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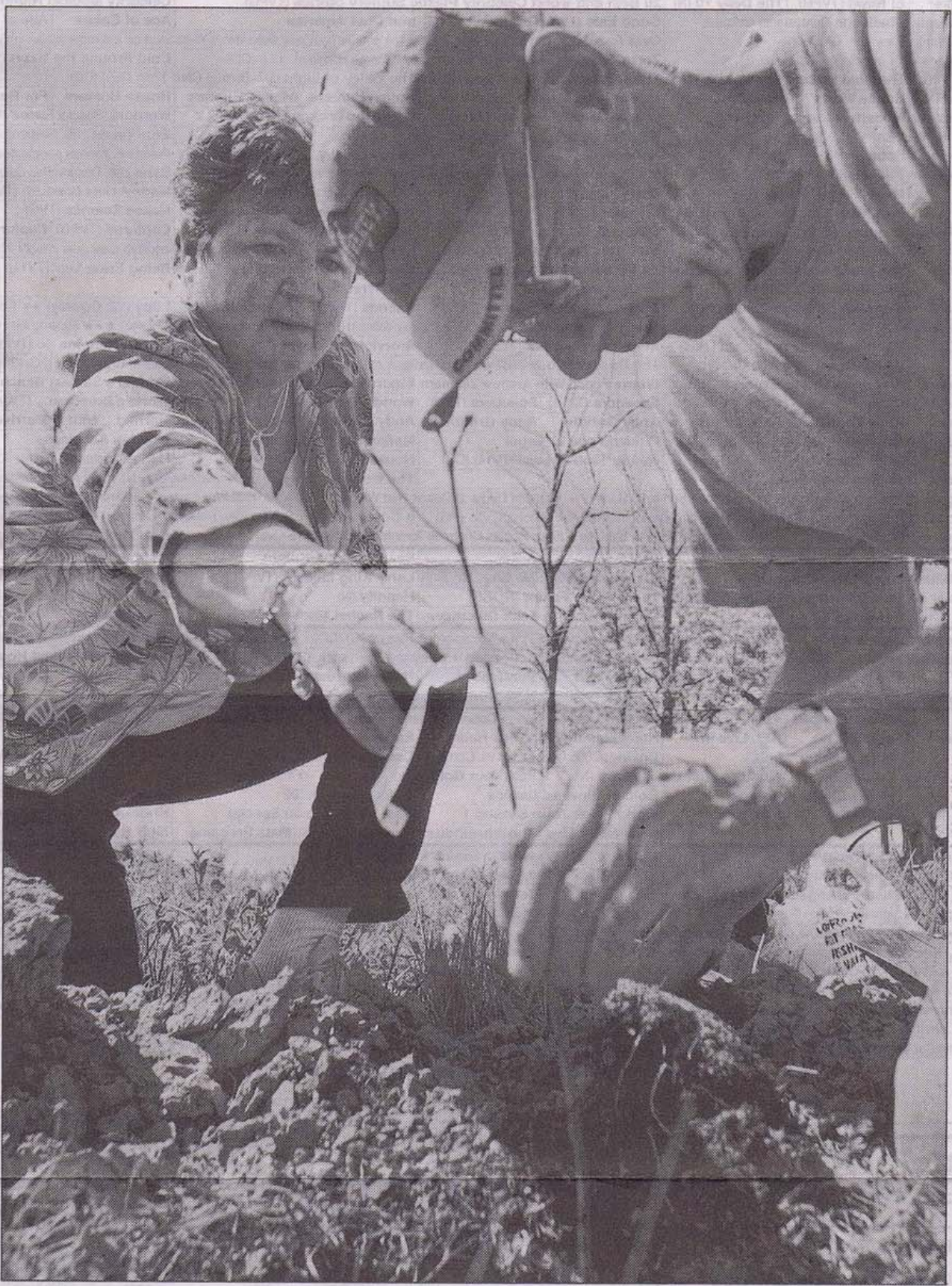
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PETER R. BARBER/GAZETTE PHOTOGRAPHER

Leafy addition

Liz and Donald Reinhart of Root plant a chestnut tree in the yard of the Walnut Hill Farm on Wednesday. The New York chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation teamed up with Cornell University and National Wild Turkey Federation to plant the trees in Montgomery County, part of an effort to restore the species to areas it once grew in before succumbing to blight.

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BY EDWARD M
Gazette Report

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Effort will plant chestnut trees in Canajoharie

The New York State Chapter of the The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF) is teaming up with Cornell University and the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) to help bring back the American chestnut to New York State.

An American chestnut tree planting ceremony in Canajoharie, May 13 will be part of a series of similar plantings across the state.

The long-term goal of these tree planting projects is to conduct at least one tree planting in each of the 53 counties in New York that were once home to the American chestnut.

In Canajoharie, the ceremony will take place the Walnut Hill Farm, 256 Melick Road on Wednesday, May 13 at 3pm.

This event is the result of collaboration with TACF, Cornell University's Cooperative Extension Program, and the New York Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf), to plant American chestnuts within their natural range.

The planting will help raise awareness of several efforts to restore the American chestnut and teach new audiences about chestnut growth and culture.

The seedlings to be planted are pure American chestnut and have been grown at either New York's Saratoga Nursery or C&C Nursery in Churchville.

These seedlings are blight-susceptible and will eventually succumb to the blight.

Despite that, these trees can often grow to 30 plus feet before succumbing and, usually, produce fruit before dying.

The goal is to plant somewhere between two and 10 seedlings at any given site. At least two chestnuts are necessary for nut production in the future.

Nearly four billion American chestnuts were destroyed by blight during the first half of the 20th century.

Entire species of wildlife that depended on the tree at a major food source were lost, and families that used the chestnut as a cash crop were devastated when the blight struck from Maine down to Georgia and west across to the Ohio River Valley.

"As Chapter President of the Schoharie County Ridge Runners, NWTf Chapter, we are very fortunate to be asked to participate in this very important project," said Don and Liz Reinhart.

"Over the last 10 years we have planted crabapple trees that came from the NWTf as part of their conservation programs. Knowing that the chestnut trees will be around for our grandchildren and a future generation has been a major reason for us to plant the trees on our farm. We hope that others will be joining us in planting the chestnut trees on their farms this month."