

Honorable Lion tells how to befriend a dog

Paul Raber is Lion of the Year

"I never expected this," said Paul Raber the day after the Marietta Lions Club presented him with the Lion of the Year award.

The plaque was given him by president Dennis Shumaker and secretary Jim Price at the Thursday night meeting.

Several of his fellow Lions visited Paul Raber on Wednesday, and asked if he was coming to the meeting. When Paul told them he didn't think so, they began trying to talk him into it. "One fellow wouldn't leave until I pro-

mised to come," Paul says.

Even though he didn't expect the award, Paul admitted to the Susquehanna Times that he had worked hard on Lions Club projects this year.

"After all, it's a club to benefit the public. We work to help people, especially the blind," Paul noted.

Paul Raber is Marietta's Dog Officer. After we took his picture, we asked how his job was going.

"Fine," he replied. "I've only got one stray here, and I think I've found

a home for him. I'd rather find a dog a good home than take an animal to the shelter."

Paul told us the secret of being a dog officer and staying healthy: "Don't let them [the dogs] know you're afraid," he said. "Then you'll be safe."

We asked him how to demonstrate lack of fear to a dog.

"Walk straight toward them," Paul replied, "and hold your hand out with the palm up. If you hold your palm down, the dog thinks you might hit him."

Paul admitted to us that his strategy isn't foolproof, and showed us scars from an English sheepdog.

"That breed, and the Doberman pinscher, are the least predictable dogs. They can lick your hand one minute and be at your throat the next," he said.

Generally, though, Paul gets good results with his technique. After he quickly made friends with one snarling canine, a man told him, "I've lived next door to that beast for ten years, and I wouldn't dare do what you just did!"



Lion of the Year Paul Raber poses with his plaque, presented to him last week by the Lions.

Big cake: The first two pastry chefs at LBJ's daughter's wedding died suddenly, but Eric survived to bake the 600 lb. fruitcake. Last week, he baked the grandest cake we've ever seen for Charlie Groff and his bride.

When Charlie Groff got married last week, he apparently wanted a very fine wedding cake—he called in Eric Devon Crane.

Eric Devon Crane is a pastry chef for the famous Greenbrier Hotel in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia. Mr. Crane, in addition to being a friend of Charlie Groff (who works summers at the Greenbrier), is one of the world's top cake creators.

Eric Crane travels all over the country baking and icing elaborate cakes. His cakes have been eaten in the White House (he baked one for Linda Bird Johnson's wedding), and he can handle any job—he once made a 600 lb. fruitcake, for instance.

"It took six big men to carry it," he says of that prodigious fruitcake. "It was raining all week, and we had to keep shoring the cake up with extra boards as it absorbed moisture."

A quiet, modest man with a West Virginia drawl, Eric Devon Crane works entirely by hand, using pieces of paper rolled up and stuffed with icing. "I just make a cone, trim the end to the proper shape, and fill it up," he explains. He disdains to use the metal tubes used by most housewives. The only mechanical devices he uses are batter and icing mixers.

Working with paper, he achieves incredible results. When we first saw the

laced icing on Charlie Groff's wedding cake, we thought it was dipped string, because it was so thin and regular. Eric Devon Crane also creates miniature sculptures in icing, again using only paper cones.

The Groff cake, he told us, took him only ten hours to make.

Mr. Crane's wedding cake for Linda Bird Johnson was smaller than his giant fruitcake, weighing in at only 350 lbs. But it was a tough job.

In the first place, he was a bit uneasy about doing it at all. The two pastry chefs who had been working on the cake before him had both died—within a space

of two weeks. He admits that this spooked him a bit, but, as he says, "It had to be done."

Eric survived baking the five-section cake in West Virginia, but found the icing a tough job. After the sections had been brought to the White House, one to a truck, the cake was set up in the East Room. Working six feet off the floor on a scaffolding, Eric had to "do every trick in the book, except to stand on my head" to ice the cake. "And then, they had the Marine Band practicing at the other end of the room," he says.

Eric worked on the icing from 7:00 AM to 11:00 PM the day before the Linda

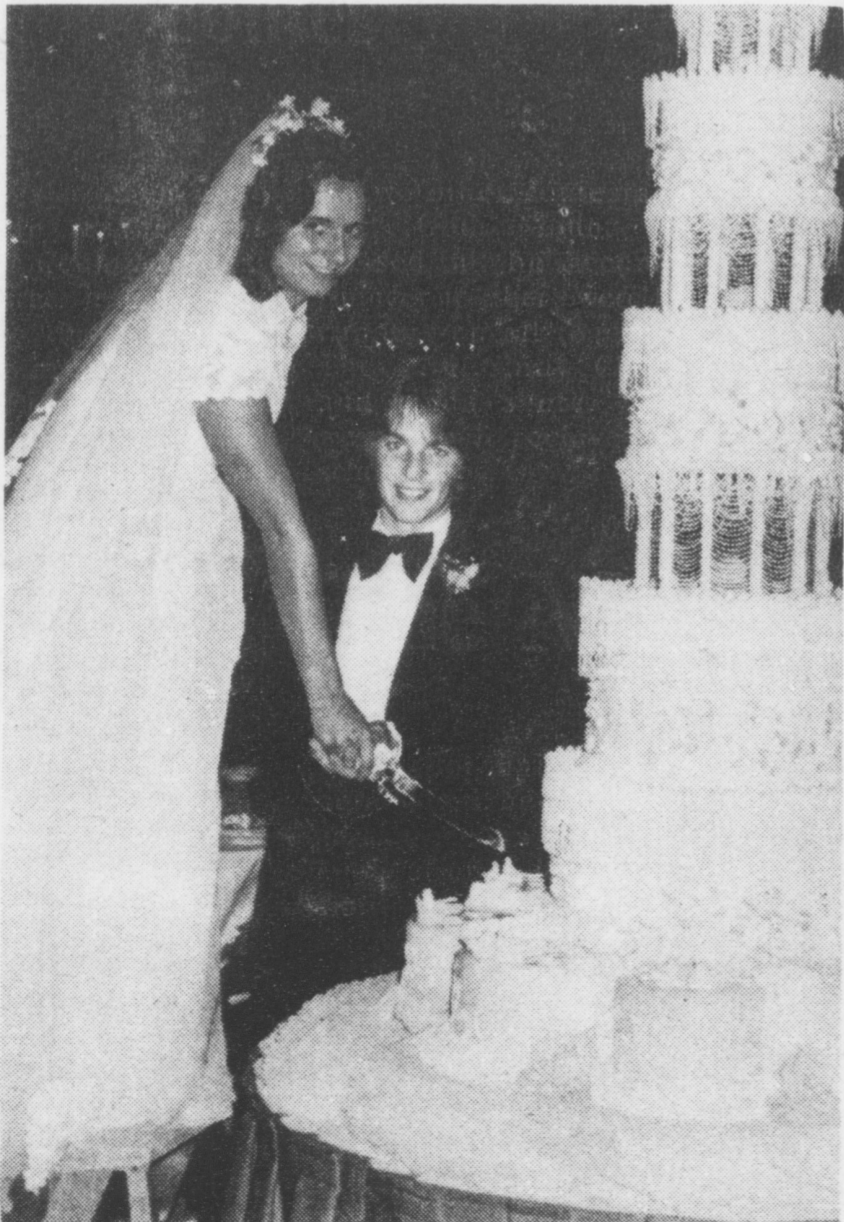
Bird got married. "They'd set up the icing mixer in the basement. It was really an ordeal. I kept tripping over the TV cables on the floor," he relates.

Eric didn't see the lady he was baking for, or the president, but he did pass Lady Bird and Captain Robb (Linda Bird's groom) in the hallway.

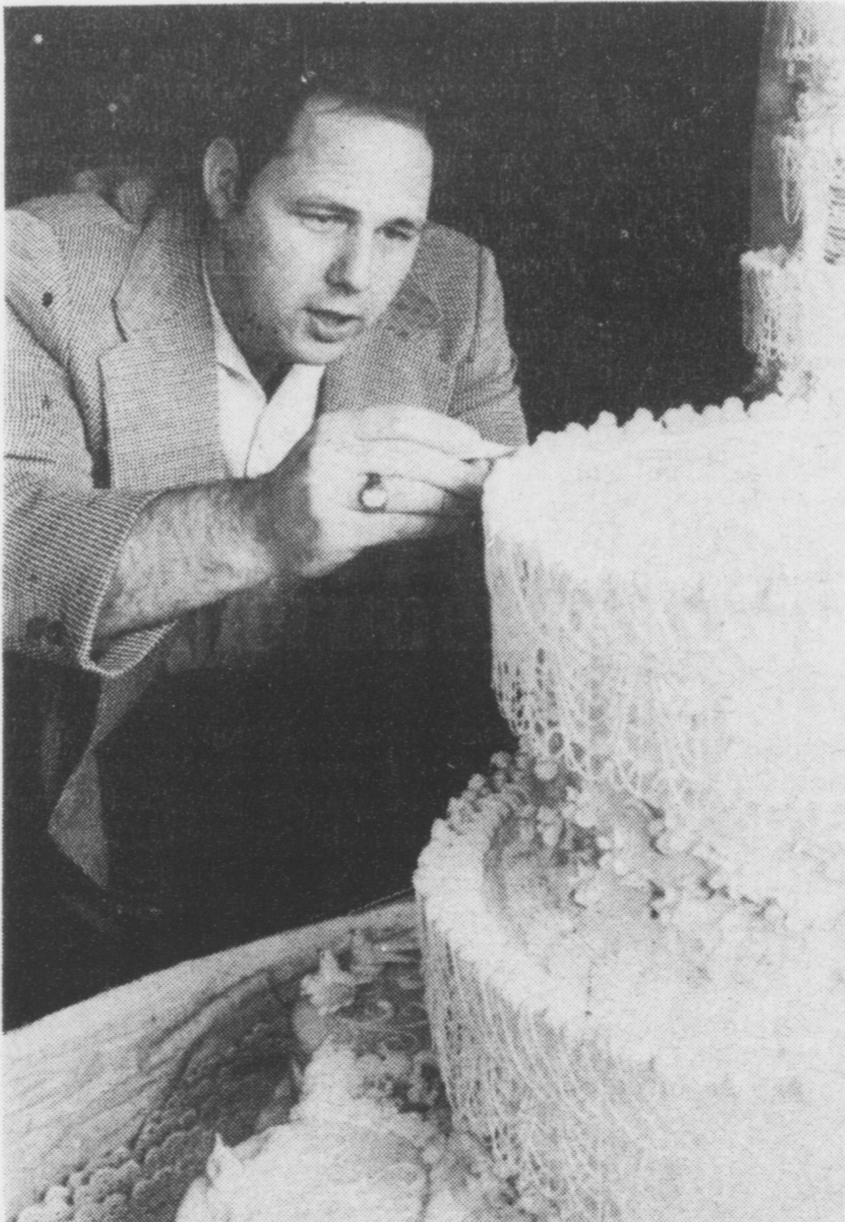
It was while icing the presidential cake that Eric met Mr. Haller, who is the resident White House chef. He visits Mr. Haller about every two years. Mr. Haller told Eric that the Johnsons

were hard to cook for, because they always had more guests at an affair than originally planned. If Mr. Haller was told to prepare for 200 people, he always ended up having to feed 300. According to Mr. Haller, though, the Nixons were very precise, and never let people crash their parties.

Eric Crane has been a pastry chef for 18 years. In that time he has seen wedding fashions change. [continued on page 7]



Newly-weds Cynthia and Charlie Groff pose with the fabulous cake made by Charlie's friend, Eric Crane. It's smaller than the one Eric made for Linda Bird Johnson's wedding, which weighed 350 lbs.



Eric Devon Crane, top pastry chef from West Virginia, demonstrates his icing technique. The object in his hand is a rolled piece of paper, filled with icing, which is the only tool Mr. Crane uses to create...



...this exquisite sugary fairylard. Mr. Crane sometimes works with "pasting," or "gum paste," a rigid mixture of sugar, egg whites, cream of tartar, gum powder, and corn starch, which he casts in a plaster mold. Other chef/artists work in wax or ice.