

# The Free P

Thursday June 18, 1998

Woodstock, VA



## **'I've never seen it rain that hard'** Weatherwatcher on big storm

Hazel Artz has been watching the weather with more than a little interest for most of the last half century.

She's an official U.S. Weather Bureau observer, and has been since taking over those duties for her late husband years ago. Together they have been recording local rainfall, snowfall and temperatures since sometime in the 1950s.

The unexpected, weatherwise at least, is what Hazel Artz has come to expect. And on Monday, that's what happened in the two hours after 2 p.m.

"I've never seen it rain that hard," Mrs. Artz said Tuesday. When it stopped raining at 4:25 p.m., she had measured two inches of rainfall in two hours.

For the day, including some light rain later in the evening, the official total was 2.17 inches. That came on the heels of .25 of an inch Sunday morning and 1.5 inches Saturday during another afternoon storm that blew down tree limbs and flooded roads.

The downpour Monday, which appeared worse in the Woodstock area, flooded South Main Street and sent normally tranquil Hollow Run out of its banks through the town.

Hailstones, which arrived at the height of the storm, were the size of mothballs.

In the low area near Shenandoah Memorial Hospital, where stormwater typically turns Main

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Floodwaters in downtown Woodstock Monday afternoon carried this Geo Tracker more than a half block from behind the Springhouse Restaurant. While the results of the downpour were less than pleasant for most, Hubbel French and Robert Trail seized the opportunity to take a dip in Hollow Run. The French Brothers Dairy on Water Street.



# Caterer awash again

Shaffer's floods as 2 inches of rain falls in 2 hours

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Street into a short-term stream, a trailer park, a doctor's office and a caterer took on water. Hollow Run, which crosses beneath Main between Spring and South streets picked up a lightweight vehicle belonging to the owner of the Springhouse Restaurant and washed it downstream.

Mayor William Moyers said Tuesday that the storm came within two weeks of the scheduled completion of three stormwater retention ponds along the Southern Railroad tracks in South Woodstock, facilities which eventually are expected to resolve part of the town's drainage problems.

"The engineers have told us that (the ponds) will alleviate the problem," Mayor Moyers said.

Monday's storm, however,

walls of the earthen ponds before they had been seeded and before standpipes had been installed, may have set back completion of those facilities, the mayor said.

Moyers said the stormwater ponds project has been delayed because town officials had opted to do the work themselves, using equipment owned by the town and the county governments, to keep down costs.

Three ponds are under construction, all located below the schools and above the railroad tracks.

Moyers said after Monday's downpour he toured affected areas and observed that a drainage pond located on the new Water Street extension behind Shenandoah Memorial Hospital was filled with water and working.

The problem with floodwater coming from Spring Hollow, however, is one ponds are not likely to correct. The mayor said town and county officials must mutually work out a plan to resolve that matter since most of the Spring Hollow water comes from west of Interstate 81 and outside the town limits.

Hardest hit, as usual, was Shaffer's Inc, the caterer whose retail store is located immediately across from the hospital's entrance.

Floodwaters entered the store and picked up an ice box located outside, relocating it to a traffic island next door.

The GEO Tracker that washed away from the restaurant and was apparently destroyed was owned by Sue Harshman.

The loss of the vehicle was picked up by