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BY BYRON CRAWFORD, THE C-J

Ronald Moore, left, showed state folklorist Bob Gates boat bumpers he makes. Moore works for Kentucky Sand and Gravel in Frankfort.

Festival show ways Kentuckians work, play

FRANKFORT, Ky. — Washer pitchers from McLean and Union counties, marble players from Glasgow and Tompkinsville, chair caners from Hopkins County, African-American drummers from Louisville, horseshoers from Lexington and banjo pickers and basket makers from Eastern Kentucky — they will all come together in Frankfort this weekend for the Festival of Kentucky Folklife.

If you have never heard of washer pitching, you could be among the thousands of festival guests who may learn something new about Kentucky.

WASHER pitching is a traditional Western Kentucky game that is often played at family reunions and other happy gatherings. The game is similar to horseshoes, except it is played with round metal washers. One or two players on each side pitch washers at a pair of holes several feet apart. Players win points for landing closest to the hole, and 5 points for a "ringer." The first player to reach 21 points wins.

BYRON CRAWFORD'S KENTUCKY

"We have this whole area that we're calling Art in Everyday Life," explained state folklorist Bob Gates. "Our main theme, I guess, is that there is art in everybody's life. We all belong to these folk groups. The theme in our Family Folklore tent is to share some of these things."

Those not interested in learning the art of washer pitching will find plenty more Kentucky folklife to sample among the many tents and stages that reach from the lawn of the Old State Capitol in downtown Frankfort, across the Capital Plaza and right to the edge of the Kentucky River.

ON THE RIVER bank they will find Dale Calhoun building and sharing stories of his unusual, stump-jumping fishing boats. The Calhouns have been building the boats by hand for three generations, and Dale Calhoun has been recognized by the Smithsonian Institution for his boat-building skills.

Master horseshoer Jackie Thompson of Lexington, who has fitted several Kentucky Derby winners with footwear, is another of the many Kentucky folklife heroes who will be sharing his stories and skills with festival visitors. Thompson apprenticed with some of the finest African-American horseshoers of their time, and now he is passing along what he learned to others.

"I guess the wildest thing in the Art in Everyday Life area is a woman who paints her husband's demolition derby car," Gates said. "The group that goes to demolition derbies is a folk group. The woman (Carla Prishmon) says that people like to see a really pretty car before it gets out there. She painted her husband's car to look like a shark."

AMONG the woodcarvers, rag rug weavers, the checker players, rock-fence and jobshoat builders, quilters, mussel braiders and step dancers, there will be music streaming from all directions at the festival. Kentucky's own Ricky Skaggs and internationally known folk musician Jean Ritchie, formerly of Viper in Perry County, will join the likes of legendary bluegrass musicians Homer Ledford, the Osborne Brothers, J.D. Crowe and the New South and a long list of blues, polka, jazz and gospel singers and musicians in a cultural blending of Kentucky's folk music, old and new. All events are free except the Ricky Skaggs concert Saturday night.

For visitor and lodging information, call (800) 960-7200 during regular business hours.

Byron Crawford's column appears on the Metro page Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays. To contact him, call 582-4701.

Tobacco supports look in jeopardy

McConnell, Lugar suggest farmers consider buyout

By MIKE BROWN
The Courier-Journal

WASHINGTON — Tobacco farm leaders pleaded yesterday for continuation of the federal price-support program, but Sens. Mitch McConnell and Richard Lugar warned that this may be the time to harvest a greener commodity: money.

The two Republicans suggested that the tobacco program may be doomed politically on Capitol Hill, and that growers might be better off getting what compensation they can out of the proposed national tobacco settlement.

Their comments came at an Agriculture Committee hearing on how a settlement could affect farmers, and specifically on a proposal that Lugar made last week to terminate the tobacco program and pay growers $8 a pound for their production quotas.

Lugar of Indiana, which grows only a small amount of tobacco, favors such a plan.

McConnell of Kentucky, the second largest tobacco-growing state, did not take a position for or against a buyout, but rather urged tobacco leaders to make "a very, very difficult political calculation:" Can the program be maintained in the face of the increasingly hostile environment in Congress toward tobacco?

If it can, Kentucky farmers would be better off keeping it, McConnell said.

But if the calculation is that it's going to be killed anyway, he suggested farmers would be better off

See TOBACCO
Page 4, col. 4, this section

Sen. Mitch McConnell questioned whether the program can be saved in the face of the increasingly hostile environment in Congress.

PHOTOS BY KEITH REICHING, THE COURIER-JOURNAL

Greg Brashears erected a barrier to keep foul air out of part of a simulated mine his team worked in during the National Mine Rescue First Aid Emergency Medical Technician and Bench Contest.

Coal-mine rescuers treat contests like true emergencies

By KATHERINE L. SEARS
The Courier-Journal

The South Wing of the Kentucky Fair & Exposition Center is a long way from the nearest underground coal mine.

But more than 300 professional coal miners who simulated rescues yesterday in the National Mine Rescue First Aid Emergency Medical Technician and Bench Contest took their roles very seriously.

The contest, held every other year and sponsored by the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration, is intended to sharpen the skills of coal-mining rescue team volunteers from across the country so they can be prepared when an emergency occurs.

Fifty-one teams from 12 states, including Kentucky and Indiana, participated in this year's contest, which began Tuesday and ended yesterday. It's been held in Louisville since the early 1970s, said Amy Louviere, a spokeswoman for MSHA, which is part of the U.S. Department of Labor.

Joe Pavlovich, district manager for MSHA's Barbourville office, said the 51 teams — each with about six members — simulated how they would cope with such forces as fire, gas fumes, flooding and carbon monoxide poison.

Teams didn't know what hazard they would encounter until they read a placard describing the conditions.

Donning oxygen masks, rescuers determined the quickest response while adhering to mine-safety procedures established by a committee of mine-rescue personnel, Louviere said. With curtains serving as the mine's walls, rescuers pretended they were pumping water to clear a flooded area and crawling beneath a low ceiling.

The participants all work at coal mines and volunteer on rescue teams. "These miners are just very close-knit and they care about each other," Louviere said.

Contests also tested miners' first-aid skills and ability to repair damaged equipment crucial to rescues.

Fifteen teams, including one from Clay and another from Providence, made it to the finals yesterday. Pavlovich said the teams that don't score among the highest learn from their mistakes. "They understand the purpose of being here," he said.

Rescuers risk their lives because they care about each other, Pavlovich said. "A lot of these people are very dedicated — willing to expose themselves to dangers to try to rescue fellow miners."

Team leader Donnie Feltner checked the oxygen supply of Jim Duckworth, left, before the rescue crews went into action. The two are with Arch of Kentucky Coal Co.

Translators prove essential to success of boxing tourney

They also show foreign fighters around the city

By PAUL BALDWIN
The Courier-Journal

Charlie Donahue was talking fast to Vladamir Laptev, manager for the Russian team at this week's Ali Cup amateur boxing tournament.

Laptev wanted to know if Donahue, one of Ali's former sparring partners, had any pictures of the champ. In between them was Liz Logsdon, a translator tapped for the tournament to help teams from the former Soviet Union.

"Tell him I had a whole bunch of pictures but I didn't have time to find them all today," said Donahue, talking loud over the music tumbling from the speakers at Commonwealth Convention Center.

"When he was real young — and good-lookin'."

With 20 countries at the Ali Cup and 27 languages spoken among its participants, translators are as necessary to the success of the tournament as boxing gloves.

Logsdon, a former translator for the U.S. Army, was snagged by the tournament when someone with the Jefferson County sheriff's office, which is helping provide security, recommended her to the organizers because she speaks Russian.

Like many of the translators, Logsdon has spent time away from the tournament with the boxers, taking them shopping to local malls and introducing them to her family. "I've taken the group from Kazakhstan," she said. "I can fit them in my car."

During the tournament's semifinals last night, Logsdon and the other translators stuck close to the boxers as they prepared for bouts.

Before the fourth bout, Gisella Y. Velez and her fiance, James Rivera, worked with Jairo David Gonel, a boxer from the Dominican Republic. Velez, a Louisville dentist, snapped pictures of Gonel as he warmed up before his fight. A tournament official worked with Rivera and Gonel's trainer to make sure his headgear was the right size.

As the head of the Dominican delegation approached Gonel, he asked Velez and Rivera to take a picture of him, with his arm around the fighter and his left hand in a thumbs up.

"Dominicana," he said, grinning, as Velez snapped a photo.

The interpreters for the Ali Cup were put together in the same overnight blitzkrieg style as the tournament. While some were recruited from the University of Louisville, others were recruited by word of mouth.

On Sept. 11, with the match only four days away and foreign athletes scheduled to arrive in two days, only six translators were lined up, said Jeaneene Hildebrandt, a volunteer with USA Boxing who organized the translators.

"I was concerned," she said. "We lacked translators for a few languages."

Luckily for Hildebrandt, four of the employees working the front desk at the Gulf House spoke foreign languages. Hildebrandt, of Evansville, Ind., said several of the interpreters have requested that they be called when the tournament returns to Louisville next year.

"I think this is the neatest part of the whole tournament," Hildebrandt said. "The interaction between the interpreters and the boxers has been something special, I think."

BY MICHAEL HAYMAN, THE COURIER-JOURNAL

Interpreter Gisella Y. Velez assisted boxer Jairo David Gonel before his bout last night. He's from the Dominican Republic.

6,000 volunteers are sought to help Louisville children

Campaign is part of national effort led by Colin Powell

By BEVERLY BARTLETT
The Courier-Journal

Community leaders will launch a campaign next week to let Louisville-area residents who say they're concerned about the problems facing young people prove their sincerity.

"Everyone says, 'We want to help,' " Louisville Mayor Jerry Abramson said. "This is your opportunity."

With those words, he announced the start of a six-week campaign to recruit at least 6,000 volunteers in an attempt to help children.

The campaign, which officially begins Thursday, is the first visible local effort to come from the Presidents' Summit for America's Future, which was organized by Gen. Colin Powell in Philadelphia in April. A local delegation attended.

Powell, who will be speaking in Louisville on an unrelated matter on Nov. 4, will hold a news conference that day to call for volunteers.

By that time, the local campaign will be almost complete. It is scheduled to end Nov. 14.

The April summit's goals were to mobilize millions of citizens and thousands of organizations to guarantee every child in the nation these things: an ongoing relationship with a caring adult, a healthy start, a marketable skill, a safe place to be when not in school, and a chance to give back through community service.

The Louisville-area campaign will

See VOLUNTEERS
Page 4, col. 1, this section

HOW TO HELP

Individuals who want to volunteer should call (502) 266-6326. Anyone interested in making a financial contribution or in donating the time of an entire group of people can also call (502) 574-3333.

INSIDE

City-county compact
Legislators urged officials who are renegotiating the Louisville-Jefferson County compact that runs out next year to revive the idea for a metro mayor in charge of both the city and the county. B3

Flood-damage grant
After months of waiting, 32 Lebanon Junction residents whose homes were damaged by flooding in March can begin selling their homes to the city, thanks to a grant awarded Wednesday. B2

Aldermanic issues
The board of aldermen, who had been focusing on the Fairness Amendment, will now turn their attention to controlling crime and deciding whether to build a 35,000-seat arena. B3

Soccer player's fight
A girl at Jeffersonville (Ind.) High School who was taken off the boys' soccer team won a small victory yesterday when a judge issued a temporary restraining order barring the school system's action. B3

INDEX

Neighborhood news B2
Weather B2
Deaths B5
Crime B5

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