Mason Neck. Home of George Mason, author of the Virginia Declaration of Rights. Tour the mansion and the beautiful gardens. Contact Gunston Hall prior to visiting and they will send you tons of information. A highly recommended field trip. Go to www.gunstonhall.org for more information, programs, and a discount coupon for \$1 off of the admission. Adults: \$8; Students: \$4. Open daily 9:30 am to 5 pm.

Frontier Culture Museum in Staunton near I-64 and I-81. Learn about the cultures of four different 1800's farms—German, Scotch-Irish, American, and English—and their traditions, their food, and their farming methods. Give yourself two and a half hours to see the exhibits. There are vending machines for snacks and drinks, but bring your own bag lunch. Open daily from 9 am to 5 pm, but you want to visit in nice weather. Adults cost \$10, children ages 6-12 cost \$6, and students ages 13-18 cost \$9. There are special educational tours and rates for groups. Call 540-332-7850 for reservations. See www.frontiermuseum.org for pictures and information.

Museum of the Confederacy located at 12th and Clay Streets in Richmond. Several folks with whom I talked consider this the best Civil War museum in the state. Over 15,000 items are on display including Mosby's sword. Open Monday through Saturday, 10 am to 5 pm; and Sundays, 12 pm to 5 pm. Admission is \$7 for adults and \$3 for children. (www.moc.org) For a couple of dollars more you can also get a tour of the White House of the Confederacy. According to the Washington Post, this mansion "is a meticulously restored neoclassical masterpiece that, in terms of quality, historical associations, and authenticity, probably is second only to Mount Vernon among restorations of historic American dwellings."

Booker T. Washington National Monument in Franklin County. (www.nps.gov/bowa/rangers.html) Open year round from 9 am to 5 pm. Admission is free, and special 45-minute programs are available if you call in advance. You will want to plan to stay for an hour or two to see the exhibits and video, and visit the

bookstore. You can also hike the area trails. Booker T. Washington was born a slave on this tobacco farm. Your visit will explain what life was like in the slave era. 12130 Booker T. Washington Highway, Hardy; 540-721-2094

Presidents' Homes. Virginia is the birth-state of eight presidents. Seven of them have homes in Virginia. (Zachary Taylor was born in Orange County, but there is no house to visit) Have you visited the homes of the Virginian presidents?

The homes includes:

- George Washington's **Mount Vernon** in Mount Vernon;
- George Washington's birthplace, **Popes Creek**, in Westmoreland County;
- Thomas Jefferson's **Monticello** in Charlottesville;
- Thomas Jefferson's **Poplar Forest** near Lynchburg;
- James Madison's **Montpelier** in Orange County;
- James Monroe's **Ash Lawn** in Charlottesville;
- William Henry Harrison's **Berkeley Plantation** in Charles City;
- John Tyler's **Sherwood Forest** in Charles City; and
- Woodrow Wilson's **Manse** in Staunton.

Arlington Cemetery in Arlington. First, stop at the Visitors Center and get a map. You will want to see the Eternal Flame at Presidents Kennedy's grave and visit the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Here you can watch the changing of the guard ceremony every hour from October through March, and every half-hour from April through September. Before you

visit, read the information about ceremonies on their website: www.arlingtoncemetery.org. so you'll know the difference between a ruffle and a flourish, and the origin of the 21-gun salute. It's also interesting to read about the training of the guards who stand at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. For hours and parking, see their website or call 703-607-8000.

Agecroft Hall, Richmond, is an actual 15th century Tudor estate on the James River. When it fell into disrepair in England, it was sold at auction, dismantled, crated, and shipped across the Atlantic, and then painstakingly reassembled. The museum and gardens are open year-round, Tuesday-Saturday, 10 am.-4 pm.; Sunday 12:30-5 pm. They are closed Mondays and national holidays. There is an admission charge, which covers an introductory film and guided tour of the museum. Garden tours are self-guided. There is reduced admission for seniors, children, and students. Group tours and education tours may be scheduled by appointment. Agecroft Hall and Gardens are located in Windsor Farms, not far from downtown Richmond and interstate highways. For more information, go to www.agecrofthall.com.

FINE-ARTS FIELD TRIPS:

Belmont Estate, The Gari Melchers Estate and Memorial Gallery in Stafford County. "The best trip I've had in awhile," says homeschool mom, Katie Jay. "I brought a small group and they were treated to a wonderful tour, including Melchers' studio, which was fascinating." Located near Fredericksburg, the estate is the former residence of the American figure painter Gari Melchers (1860-1932). The museum consists of the artist's home, studio, and gardens. The stone studio and galleries are home to the largest collection of Melchers' works anywhere. Visit www.mwc.edu/belm. All group tours must be arranged in advance by calling 540-654-1851, or emailing Nancy Heyward, education coordinator at nheyward@mwc.edu.

WPA Murals. There are 27 post offices in Virginia that house WPA murals. WPA (Work Projects Administration) was a program established by Franklin Roosevelt during the depression. It was not only an attempt to employ out-of-work artists, but to show that art could enrich the everyday lives of ordinary people, not just the upper-class. Murals exist in Hopewell, Petersburg (2), AltaVista, Emporia, Chatham, and Arlington. Can you find the rest?

Millionaire's Row in Danville. If you appreciate architecture, you will want to drive or walk down Millionaire's Row where you can enjoy eight blocks of Victorian and Edwardian architecture. Included are five churches, giving Danville the nickname "The City of Churches." For more information about the Old West End Historic District and Millionaires Row, contact the Danville Area Chamber of Commerce.

Shenandoah Shakespeare's Education Center in Staunton takes the fear out of Shakespeare's plays. Actor-led show tours combine lecture and performance in an educational but entertaining look at Shakespearean theatre. Enjoy a lesson about England's first indoor theatre, do a little performing, and understand how staging conditions of 17th-century London

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influenced the works of Shakespeare. Tours last approximately one hour and are offered Monday through Friday at 11 am or 2 pm. (Wednesday only has a 2 pm tour.) Other programs and matinee information is available at their website: www.ishakespeare.com They are located at 10 South Market Street, Staunton. 877-MUCH-ADO.

Torpedo Factory Art Center in Alexandria. The largest and most successful visual-arts center in the country, the Torpedo Factory has 84 working studios and six galleries. At one time, the building really was a torpedo factory, but has been renovated, and is visited by over 800,000 people each year. During your visit, you can meet some of the artists and watch them work. You can view different media being used: pottery, stained glass, photography, printmaking, to name a few. To see the floor plan identifying the different media, go to www.torpedofactory.org. For information about self-guided and docent-led tours, call the Artists' Association office at 703-838-4565, ext. 6; or contact them by email at tours@torpedofactory.org.

O. Winston Link Museum in Roanoke. O. Winston Link was a renowned photographer who documented the last mainline steam railroad in America, the Norfolk and Western, from 1955 to 1960. It is appropriate that the museum is housed in a restored Norfolk and Western passenger station. The Museum houses 190 of Link's signed prints and 85 estate prints. For hours and admission prices go to www.linkmuseum.org/admissions. Notice that there are some joint-ticket offers with the History Museum and the Virginia Museum of Transportation.

EVENTS:

Virginia State Fair in Richmond. Scheduled for September 23 - October 3. What better way to get the "big picture" of our great state? There are many school tours available, see www.statefair.com/school_tours.asp# for programs. **Homeschool Day** will be September 27 (see page 7). Check www.heav.org or www.statefair.com/tour_schedule.asp for updates. Activities include agricultural and animal exhibits, the heritage area, technology center, and arts and crafts. Of course, there's my favorite—the Rodeo! Check the Internet for updates on ticket prices and events.

Waterford Fair in Waterford, is held the first week of October every year. This year it will be October 1-3, from 10 am to 5 pm. During this three-day festival you can learn traditional crafts, tour historic homes, and watch military re-enactments while enjoying music, dance, and good food. Tickets are \$13 per person (per day) in advance and \$15 at the door. Children under 12 are free. Call the Waterford Foundation office (540-882-3018) to purchase your tickets.

Market Days at Claude Moore Farm in McLean. Held on the third weekend of May, July, and October. Claude Moore Farm is a colonial farm that can be visited Wednesday through Sunday from April to December. Three times each year, the farm holds its Market Days. There are activities for the kids and craftsmen, spinners and dyers, tradesmen, a "colonial" doctor, and even the militia to see! Foods and wares can be purchased. To view all the

activities, go to www.1771.org/market_fair. There is a free pass on this website also, good for admission of up to six people.

The Pony Swim at Chincoteague is held on the last Wednesday and Thursday of July. Read *Misty of Chincoteague* by Marguerite Henry before going! www.chincoteague.com/pony/ponies.

"Camp In" at Science Museum of Virginia in Richmond. Grab your friends and have a sleepover at the Science Museum. You'll be treated to interesting workshops, an IMAX show, a planetarium show, science theater, and opportunities to explore the museum's exhibits. The Museum provides evening and breakfast snacks and souvenirs. For a sample "Camp In" schedule, go to www.smv.org/prog/CampInSMV02. "Camp In" is recommended for grades 1-6. Pre-registration is required. The cost is \$36 per child; \$18 per adult chaperon. Additional adults are \$36. For every six children, one adult chaperon is required. Call 804-864-1436 to register your group, or e-mail campin@smv.org if you have questions.


Appomattox Court House in Appomattox. Celebrate the 140th anniversary of the reuniting of our country! Special events planned for April 8-10, 2005. Mark your calendars now. Check www.appomattox.com for updates in the coming months. ☺

A big thanks to friends and "strangers" who contributed ideas for this article. Special thanks to Helen Johnson and Darlene Levy for their abundant lists. Also, some ideas were obtained from Virginia—Off the Beaten Path by Judy Colbert.

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- They want their sons to have opportunities to develop and demonstrate leadership skills, to interact with high-quality peers, and to learn the value of teamwork and fair play.
- Within a safe, structured environment, they want their sons to have access to the finest athletic facilities and to participate in choir, band and other extracurricular activities, clubs, and organizations like the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.
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Becoming a Time Traveler

Lindsey Smith

Let's face it. If your kids are like me, they might think that going to different museums and spending lots of time at each display can get pretty boring. Well, that might be the case until you join the TimeTravelers program.

Is there a museum or historic site you've wanted to see? Wait! Get your TimeTravelers passport first so that your children can get rewarded for their visit.

Developed in the fall of 1995 when Governor George Allen called on Virginians to work together to ensure a vital future for the Commonwealth by promoting the educational, cultural, and economic contributions of our historic resources, institutions, and organizations, the TimeTravelers program is a great incentive to get out and about.

TimeTravelers offers students rewards and a sense of continuing adventure and accomplishment. Students are encouraged to explore the many exciting events and the culture in the history of America that took place right here in Virginia. As they travel back in time—years or even centuries—they learn about the people, places, and events that have shaped our world today.

There are more than 300 museums and sites to choose from, with many special events going on at a place near you! TimeTravelers includes art, science,

and children's museums; botanical gardens; state parks; and even wildlife areas. There is definitely something for every taste! TimeTravelers has activities posted on their website far in advance so you can easily plan ahead. Each year more than 3,000 children in grades kindergarten through 12 visit TimeTravelers museums.

The program works like this: First, you can either pick up a passport from a local public place (including libraries, participating TimeTravelers sites, visitor centers, and Ukrop's Customer Information Centers), or you can download and print it from the TimeTravelers website (www.timetravelers.org/passport.html). Then at each participating museum, historic site, or event, you get your passport stamped.

And the incentive to participate in this program? The stamps themselves are fun, but when you have stamps from six different sites, you mail TimeTravelers a photocopy of your completed passport and they will mail you a signed certificate stating that you are an official TimeTraveler. For a small fee, they can also send you an official TimeTravelers T-shirt designed for that year. Of course, don't forget to keep your original passport with your collection of unique stamps from the places you visit. That will look great in your scrapbook!

(continued on page 25)

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Scrapbooking

Allison Brochu

You've just spent two weeks visiting Virginia's Civil War battlefields. Or you've just returned from simulating a space mission in Alexandria. Maybe you've just finished a special visit to Chincoteague. You've lugged home countless rolls of film, several stacks of brochures, and the journal of your impressions of the trip. Now what?

To answer that, start with the most basic question, "Why?" Why do you want to save all these memories of this trip? Once you know why, the next question is "How do I keep all this stuff so that it'll be interesting to look at?"

There are several reasons why we take photos and why we collect brochures and other memorabilia:

- to remember special times
- to remember special people
- to remember special stories

Your photos help tell stories. They tell about the joys, the beauty, the laughter, and the tears that fill your life. Your stories are gifts to share with your family, your friends, and future generations. Long after we're gone, our photo albums and journals remain. They show future generations what it was like to live in the early 2000's: how we schooled, how we traveled; how we spent our vacations and free time; and what the world looked like while we were on it. So, not only do your albums bring pleasure to you and your family now, they also form an important legacy of the way we lived.

The complete story of your trip is contained in the pictures you took, the memorabilia you collected and the stories you saved. A photo is just a piece of paper if it doesn't have the story that goes with it. The stories bring your photos to life and add depth to your collection of memorabilia.

THE RIGHT TOOLS

All photos and paper will eventually age and deteriorate. It's the nature of the composition of the paper and the way it's produced. It's generally accepted that a photo can last up to 150 years with proper care, but some photo albums and journals actually accelerate the deteriora-

tion process. The best choice for minimizing photo deterioration is an album specifically tested for photo safety.

Creative Memories (www.CreativeMemories.com) is a company that focuses exclusively on photo-safe albums and adhesives. Photo-album pages that are acid-free, lignin-free and buffered are the safest for storing photos. Creative Memories paper has a pH between 7.0 and 9.5, which keeps paper from turning brittle and brown. Buffered album pages ensure that any acid in the air or on any memorabilia doesn't travel to the photos and accelerate aging.


Whatever double-sided sticky stuff you use to put your pictures into your album can also affect its deterioration rate. You want adhesives that will last 150 years and won't damage the photos and brochures in your album.

The ink you use to record your memories is also important. Generally, ballpoint pen ink is acidic and can eat through paper, and it fades over time. It's a waste of your time to record your special impressions of your trip only to have them fade in 10 years! Ordinary pens and pencils can leave permanent indentations and cracks in photos. You want a photo-labeling pencil to write on the backs of your photos and you want an acid-free, fade-proof, waterproof pen to record your stories.

GETTING ORGANIZED

Your album will be so much easier to put together if you do a little bit on it every day of your trip. Before you go, make yourself some "journal boxes" out of acid-free, lignin-free paper. Cut them into pieces approximately the size of an index card. (A sheet of 10" x 12" lined photo mounting paper can be cut into eight pieces of 3" x 5") Keep this stack of paper, along with an acid-free pen, handy while you travel.

It only takes a few minutes to jot down your impressions. You can record your thoughts while waiting in line, while waiting for a bus, or while riding a train. Encourage children to record their thoughts and impressions as well. If they're too young to write, ask them to dictate to you. Over time your albums will reflect your children's growing writing abilities.

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Remember to include stories that may not have an accompanying photo. You might not have a picture of your daughter's face at her first glimpse of Luray Caverns, but the moment was special nonetheless and deserves a place in your album.

Bring along a file organizer to keep your memorabilia and journal boxes together. For example, you can group them by event, by day, by location. Memorabilia may include postcards, brochures, autographs, menus, and your plastic room key—anything that helps you remember special things from your trip can be saved in your album. When you get home and get your photos developed, your file folder system will help you determine what goes together. All of your journal boxes will provide the details to go with the pictures and memorabilia. It shouldn't take very long at all to assemble your album and relive that special trip.

ASSEMBLING YOUR ALBUM

OK, you've got a stack of photos, a stack of memorabilia, and a stack of journal boxes. Now what? Now you use these seven basic steps to showcase the most important elements—your photos and your words.

1. Choose your best photographs. Eliminate the duplicate and blurry photos.
2. Crop your photos. You may trim away excess sky and scenery. Cropping highlights the most important part of the photo and lets you fit more photos on a page.
3. Cluster photos and create an eyeline. Choose a photo to be the center piece of your page. Placing it off center results in a pleasing layout. An eyeline is a dominant margin that stands out on your page. It serves to organize the pictures into an interesting yet orderly layout. To create an eyeline, cluster photos vertically or horizontally on the page. An eyeline puts a break in the page and it adds to its visual organization.
4. Enhance your page with some colored paper. The paper shouldn't overwhelm your photos.
5. Add a title block. A title immediately identifies the subject and helps draw the viewer into the page and photo stories.
6. Place your journal boxes and/or journal directly onto the page. Remember, a page without journaling is like a library without books!

Add enhancing touches. Draw straight or decorative lines around the border of a page or photo. Cluster stickers in corners. Using "sticker restraint" will enhance your photos, yet won't overwhelm them. The focus should be on the pictures and the stories, not the decorations.

SPECIAL TIMES

No matter what you did, where you went, or what you saw, your trip was made up of thousands of special moments, special memories, and special stories. With a little bit of advance planning and organization you can relive your trip for years and years to come. ∞

Allison Brochu plans and commemorates her field trips from her home in Sterling, Virginia. She is a Creative Memories consultant. You may contact her at 703-404-4064 or www.creative-memories.com/AllisonBrochu.

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HOMESCHOOLING: THE ULTIMATE FIELD TRIP

Dr. Joel Orr



The combination of the anticipated and the unanticipated, what you planned, and what actually happens, are what make a field trip exciting, interesting—and challenging.

Homeschooling is a lot like a field trip. You get excited about a destination. You learn all about it; plan routes, supplies, schedules; you budget for it. Then you get everyone into your vehicle and head out.

Much of what is learned on any field trip is beyond what you thought was going to happen. The experiences you have as you put your family into new situations present many unexpected challenges. What did you do when you got lost? When you had a flat tire? When you encountered another family in need? Dealing with those unplanned events is the stuff of life—God’s character curriculum.

We are like pioneers—or perhaps more accurately, like the survivors of a major disaster—who must recreate the world anew, in the midst of wreckage and danger. Homeschooling is our Mayflower, our Conestoga wagon.

I doubt if there is a homeschooler who has not thought, within the first few days on this “field trip,” “I’m not ready for this!” For one thing, I’ve often thought—as you probably have, too—why are we designed to have children when we are still almost children ourselves? Why, when they are at the most vulnerable stage of their lives, are we at our most ignorant?

I think it’s because God intends us to live in families, not in the isolation in which most of us find ourselves today. Grandparents and great-grandparents, aunts and uncles, all of whom have the experience we lack are supposed to be close at hand, teaching us, showing us how to do the things we’ve never done before. Modeling for us godly behavior, trusting completely in God. Few of us, in 2004, are blessed to have that nurturing framework.

My guess is that you were not homeschooled, and that your parents were not as committed to the conscious living of Judaeo-Christian values to which you aspire. (What a blessing if they were!) You have made the decision to homeschool for the sake of your children, because you believe it is right for them—that through homeschooling, you will be able to give them the training, the education, and the values that would otherwise be inaccessible to them.

Let’s face it: You are making it up as you go. Even with all the commercial curricula available today, with all the great recorded teachings from homeschool events, and with the

burgeoning growth in support groups, you have to do the moment-by-moment doing of it to make it happen. And you’ve never done it before!

So you pray, separately and together with your spouse. You get involved with your local support group. You seek out others who have faced the issues that confront you now.

You get to know some of the other passengers on the Mayflower.

Together, we are creating a surrogate for the extended family that is God’s pattern. By finding our mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles in the family of God, we are creating a framework of guidance and support for successive generations (should the Lord tarry).

It is only by God’s grace that we can do this. One of the thought processes that is most helpful is living what Socrates alluded to as “the examined life.” We don’t just live, reacting to a flow of events as if they are beyond our control; we think about our goals, and the ways in which our daily activities take us toward or away from them.

I was raised to be a “good person”—but I was never taught what that might mean, explicitly. I knew that lying and selfishness were wrong, and that helping those in need was good, but it was never clear to me that these are part of the bigger picture of character.

Happily, there is now a lot of material available to address good character—what it is, and how to build it in our children. And along the way, it works on us as parents, too.

For it is fundamental to childraising that our children will do what we do, regardless of what we say. If we are hypocritical, we are training them in hypocrisy.

As we live our lives in the shared intimacy of our family, our own punctuality, our own commitment to our promises, our behavior under stress—all these and much more are our most powerful lessons for our children. And our own acknowledgement of our faults and failures, our willingness to repent and ask forgiveness, show our children what they are to do.

“If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” says Psalm 11:3. When the world is in spiritual and moral chaos, what can we do? We can board the Mayflower, the little bark that will carry our family and some others to the New World. We can join our Conestoga wagon to those of a small group of others of like mind, and head west. We can join the community of believing homeschoolers, and press forward on a most amazing “field trip,” to educate and edify our children, ourselves, and those of our extended “traveling family.” ☺



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more than 9000 entries from across the country. She has won a \$5000 savings bond, will travel to Chicago with her parents in September to meet Bob Vila, and while there, will have a chance to win another \$5000 savings bond. For information on this program, go to www.nsta.org.

Congratulations to **StarTek**, the ten-member *FLL team* that received the second-highest score in robot performance in a regional *FIRST LEGO League* event in Danville in November. The team also participated in the state tournament held in Blacksburg.

FLL participants from **StarTek** and **The King's Team** (both homeschool teams) also participated with the newly formed **Home School Robotics Organization, Inc. (HSRO)** in the 2004 "FIRST Frenzy" FIRST Robotics Competition held at the VCU Siegel Center in March. From a total of sixty-three teams, HSRO and their robot HERO received the Highest Seeded Rookie Team Award!



StarTek team members pictured are listed in alphabetical order: Daniel Dixon, David Dixon, Joey Dixon, Micheal Dixon, Dena Hutchinson, Michael Hutchinson, Andrew Rinaldi, Anthony Rinaldi, Michael Rinaldi, Tracey Rinaldi, Lindi Stevenson, Sam Stevenson, Alyssa Warner, Anders Warner, Nathan Warner, and Robert Warner.

Mentors not pictured in the HSRO photo: Anthony Durette, Peggy Sue Durette, Jesse Fisher, Mala Fisher, Diane Harvey, William Heath, Anne Miller, Sam Miller, Susannah Miller, David Rinaldi, Jim Stevenson, Robert Warner and Rosalie Warner.

For information on FLL, go to www.firstlegoleague.org.

Congratulations to the homeschool chapter of the National Beta Club, still the smallest chapter in the state. Winners from our chapter are **Matthew Daugherty**, second place in Sculpture and third place in Woodworking; **Abigail Johnson** and **Kati Peters**, third place in Talent; **Abigail Johnson**, third place in Creative Writing; **Eric Lansing**, first place in Oratory; **Katherine Peters**, Scholarship; **Timothy Prousalis**, first place in Pen and Pencil; **Kerrissa Richards**, third place in Spelling.

Eric Lansing was invited to compete in the national convention held in Atlanta, Georgia, this summer.

For information on this group, go to www.betaclub.net.

Congratulations to **The Lady Breakers** (Virginia Beach), who posted an 11-1 regular season and then went on to sweep the *Homeschool World Series* for back-to-back championships! For the second year in a row, the Breakers faced a pitcher in the championship game who will be pitching in college next year. **Allison Paul**, this year's opposing pitcher in the championship game, will be pitching at Columbus State University, in Georgia. Sophomore **Kelly Mann** pitched three wins, and senior **Kathryn Gard** had two wins and one save—including a one-hit shutout in the championship game.



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Resources for a Great Field Trip Nancy Coleman

BOOKS

The single-most outstanding resource is *Kids Love the Virginias*. The Zavatsky family drove over 4,000 miles and spent endless hours researching well-known and much-lesser-known locations in Virginia and West Virginia. Organized into geographical zones, the book includes the address, phone number, Internet address, hours, admission, and a short description in each listing. Interested in being a salsa taster? Want to drive through a zoo? Craving a skipjack sandwich? Kids can discover where ponies swim and dolphins dance, dig into archaeology and living history, and learn how to dance the Virginia Reel. You can walk, trot, or trolly past famous homes or drive your car underwater. This book is well worth the \$13.95 price tag and is available at major bookstores, as well as at Amazon.com. Remember that hours and admission fees may change over time, so please check with each location prior to visiting.

Educational Travel on a Shoestring: Frugal Family Fun and Learning Away from Home by Judith Waite Allee and Melissa L. Morgan, does not recommend specific destinations, but provides practical ideas and helpful resources for frugal travel. Humorously written, the book lists ideas for inexpensive food, lodging alternatives, and helpful hints for parents when the “bucket” breaks down. It includes a resource guide full of websites, newsletters, and companies that pertain to family travel.

Carschooling by Diane Flynn Keith includes over 350 entertaining games and activities that turn travel time into learning time. It also provides information on how to organize your vehicle and keep it organized. This book is available at Amazon.com for \$11.87; list price is \$16.95.

Hometown Celebrations! by Kay Vanatta, is a series of workbooks containing history and local trivia for Virginia counties. They include puzzles, mazes, and other games. Created with the goal of helping others learn about their hometowns, there are currently booklets for Surry, Chesterfield, Prince George, and Isle of Wight, as well as the cities of Hopewell and Colonial Heights. By summer’s end, Mrs. Vanatta plans to complete workbooks for Sussex, Charles City, Dinwiddie, and Nottoway. These workbooks, at \$5 plus shipping, include a wealth of information in a concise, entertaining fashion, as well as website addresses and books for further study. You may contact Mrs. Vanetta directly at Vhsdrh@aol.com.

The Trails of Virginia - Hiking the Old Dominion, by Allen de Hart, is an indispensable guide for hikers, walkers, birders, anglers, and all who enjoy the outdoors. It includes comprehensive information for the National Forests, National Park System, Wildlife Management Areas, county and municipal areas, as well as regional, military, college, and private trails. While recently out of print, this book is available at Amazon.com for \$17.50 or less, and at your local library.

If you are planning an outdoor excursion, you might consider packing along a Peterson or Audubon field guide. Available at most major bookstores, these guides cover topics such as Eastern forests, stars and planets, trees, wildflowers, birds, animal tracks, and more. Usually under \$20, these are great resources that help you decide whether you really want to eat that berry or follow that animal track.


MAPS

Virginia offers an official state transportation map for free at www.virginiadot.org/comtravel/maps-state.asp. Sections of the official map can be printed with the PDF version available at the website. You can purchase individual county maps for 50 cents, or all county maps bound together for \$25.

www.511virginia.org provides detailed information on roadwork and difficult driving conditions. It also lists web cams so you can examine the traffic real-time.

WEBSITES

www.50states.com/virginia.htm provides detailed information regarding Virginia. Most remarkably helpful is the link to Richmond’s outstanding website: www.ci.richmond.va.us/index.asp.



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www.visitloudoun.org provides a calendar of events and suggested itinerary for visiting Loudoun County.

www.visitfairfax.org contains links to Fairfax's calendar of events, as well as to destinations within the city. You can find tour itineraries, history, shopping, recreation, entertainment, dining, and more.

www.fredericksburg.com maintains a calendar of events, as well as places to visit. (Click on Community, then Local Links.)

www.shenandoah.national-park.com lists detailed information about Shenandoah National Park, such as fees, camping information, hiking trails, and more.

Most major cities and counties within the state of Virginia maintain websites that contain either a link or phone number to the Chamber of Commerce where you can request a visitor's package. In some instances, localities have relocation packages that contain more detailed information.

GAMES AND CAR ENTERTAINMENT

Kidstravel: A Backseat Survival Guide by Klutz Press is a book of car-appropriate activities with a 100-page write-right-in-it game pad, and a vinyl pouch full of everything you need. Designed for children ages 9-12, it won the Canadian Toy Testing Council Award of Excellence. Amazon sells it for \$13.95; list price is \$19.95.

Travel Scrabble is available at Walmart for about \$15. It has a set of snap-in letter tiles so the board may be closed and zipped shut, then reopened to continue play.

Apples to Apples is a card game available through Out of the Box Publishing, www.otb-games.com/showcase/index.html. Rated as Toy of the Year by Family Fun Magazine, this game has three versions designed for three different age levels. For the adult version, which is easily handled by an eleven-year-old, you might want to peruse the cards prior to play. It's not designed specifically as a travel game, and players must sit in the same seat to play together, but is great for anywhere you will be stationary for several hours.

Midnite Snack Magnetics, www.magneticgames.com, sells small magnetic chess, checkers, backgammon, and solitaire games for \$8.99 each. This company is extremely customer-service friendly. If you lose the game pieces, send them a self-addressed stamped envelope with 55 cents postage, and they will replace the missing pieces for free. Their address: PO Box 412, Rifton, NY 12471.

www.powells.com/subsection/childrensactivities/travelgames.html provides a wealth of travel games ranging in cost from \$3.95 to \$15. Search carefully. Some of the games are appropriate, while others may not be. ☺



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WILLIAMSBURG—Hands-on history programs for home-educated students will be offered September 27-29, on an advance-reservation basis at Jamestown Settlement, a museum of 17th-century Virginia, and the Yorktown Victory Center, a museum of the American Revolution.

The programs are taught by trained museum educators, and address Virginia and United States history curriculum objectives. Each consists of a one-hour classroom component for students followed by a guided tour for students and their families of the museums' outdoor interpretive areas which include a re-created Powhatan Indian village, the 1607 ships, a colonial fort, and the riverfront discovery area at Jamestown

Settlement. Also included is a re-created Continental Army encampment and 1780s farm at the Yorktown Victory Center.

Students can enroll in one of three programs at each museum, according to grade level. The programs repeat at 9:15 am, 10:30 am, 1:15 pm and 2:30 pm on all three days.

Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 2—In “Living With the Indians” at Jamestown Settlement, students handle and analyze clothing, bone tools and pottery of the Powhatan Indian culture. In the Yorktown Victory Center program “Colonial Life,” students examine tools and materials used on a small Virginia farm to explore the life of a typical Tidewater farming family.

Grades 3-6—In “Cultures in Contact” at Jamestown Settlement, students compare and contrast the Powhatan Indian, English, and African cultures in contact with one another during the 17th century. In the Yorktown Victory Center program, “Revolutionary Virginia,” students analyze primary sources and reproduced artifacts to learn about lives of ordinary 18th-century Virginians.

Grades 7-12—In “Voyage to Virginia” at Jamestown Settlement, students learn about the 1607 voyage to Virginia by exploring period navigation tools. In the Yorktown Victory Center program, “Life of a Private,” students explore a Continental soldier’s haversack, clothing and weapons to relate to the experiences of people during the American Revolution.

The program fee of \$6.75 per family member (youth or adult) for one museum, and \$9.75 for both museums, includes general museum admission. The registration deadline for these fall programs is 5 pm, Tuesday, September 21.

For more information or to register, call 888-868-7593 (toll-free), or 757-253-4939. You may also fax (757-253-4997), or email group reservations

“What from your fathers’ heritage is lent, earn it anew to really possess it.”

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

(reservations@jyf.virginia.gov).

Jamestown Settlement is located on State Route 31, southwest of Williamsburg. The Yorktown Victory Center is located on Route 1020, near the Colonial Parkway in Yorktown. To learn more about the museums, visit www.historyisfun.org.

“ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE HOMESCHOOL FAMILY” CONFERENCE

On September 24, from 7 pm to 9 pm, and September 25, from 9:45 am to 12:45 pm, Steve and Teri Maxwell will be presenting a free weekend conference filled with practical encouragement.

Friday:

Managers of Their Homes (Teri)

Manager of His Home (Steve)

The Homeschoolong Family:

Building a Vision (Steve & Teri)

Saturday:

Homeschooling with a Meek and Quiet Spirit (Teri)

Preparing Sons to Provide for a Single-Income Family (Steve)

Keeping Our Children’s Hearts (Steve and Teri)

Experiencing the Joy of Young Womanhood. *For young ladies.* (Sarah, 22)

Success or Failure: Where are You Headed? *For young men.* (Christopher, 25)

An offering will be taken. The conference will be held at the Calvary Chapel, 361 Beechmont Drive, Newport News. For more information, contact Angel Reed at eric-angel@hotmail.com, or 804-695-0297 ☎



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Becoming a Time Traveler (continued from page 16)

This past year, TimeTravelers specifically invited participants to learn more about famous Virginians by discovering *Virginians in Time* as part of their six site visits. They could visit two or more *Discover Virginians in Time* sites designated on the online lists or on the back of the passports, and receive a free patch when they sent in their completed passport.

The TimeTravelers program starts in mid-March and ends early November. Be sure to check out their website for the latest information so you can plan ahead for next year.

Now that you're interested, how do you incorporate TimeTravelers into your schedule?

- Make TimeTravelers a part of any weekend trip away from home. Vacations can also be routed to include a museum or two along the way.
- Use TimeTravelers as an additional resource to supplement textbook

lessons on Virginia history and geography.

- Do your children participate in Scouts or a similar club? Scout troops can adopt TimeTravelers as a group activity. Or kids could even form a special TimeTravelers club with friends.

Be creative! Your kids can be the ones to find out about the places you'd like to go and help do the planning—that makes it twice the fun! I like researching places we're going to visit; maybe your kids will too. To get started, visit the Time Travelers website at www.timetravelers.org.

Okay, so I'll look for you next year in that participating museum, staring at every display for twenty minutes...(Mom, can we please move on now?). ☺

Lindsey Smith is a homeschooled sophomore from Northern Virginia. She likes to read, write, ice skate, and dance ballet. You can invite her along on your field trip, but please – keep it moving!

CHECK-LIST FOR A SUCCESSFUL FIELD TRIP

(continued from page 12)

Don't forget to take your camera or video recorder with you. Since many homeschoolers do not have yearbooks, it's nice to make a field trip scrapbook to record your memories. I like to buy an ornament or souvenir for our Christmas tree to remind us of the places we've been.

After the activity, the children should thank the tour guide, docent, or park ranger. If in a group, they should thank their chaperones also.

On your way home, review some of the things they learned. Find out what their favorite part of the day was. If Dad did not attend the field trip, have the children share with him what they saw and did.

Try to keep a balance of fun vs. education. Have fun while you are learning and learn while you are having fun. ☺



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WRITING COACHES WANTED—WriteAtHome, a company providing online writing classes to homeschoolers, is looking for Writing Coaches to work from their home computers providing feedback and assessment on student writing. Coaches work as independent contractors for \$12-18 per hour and determine the grade level(6th-12th) and number of students they serve (minimum 10). Applicants must have at least an undergraduate degree in English, education, or a related field, and must have experience in education, publishing or writing. We are looking for dependable, encouraging people with a love for kids and words. For more information, visit the Coaches page of our website (www.WriteAtHome.com), or contact Don Myhill at WriteAtHome@cox.net.

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COMING UP

Our winter issue will focus on volunteer and ministry opportunities for

homeschoolers. Does your family participate in any such activity? Please tell us about it! We're interested in everything from bluebird or butterfly counting, to adopting streets for litter pickup, to helping with Meals on Wheels or soup kitchens, to volunteering in your local library or nursing home, to working with church ministries. Please send two or three paragraphs (300 words) explaining what you do and where someone can go to get more information. A photo would be great, too. Put your name and hometown on the information and e-mail it to editor@heav.org by November 1, 2004.

Where Can I Find...?

In this column we provide e-mail and Web listings from and for your area. If you want to know what support groups are out there, what field trips you can join, or where the closest used-book sales are, sign up for the listing(s) in your area. And don't forget the HEAV Update—there's something in there for everyone!

REGIONAL NEWSLETTERS

Northern Virginia:

Sharenet. Melissa Riemer, SHARENET@att.net or Susan Smith, susieg@alum.mit.edu

Fredericksburg area:

homeschoolresources@yahoo.com

South of Richmond:

Tri-Cities Home Educators. Vicki Bentley, Gmbentley@cs.com

Harrisonburg and Rockingham County area:

Valley Home Educators (VHE). newsletter@vhweb.org

Roanoke area:

Greater Roanoke Valley Home Educators Association. Ken Johnson, khsakwee@cs.com

Tidewater area:

Tidewater Homeschool Info Support (THIS, PFS, HIS).

Darlene Levy, homeschooling4ULord@juno.com

TEACH. info@teachhomeschool.com

Williamsburg area:

HEART HOTLINE. Mary Blunt, mkblunt@aol.com

HEAV Update: Sign up at www.heav.org

E-GROUP

Homeschool_Hotline: homeschool_hotlinesubscribe@yahoo.com

HELPFUL WEBSITES

Children with learning disabilities: visit www.ldcouncil.org.

National African-American Homeschoolers Alliance:

Jennifer James, info@naaha.com; <http://www.naaha.com>.

If you know of a regional e-mail listing that is sent to at least 100 families, we'd be happy to list it in this column. Send your information to editor@heav.org.

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