

Youth

Young blacksmith forges a future career as a farrier

By Rob Cullivan

PAINTED POST — The two aged strangers, their shoulders stooped from years at the anvil, knocked on Mike Hutter's door. The young resident of Painted Post greeted the pair, who claimed to make horseshoes for a living. They had heard about this teenage blacksmith, but they wanted to see for themselves the adolescent forger who was so well-known in these parts.

Hutter spoke with them and showed them his shop in the backyard. They were impressed, but they left the youngster with this advice, culled from years of backbreaking labor in a dying trade: "You ought to get your head examined."

If one did examine the head of the 16-year-old Hutter, one would find thoughts of Revolutionary War history, horseshoes and pride in his ability to craft numerous metal items using tools that he made in a workshop he built with money he earned from selling his own products.

"I can't sit behind a desk. I was meant to work with my hands," Hutter said, who also likes to hunt and fish. A junior at Painted Post's West High, Hutter belongs to the youth group at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church.

The teenager taught himself most of what he knows about working with steel, starting about five years ago with an anvil he bought from an antique dealer. He set up shop in an abandoned chicken coop on a farm where he worked, but the weight of the anvil caved in the coop's floor, prompting him to build another shop.

Hutter built his current shop last year. Nails, crosses, belt buckles and a pair of century-old bellows hang on the smoky structure's walls. The blacksmith works here nearly every weekday during summer and winter vacations, and most of the money he earns from selling his pieces is reinvested in the enterprise.

Much of his labor is devoted to making tools and presents for family and friends. Christmas time means Hutter can be found making cross-

es and door knockers for his relatives. The rest of the year, he is busy working on commissioned projects, including the restoration of antiques for history museums in western New York.

Hutter also travels throughout the area selling his wares at crafts shows, where older admirers, who remember when each town had its own blacksmith, encourage his work. "I've had a couple of people come up to me and say, 'It's just as good as what my grandfather would do,'" he said, noting that such praise reassures him that his pieces measure up to past standards of quality.

His concern for quality leaves no time for projects that call for quantity. "I had one lady ask me to make 5,000 nails," he laughed, remarking that she wanted to use them to build a house. "Making nails is ridiculous. I wouldn't have the time to do it."

After he graduates from high school, Hutter will have the time to pursue his ultimate goal — becoming a farrier, or professional horseshoe maker. He plans to apply to the Cornell University farrier program, which spans four months, and hopes to be one of two students admitted each term.

Whether he'll stay in New York or seek his fortune elsewhere depends on the market for his trade. "There's a lot of opportunities out west," Hutter said, noting that his skills will be more practical than those of most current blacksmiths. "I'm not really into art," he said. "I like to make tools."

Despite the strangers' warning about the years of backbreaking work before him, the teenager plans to forge ahead. Besides, he noted, his potential competition will all be retired by the time he strikes out on his own.

Still, Hutter does worry that bending over constantly while he shoes horses will hurt his back. Until that day he has a simple formula for avoiding the stooped walk characteristic of aged farriers. "I stand up straight a lot," he grinned.



Linda Dow Hayes/Courier-Journal
Mike Hutter of Painted Post leans on hammer and anvil in the workshop where he spends most of his free time honing his smithing skills.

Quiz offers opportunity to consider how and why we make decisions

Coming of Age

By Linda L. Rome
NC News Service

Making choices is part of our freedom as human beings. Usually it is a fun activity, like deciding whether you want chocolate or angel food cake for dessert.

But hidden beneath the frosting lurk the twin catches of choice making: responsibility and consequences. And in every choice, we are "unchoosing" something else.

Why do you make the choices you do? What can they tell you about yourself?

Decide what you would choose in the following situations.

1. I really like to play basketball but my parents won't let me try out for the team. I decide to: a. obey them even though I resent

their decision; b. try out for the team anyway and if I make it, I'll ask my parents to reconsider their decision; c. practice at home so I'll be sure to make the team next year when my parents said I could try out.

2. I have two hours of free time after I get home from school before I have to help make supper and set the table. Usually I decide to: a. do my homework so I'll be free after supper; b. watch television and do my homework later; c. stay busy after school with play practice or soccer or football practice; d. talk on the phone.

3. My friends go to MacDonald's and a movie every Friday night. They always invite me and: a. since I don't have the money, I tell them I'm not allowed to go; b. I spend all my allowance to go with them because it's fun; c. I go once in awhile, but I have to budget my money for other expenses too; d. since they stay out later than my curfew, I don't go; instead I invite them over on Saturday.

4. A friend suggested I try out for the play. Another asked if I would take roller-skating lessons with him. My parents want me to be

in the marching band and get good grades. What should I decide to do?: a. say yes to all the opportunities and juggle them the best I can; b. choose the one extra activity that interests me most so I'll have enough time for my schoolwork; c. don't decide what I want to do until the opportunities are past.

5. A student in phys. ed. is afraid to jump on the trampoline. Some students make fun of this person. What should I do?: a. don't say anything and hope the teacher will step in; b. try to encourage the person who's afraid by telling how frightened I was the first time and how I got over it; c. laugh with the others because I want them to like me; d. tell the instructor about the person who's scared.

6. Who do you choose to please first? a. your parents; b. your friends; c. your teachers; d. yourself.

7. In making plans for summer vacation, you have to choose between: a. a part-time job at the swimming pool; b. summer camp with friends; c. family vacation at Cape Cod; d. summer school to learn Spanish. Which would you choose and why?

8. After I've made a difficult choice, I: a. rarely change my mind or have second thoughts; b. will change my mind if the circumstances change; c. worry if I've made the right decision; d. feel relieved, even if it's not the right choice.

(Rome is a free-lance writer in Mentor, Ohio.)

Speaking Out

By Paul Hezel

DeSales High School

A longstanding problem involving the dress code at DeSales has finally been resolved this year. Just three weeks ago, a revised dress code was put into the school rules and regulations.

The new dress code's purpose "is to reinforce the idea that school is a place of work, and to prepare students for dressing professionally in the work world now, and in the future." I am not opposed to a dress code, but other than making the student body appear more respectable, I always thought a dress code was just another rule which Catholic schools had and public schools didn't.

Don't get the impression that the dress code

is harsh at DeSales. Our code is very lenient, especially compared to some of the regulations at other Catholic schools. The problem stemmed from the fact that the dress code was old and outdated. It had not been changed for over 10 years, and for this reason was unclear on certain points.

The looseness of the old code allowed it to be interpreted by the students. The teachers were not able to enforce it. Not all teachers enforced the code equally. Some instructors let blatant violations slip by. Eventually, a few students totally neglected the code, and were able to get away with it.

There were legitimate complaints from students about those who did not conform to the code. A few students were able to defy the system with little punishment, while others abided by it. Guys especially complained that while they had to wear ties and a shirt with a collar, girls were wearing whatever they pleased, including blue jeans.

Most of the time, a student would get only a single detention for violating the dress code, if that.

At a faculty meeting last spring, the dress code issue was brought up. It was decided that the code should be redefined with input from students and faculty. This fall, Edward J. Tracey, school principal, asked the student council to propose a new dress code, which he would then approve.

The student council, with input from the students and faculty, proposed the revised dress code, which was approved by Mr. Tracey. The council also devised a new plan for disciplinary action to be taken when the code is violated. Now it is up to the students, who helped create the new code, to make it work.

their decision; b. try out for the team anyway and if I make it, I'll ask my parents to reconsider their decision; c. practice at home so I'll be sure to make the team next year when my parents said I could try out.

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The winner was Anthony Altieri of Most Precious Blood

MUSIC TRIVIA

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 Give the last name of George, from the Beatles.

A:

Rules:
 Each week, the Courier-Journal, in conjunction with the House of Guitars will feature a Music Trivia contest. All you have to do to enter is answer the question, fill in your name and address and the school you attend (if applicable), cut out the coupon, and send it in to the Courier-Journal. If more than one correct entry is received, a drawing will be held and one winning entry will be drawn. If yours is the winning entry, you will be mailed a coupon for a free album or tape of your choice redeemable at the House of Guitars, 645 Titus Ave.
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