WONDERFUL WEST VIRGINIA

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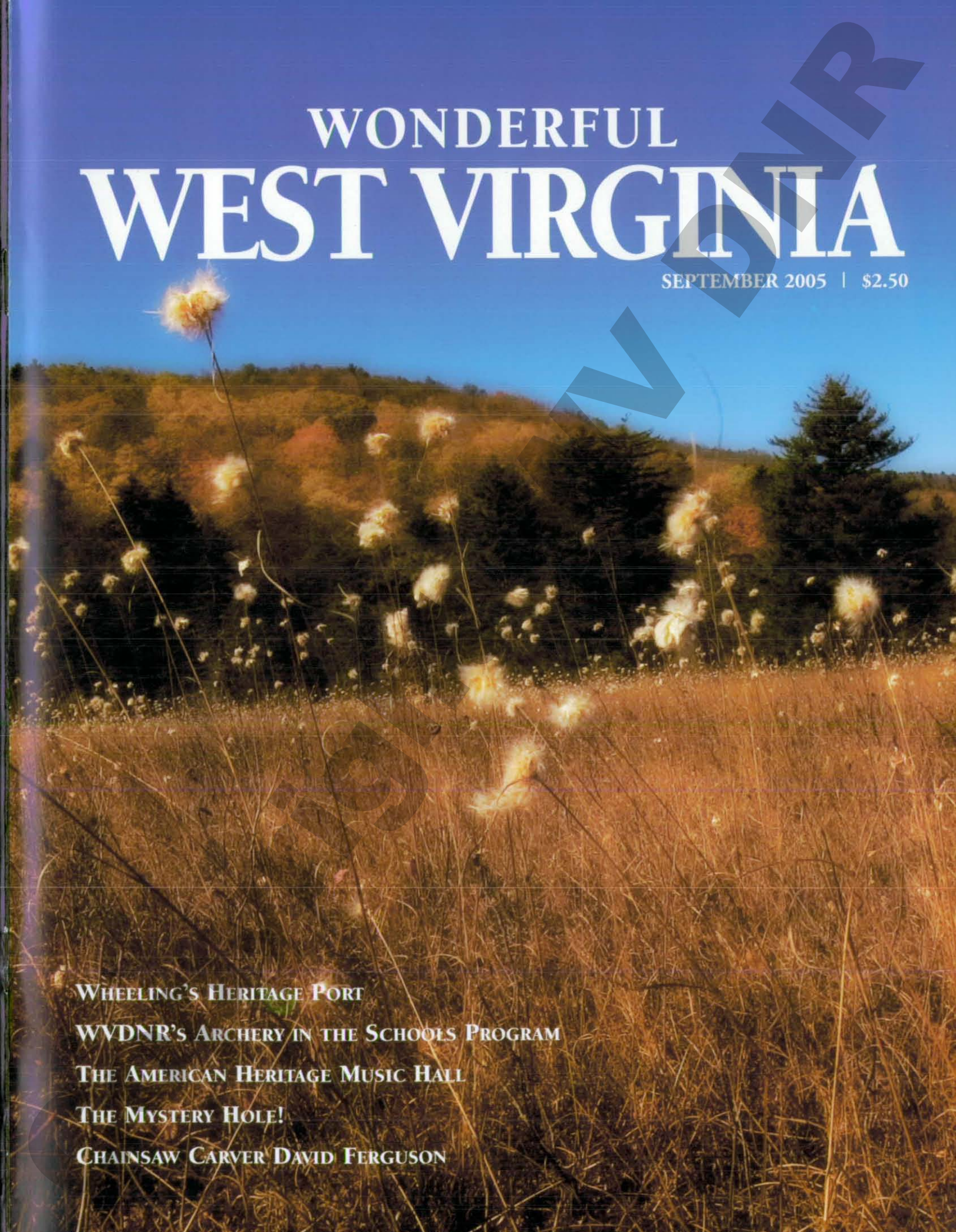

WHEELING'S HERITAGE PORT

WVDNR'S ARCHERY IN THE SCHOOLS PROGRAM

THE AMERICAN HERITAGE MUSIC HALL

THE MYSTERY HOLE!

CHAINSAW CARVER DAVID FERGUSON

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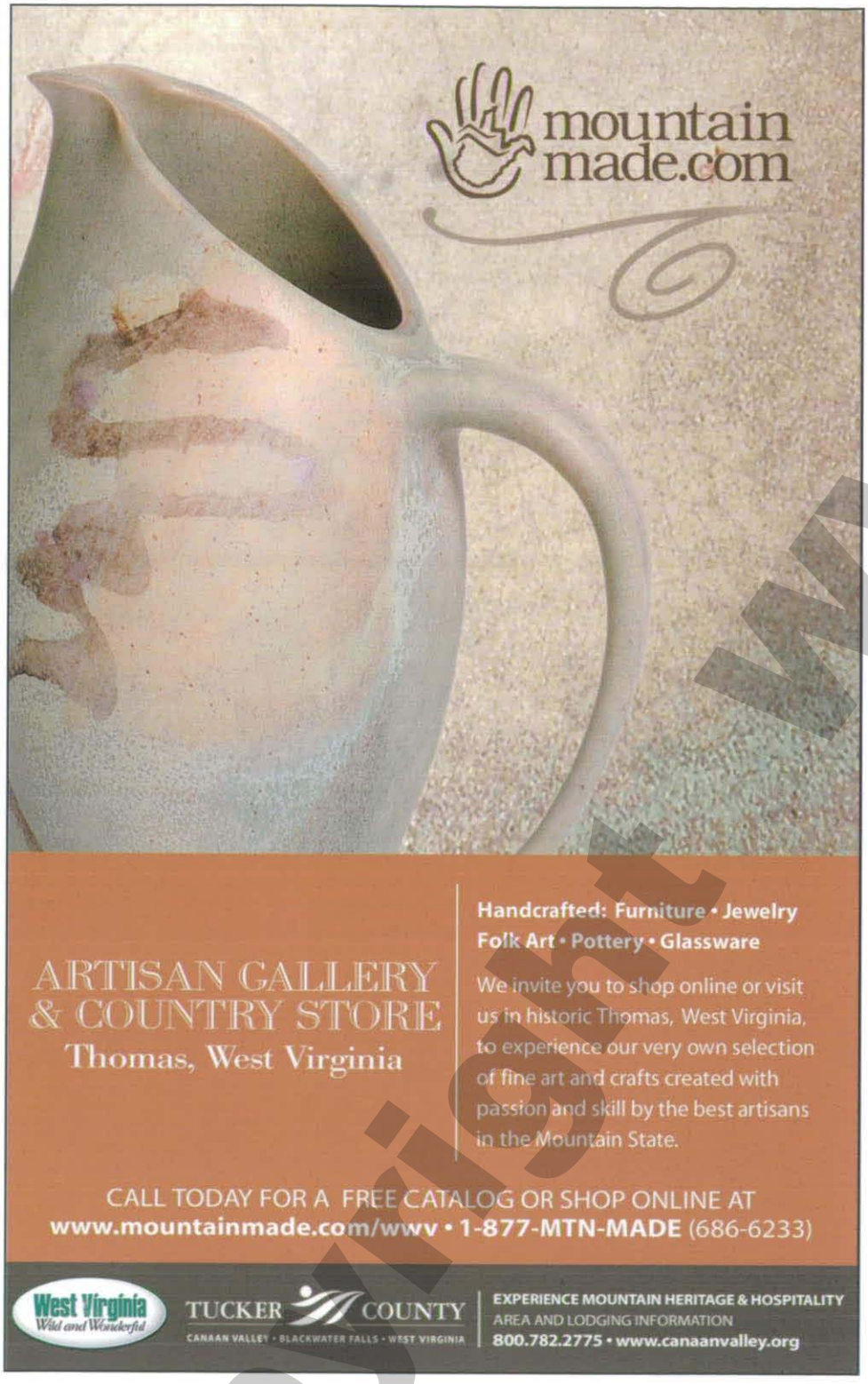

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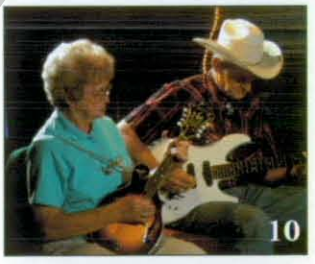

Cover: Autumn creeps into the Cranberry Glades.

By Clayton Spangler

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Wheeling's *Heritage* Port

By Jamie Fenske ⁂ Photographs by Steve Shaluta

WV DNR

Wheeling, the friendly city, could also be known as the progressive city and the city on the move. No longer able to rely on the iron and steel industry and other traditional manufacturing entities, Wheeling and the surrounding community are finding new ways to continue to grow and diversify. Known throughout the state and the region as the home of such famous attractions as Jamboree USA and the Capitol Music Hall, Oglebay Park, the Wheeling Island Racetrack and Gaming Center, Victorian-era architecture, and the Wheeling Suspension Bridge, the city continues to keep an eye to the future while embracing its rich past.

Recent success stories include the opening of a nearby Cabela's retail outdoor store and the Wheeling Artisan Center. Wheeling is also home to two professional sports franchises—the Wheeling Nailers hockey team and the Wheeling Greyhounds national indoor football team.

Yet another recent major success story is the Wheeling Heritage Port. Located in the heart of downtown Wheeling, this waterfront park has become the focal point of a multitude of events, festivals, activities, and attractions.

From the city's early days in the eighteenth century and through most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the waterfront was used only as a commercial and industrial area. For centuries factories and mills of every shape and size have crowded the banks of the Ohio River in this working class town. What little space remained on the city's riverbank was used for loading and unloading everything from timber, coal, and freight to livestock and passengers.

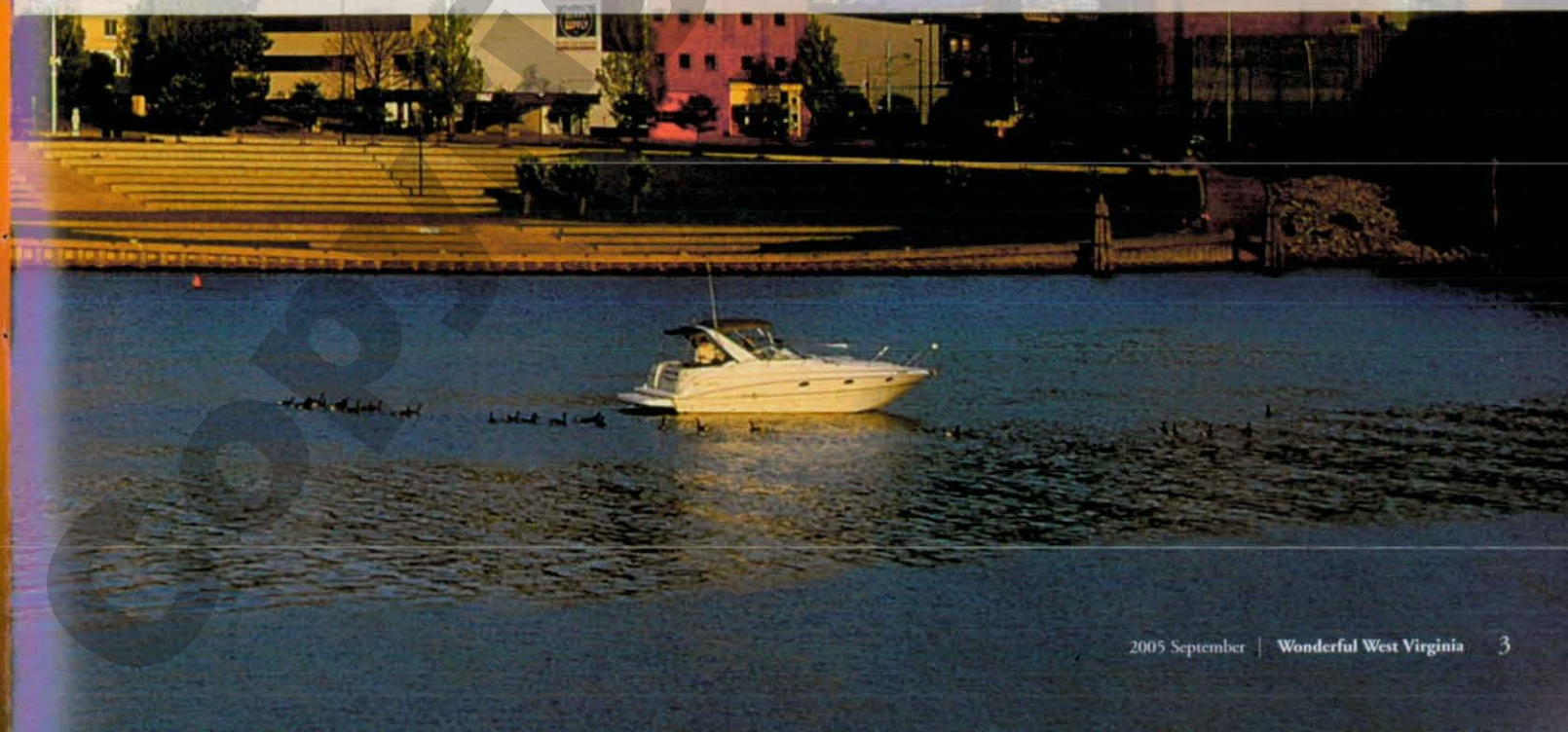
Some of the more noteworthy passengers to arrive in Wheeling by its port were General Lafayette, Meriwether Lewis, and Mark Twain. The Wheeling Port was an important stop along the Ohio River, and at one time, more cargo passed by Wheeling via the Ohio River than traveled through the Panama Canal.

Recreational use of the waterfront was never a serious consideration until the 1980s, according to Hydie Friend, executive director of the Wheeling National Heritage Area Corporation. Historically, the waterfront was always the focus of downtown Wheeling, but in more recent times, the community had become disconnected from the Ohio River and the waterfront, says Friend.

The city now realizes the full potential of its magnificent waterfront. According to Friend, the downtown area attracts 350,000 visitors annually. In the near future, the Heritage Area Corporation will release a 10-year plan that focuses on the waterfront as a gateway for highlighting and revitalizing the area.

Luck played a big part in establishing the Heritage Port. Friend notes that for close to half a century, the former Wharf Parking Garage kept this prime parcel of riverfront property from being newly developed. Once the parking garage was demolished, the way was opened for the Heritage Port. The port was constructed in four phases as funding became available through the National Park Service.

The Heritage Port was designed and sculpted with the knowledge it would be flooded. "When the Ohio River recedes, the port drains so that no water is trapped on the grounds, which is an extraordinary design feature," says Friend. In 2003, the Heritage Port was designated as one of



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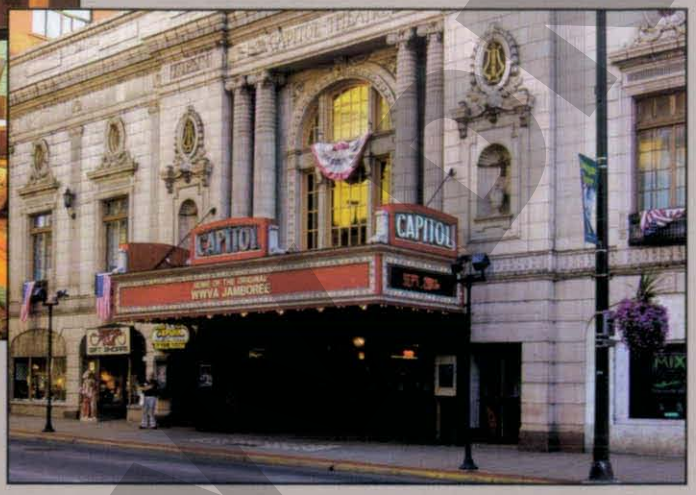

Wheeling's restored downtown port is within walking distance to the Artisan Center (above) and the Capitol Music Hall (right).

In 2003, the Heritage Port was designated as one of the top

the top waterfront projects in the world by the National Waterfront Center. Other award-winning projects included waterfront parks in London and Vancouver.

Wheeling's Heritage Port includes two amphitheaters, a veteran's memorial area, and a unique playground. The veteran's memorial area includes monuments paying tribute to each conflict in which the United States has been engaged. The playground was constructed entirely by volunteers. The park is also one of many access points to the 13-mile Wheeling Heritage Trail System, which follows the old Baltimore and Ohio Railroad grade along the Ohio River.

Some of the events held at the Heritage Port are the weekly Waterfront Wednesdays Summer Concert Series, the Wheeling Feeling Chili Cook-off, the African-American Jubilee, the annual Fourth of July Celebration, the Upper Ohio Valley Italian Festival, the Debbie Green Memorial 5K Run and Walk, the Heritage Music BluesFest, and the Wheeling Heritage Port Sternwheel Festival.

The weekly concert series hosts a wide variety of music by local bands, including pop, rock, country, bluegrass, jazz, and classical. Sponsored by the city, these free concerts run from June through August.

The annual Chili Cook-off invites chili chefs to compete to represent Wheeling in the National Chili Cook-off and includes free entertainment and a car cruise. This hot event is sanctioned by the International Chili Society and benefits the United Way of the Upper Ohio Valley.

The 13th annual African-American Jubilee promotes cultural sharing throughout the Ohio Valley and West Virginia and includes a wide variety of food and entertainment. The 2004 Jubilee featured the 100-member Children of Thunder Drum and Flag Corps.

The city's annual Fourth of July Celebration features the nationally acclaimed Wheeling Symphony Orchestra in conjunction with a spectacular fireworks show staged from the Wheeling Suspension Bridge. The annual Upper Ohio Valley Italian festival is the largest Italian Festival in West Virginia and the third largest Italian festival in the United States. This weekend-long event features an array of activities, including live entertainment, Italian food, wine tasting, and a bocce ball tournament.

The Debbie Green Memorial 5K Run and Walk is considered the national 5K championship race by the Road Runners Club of America and is West Virginia's largest 5K

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Wheeling's renovated waterfront is a beautiful spot for picnics, concerts, and festivals.

waterfront projects in the world by the National Waterfront Center.

race. Proceeds from this special event benefit children in the Ohio Valley who are stricken with leukemia.

One of my favorite attractions is the annual Heritage Music BluesFest weekend. This three-day blues festival features some of the top blues artists in the country. Tickets can be purchased at the adjacent WesBanco Arena box office or online at www.heritagemusicfest.com. The festival attracts fans from across the United States and is rated one of the nation's best blues festivals by several music publications.

The annual Sternwheel Festival includes sternwheeler boats of all shapes and sizes from across the region. This weekend also features great food, entertainment, and even tours of some of the sternwheelers.

Two new waterfront events to look for are the Heritage Port Car Show and Riverfront Movie Night. The Heritage Port Car Show is sponsored by the City of Wheeling and Advance Auto Parts. Proceeds from the car show go toward the Waterfront Wednesdays concert series.

Finally, both the Mississippi Queen and the Delta Queen routinely call Wheeling one of their select ports and are always a big favorite of river buffs. The Mississippi Queen is one of the largest and grandest paddlewheelers on the Ohio River and boasts the world's largest working calliope.

Susie Nelson, marketing specialist with the City of Wheeling, says that one of the city's primary goals is to provide a wide selection of events and activities for both the local community and visitors to the Heritage Port.

When no festivals or events are taking place, the waterfront park serves as a great place for picnics, relaxing, kite flying, or daydreaming. The park offers spectacular views of the Wheeling Suspension Bridge, Wheeling Island, the mighty Ohio River, and the surrounding hills. Centrally located, the waterfront park is within easy walking distance of the Wheeling Visitor Center, WesBanco Arena, West Virginia Independence Hall, the Artisan Center, and the Capitol Music Hall.

For a complete and up-to-date schedule of events, go to www.WheelingEvents.org.

Frequent contributor Jamie Fenske is a wildlife biologist, avid hiker, and amateur photographer. He lives in the Northern Panhandle.

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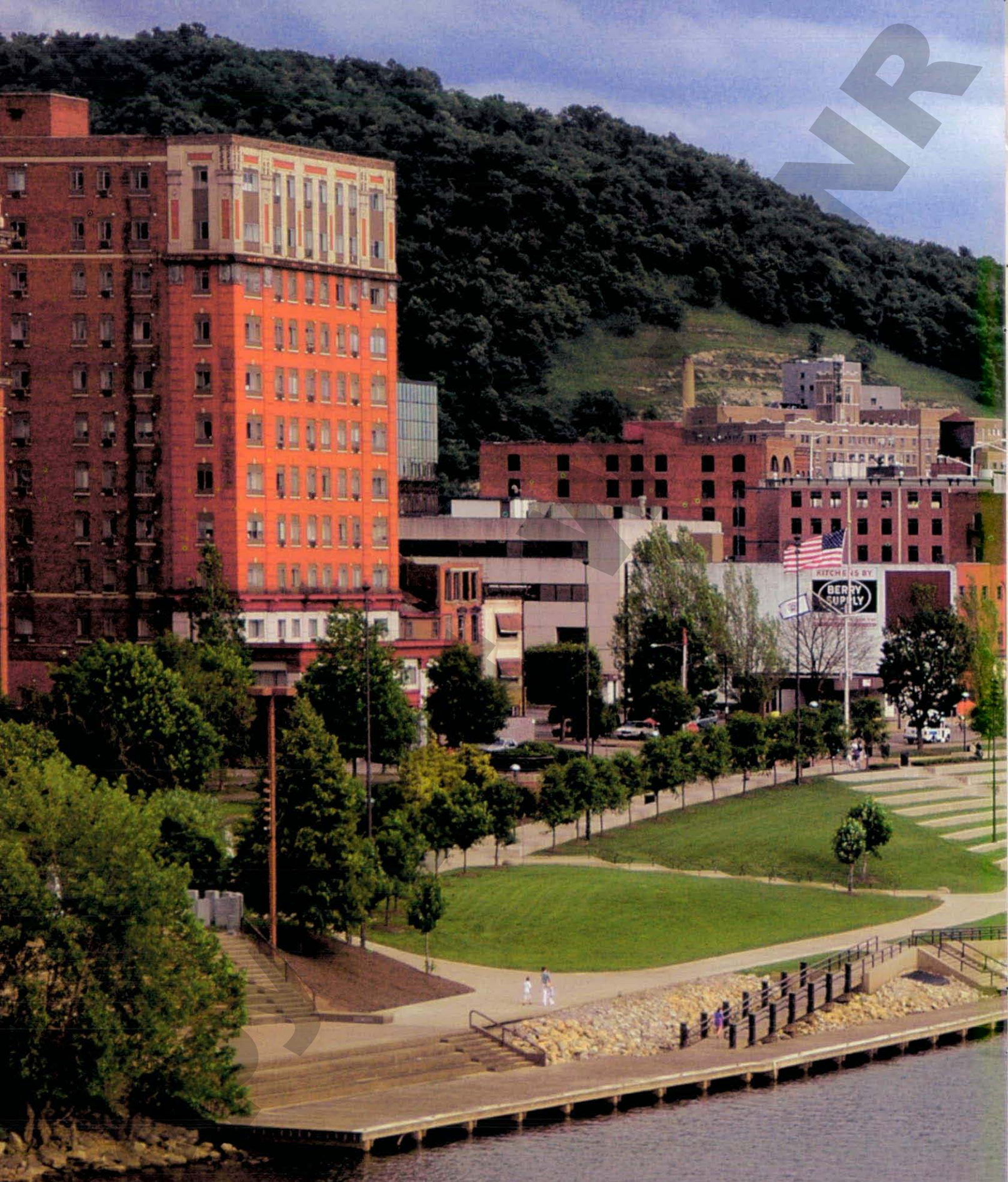
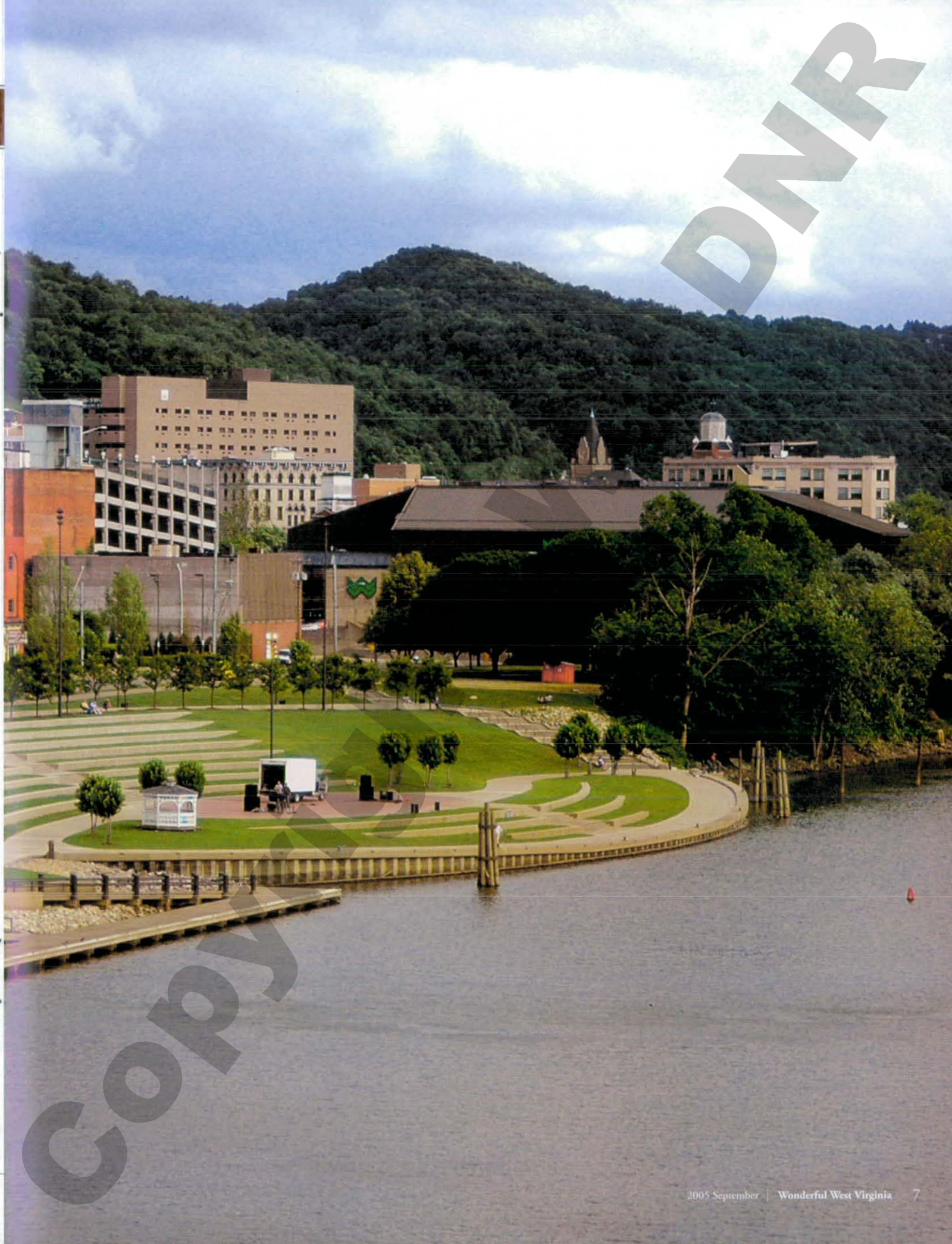


The Wheeling Heritage Port, with a rich industrial past, has had its share of famous visitors, including Mark Twain and Meriwether Lewis.



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On Target

WVDNR's Archery in the Schools Program

By Steve LeMaster

West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR) biologist Scott Warner can't help but get excited when he talks about the agency's Archery in the Schools Program. Warner has had a helping hand in the popular program that now allows West Virginia middle school and high school students—some of whom may have difficulty succeeding in other physical activities—to learn archery as part of their physical education.

In 2004, as part of a pilot program, WVDNR implemented Archery in the Schools in 20 public schools. WVDNR officials Warner and Dave McClung, along with Randy Eppling of the West Virginia Bowhunters Association, were trained by the National Archery Association as Level II instructors.

The trio in turn trained West Virginia physical education (P. E.) instructors from participating schools in archery history, safety, and shooting form. The P. E. teachers were required to attend a two-day training course that included 12 hours of instruction that qualified them for a Level I National Archery Association certification. Afterwards, each of the schools received an archery kit that consisted of 10 bows, five targets, safety netting, arrows, and related equipment. The kits cost $2,000 a piece and provided students and teachers with top-quality equipment and safety gear.

Thanks to the Archery in the Schools Program, many West Virginia students who once dreaded P. E. class now look forward to getting off the bleachers and competing in a physical activity. Archery is accessible to people of all athletic abilities, including disabled students and those with physical limitations. And the star basketball or football players aren't always the best archers. Warner also stresses that students don't have to be hunters to enjoy archery.

WVDNR points to Kentucky, the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) founding state, as inspiration for the program. "The reason we got started had to do a lot with our neighboring state Kentucky," explains Warner. "Demographically, people in our states are about the same. Kentucky had great success with the program and we felt we could do the same." The Archery in the Schools Program first started in 22 Kentucky schools in 2002, under the name Archery: On Target for Life.

Kentucky now has more than 322 schools enrolled in the program, and 24 other states have also introduced NASP into their P. E. curriculums. NASP, which offers Olympic-style target archery in accordance with National Physical Education Standards for 4th- through 12th-grade students, has received inquiries from 14 different countries interested in importing the archery program.

Archery is a life skill that offers excellent sport, scholarship, and recreational opportunities, Warner says. "There are so many different avenues you can take with the sport of archery," he adds. "Just look around at the number of archery tournaments. Who knows? The next Olympic archer may come from West Virginia." Warner says that archery target practice gives many students a constructive after-school outlet. Since the introduction of the archery program in Kentucky, school attendance rates have risen.

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Warner believes that WVDNR's archery program will benefit not only students but also teachers, program sponsors, and whole communities.

In March 2005, the third annual NASP tournament was held in Louisville, Kentucky. The event attracted more than 1,800 students and is considered the largest student archery event in United States history. Since the tournament's debut in 2003, participation has tripled. "The tremendous growth and popularity of this program is astounding," says Roy Grimes, an aide to Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Tom Bennett and national coordinator for NASP.

The program has also received strong support from national organizations, including the National Wild Turkey Federation, and from archery experts like Matt McPherson, founder and CEO of Matthews Inc. and inventor of the Genesis bow. The Genesis is the first one-size-fits-all bow that automatically covers draw lengths from 15 to 30 inches. The bow enables beginners of all ages and sizes to learn the sport in a precise and safe fashion. Weighing only 20 pounds, the Genesis bow eliminates let-off and offers light draw weights of 10 to 20 pounds.

At the 2004 Archery Trade Association Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana, McPherson personally matched the National Wild Turkey Federation's $100,000 donation to NASP. WVDNR's Archery in the Schools Program, as well as the archery clubs it has inspired in schools around the state, has had no shortage of local support. Sponsors include (but are not limited to) Gary's Sporting Goods, the International Bowhunting Organization, Parker Bows, Stateline Hunt Club, Warner Law Offices, the West Virginia Bowhunters Association, the West Virginia Department of Education, the West Virginia Department of Education and the Arts, and WVDNR.

WVDNR held additional training sessions for P. E. teachers in March and May of 2005 and is planning the first statewide Archery in the Schools tournament next year. The tournament, with divisions for both middle school and high school students, will be held in January or February 2006. In terms of popularity, positive impact on students, and community support, WVDNR's Archery in the Schools Program has hit a bull's-eye. For more information, visit www.wvdnr.gov and click on the Archery in the Schools subheader.

Steve LeMaster is sports editor of the Floyd County Times. *He has covered the NASCAR Nextel Cup Series and appreciates outdoor activities and auto racing as much as any other sports. LeMaster also contributes to* Kentucky Monthly, Kentucky Living, *and* The Cats' Pause. *He has also worked as a radio commentator and sports talk show cohost.*

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THE AMERICAN HERITAGE music HALL

By Nancy L. Mills Photographs by Steve Shaluta

On Tuesday evenings, the hills south of Lewisburg are indeed alive with the sound of music, courtesy of the American Heritage Music Hall in Ronceverte. The weekly jammin' sessions take place from 7 to 11 PM and are open to all ages of musicians, vocalists, listeners, and dancers.

Musicians Charlie Massie and Jeannie Crane founded the American Heritage Music Hall (AHMH) and oversee its operation. Every week the hall is filled with bluegrass, folk, country, old-time, and gospel music from groups with names like The Pot Luck Country Band, Swinging Country, Country Classic, and the Brier Pickers. All musicians are encouraged to join in, so bring your guitar (electric or acoustic), banjo, mandolin, drums, fiddle, autoharp, dulcimer, or harmonica and take part in the fun. Whether you sing along from your seat, grab a microphone on stage, or wear out your dancing boots, you'll have plenty of company.

With the goals of carrying on our nation's musical traditions and passing these traditions to younger generations, the AHMH is a large-scale version of sittin' and pickin' on an Appalachian front porch. The environment is warm and friendly with no alcohol, drugs, or smoking permitted. The venue is an excellent alternative to bars for great, live music.

AHMH founders Massie and Crane originally produced the music to accompany skits presented by the Eco Theater in Lewisburg, often composing their own tunes if they couldn't find anything suitable. The loss of the Eco Theater's home after the death of its originator, Maryat Lee, coupled with the growth in the number of musicians joining Massie and Crane, made it imperative to find a larger facility. The persistent Crane located a vacant building and AHMH, officially created in July 1998 and incorporated as a nonprofit organization in January 2003, had its first home.

This first home, the former Greenbrier Pet and Groom Shop, was transformed by the hard work of the founders and their friends, who applied fresh paint and carpeting on the walls behind the band performing area. They also constructed a kitchen in the old animal grooming area. Considering its former life, it's not surprising that the facil-

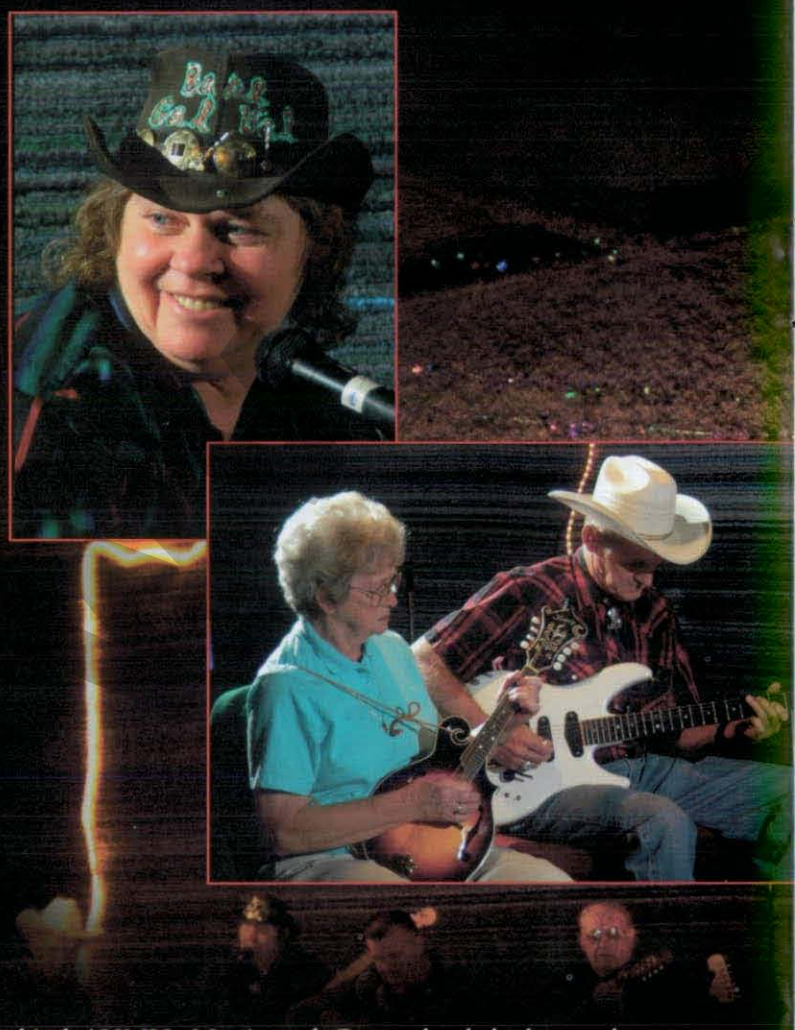
ity was affectionately known as the Dog House. Due to AHMH's popularity, however, it quickly outgrew the Dog House. When the Music Hall lost its lease earlier this year and had to close for a few months, the search was on for a larger location.

In May 2005, the American Heritage Music Hall reopened in the former Roller Rink at Island Park in Ronceverte. Massie and Crane, with help from dedicated volunteers and donations of labor, supplies, and money, have created a beautifully redecorated and much more spacious and comfortable venue. With over six times the amount of space, there is plenty of room for tables and chairs; a large, raised stage area; a huge dance floor; snack tables; an office area; storage; restrooms; and, coming soon, a children's corner for the youngest music fans.

There is no set admission charge—donations of $3 per person are currently suggested—and the musicians are not paid, though they gratefully accept donations. In fact, the operation is supported entirely by donations and money from Massie and Crane's pockets, though they hope to secure grants in the future.

Every week, the snack tables are filled with chips and dips, cookies and other desserts, coffee and soft drinks, and often, covered dishes brought by musicians and visitors. From doughnuts to deviled eggs, sandwiches to sweets, there's typically something for everyone. Once a month the party expands to include birthday and anniversary celebrations. The hall also provides brochures to area motels and the convention and visitors bureau as part of its goal to encourage tourism in Greenbrier County. Visitors have come from across West Virginia and Virginia, and from Florida, Kentucky, Ohio, various parts of New England, and even London, England. Musicians regularly appear from Lewisburg, White Sulphur Springs, Union, Caldwell, Fairlea, Alderson, Ronceverte, Organ Cave, Rainelle, and Beckley, as well as Covington, Virginia.

The striking dark blue walls of the Music Hall set off the glittery gold and silver of music-themed decorations and old record albums strung overhead. The stage area is outlined in white light tubes and some of the abundant artificial greenery sports strings of small white lights. On display are instruments for sale, including guitars, mandolins, and fiddles, one of which was built by Massie. Massie also crafts banjos, guitars, and mandolins. An array of antique and unusual instruments completes the display, including a hand-built dulcimer and Massie's own creation—the Hum-n-Strum. "If you can hum it, you can strum it," says Massie of the three-string instrument with hummingbird sound holes. You really have to see and hear it.



In addition to being talented musicians and the force behind AHMH, Massie and Crane also help keep other musicians playing their best. Massie repairs and reconditions stringed instruments of all kinds, except autoharps. "Too many strings for him," says Crane with a smile. Restringing, tuning, and reconditioning, as well as playing, autoharps is her specialty.

What really brings the American Heritage Music Hall to life each week are the many accomplished and enthusiastic musicians. On a typical night, they might range from "old-timers" to robust young men sporting ponytails to a bonafide "Honky Tonk Angel" who plays guitar and drums and leads the crowd in singing this Kitty Wells song and the popular "You Ain't Woman Enough to Take My Man." A father-son team offers "Long Black Train," the requested "Watermelon on the Vine," "Kentucky Girl," and other tunes, accompanied by guitar and banjo. When the musicians strike up "Folsom Prison Blues," audience members jump to their feet to form a train (a country-western conga line)—complete with train whistle sound effects—which snakes through the room, gathering dancers on each pass.

Later in the evening, Massie will grab his blue electric guitar and, with Crane on snare drum or autoharp, join the other musicians.

Maintaining and improving AHMH and hosting the weekly sessions is hard work, but it is a labor of love. It's obvious that everyone who comes to the music hall, whether musician or audience member, is there to have fun. Newcomers are always made to feel welcome. The smiles, friendly banter, questions about the health of other regulars, and joyful camaraderie make the crowd feel like a big, happy family. As Charlie says, "We're just trying to help keep live music alive." And so they are.

Directions to the American Heritage Music Hall: From Interstate 64, take Exit 169 and continue south on U.S. Route 219 through Lewisburg, Fairlea, and Ronceverte. Just before crossing the Greenbrier River, turn left into Ronceverte Island Park. Follow the road past the ball fields, picnic shelters, and swimming pool to the end of the park. The old roller rink is just past the entrance to the Mulligan Lumber Company. You'll see the large American Heritage Music Hall sign on the end of the building. (The address is 315 Monroe Avenue, Ronceverte.)

For more information, contact Jeannie Crane at (304) 645-2298 or Charlie Massie by phone at (304) 645-3982 or by e-mail at cemassie@citynet.net. Address correspondence by mail to American Heritage Music Hall, Inc., P.O. Box 1315, Lewisburg, WV 24901. Additional photographs of the music hall are displayed on the American Federation of Musicians, Local 674 Web site: www.local674-afm.com (click on the AHMH link).

Freelance writer Nancy L. Mills enjoys exploring and writing about her new home state of West Virginia. Prior to moving to Greenbrier County four years ago, Mills and her husband, David, lived and cruised aboard a boat for five years. Mills has published more than 65 pieces about their travel experiences. Their Web site is www.pairohermits.com.

Gallery

A master of capturing vestiges of bygone eras, fine art photographer Steve Balcourt of Flatwoods uses photographic equipment and processes that are themselves things of the past. Unmoved by recent digital trends in photography, Balcourt remains loyal to his hand-built, wooden view camera that produces single, 8 x 10-inch negatives. Balcourt logs numerous hours in his darkroom not only developing photographs but also creating sheets of custom, platinum-coated photographic paper needed for his signature platinum/palladium prints. The stunning results make the costly and painstaking process worthwhile for the veteran photographer. Balcourt has received grants from the West Virginia Commission on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts, and his work has been featured at Tamarack. To see more of his elegant black and white photographs, visit www.stevebalcourtphoto.com.

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By Steve Balcourt

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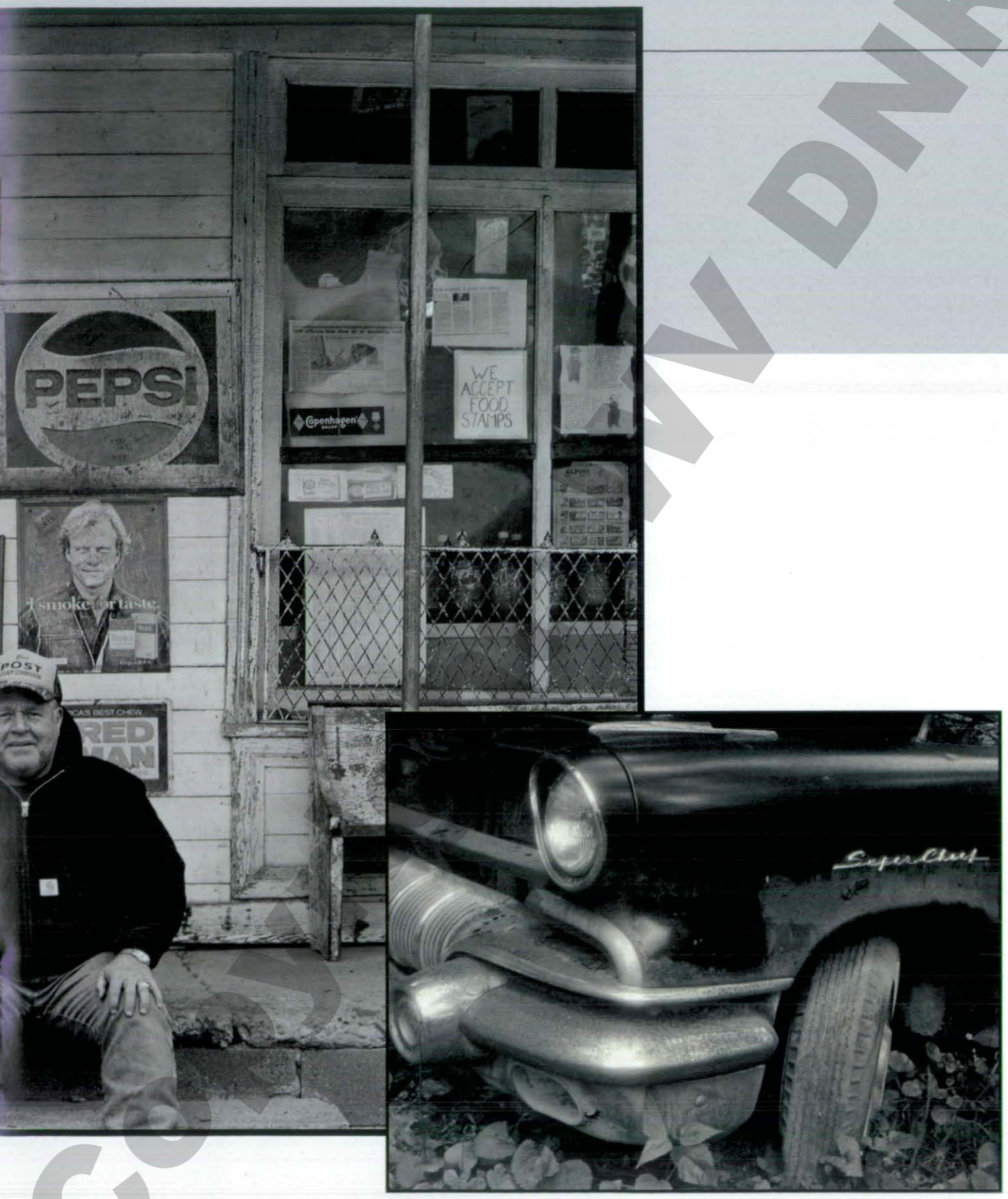
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Let the Chips Fall Where They May

Text and Photographs by
Steven Wayne Rotsch

At six feet tall with a graying ponytail sticking out the back of his baseball cap, David Ferguson of D-Whittlings Woodcarving in Williamstown looks a bit like his chainsaw art—rustic and rough hewn. But a conversation with this artist reveals the deep passion and pride that are so evident in his work.

Ferguson uses chainsaws like a painter uses brushes to create surprisingly detailed and realistic wooden sculptures. His subjects include animals, Native Americans, and, today, a Mountaineer he is finishing for a Florida couple. Many of his subjects are requested by his patrons, sometimes right down to the expressions.

The expressions on his creatures vary from benign to ferocious, but Ferguson gives each creation its own personality. "They're all unique. That's the niche of any artist," Ferguson says. When he creates a new piece, Mary, his wife of 25 years, can tell his mood by looking at the creature's facial expressions.

A father of three biological children and three stepchildren and a grandfather six times over, Ferguson fell into woodcarving 13 years ago while fishing on the banks of the Little Kanawha River. There he found an interesting walking stick and spent the next three days whittling eagles, snakes, and a man's face into it. When he was finished, his reaction to his first attempt at carving was, "That stinks!" "But I was hooked," he adds.

"I realized pretty quickly that I was consumed by woodcarving," Ferguson explains. He went to the library to check out wood-carving books. At the time, he was between jobs and picking up occasional work, which gave him plenty of time to practice carving.

One year later, he sold some of his creations at the former Parkersburg Sundowner Flea Market. Ferguson thought, "Hey, I've got something here." His first sale was a small piece depicting a scene of four separate miniature carvings which he called *The Dancers.* It featured guitar and accordion players and a man and woman dancing. Each figure was hand painted. It had taken him about a week to carve, and he sold it for $18 to another vendor at the flea market. "I was very satisfied that someone wanted what I created," he says.

Ferguson bought the piece back five years later by trading the vendor another of his sculptures worth about $125. Now Ferguson treats *The Dancers* as a museum piece.

Though he loves miniature carvings, Ferguson realized he couldn't make a living with the small sculptures. He remembered watching a man on TV carving something with a chainsaw, so he decided to try using chainsaws to create his art. He thought, "If I can make these carvings bigger and quicker, I might be able to make a living."

His first professional experience with a chainsaw was after high school, when he cut timber for Ohio Edison. At the time, using one to create art was the furthest thing from his mind. Now it's nearly second nature.

His first attempt to carve a four-foot-tall bear from a block of wood took two and a half weeks. "I sold it for $80," he says. "Now I can make bears in 45 minutes."

Today, he works from sketches, or photographs, or just makes up things as he goes. Sometimes the shape of the wood nudges his creativity.

Ferguson does some of his carvings at his shop, located just off Williamstown exit 185 on Interstate 77. Sometimes people driving by hear or see him carving with his chainsaws, and curiosity draws them into his driveway. "I get a lot of lookers," the self-taught artist says. A huge wooden bear and an eagle statue greet people at the front door. A massive, award-winning, 20-foot totem pole stands outside his shop.

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David Ferguson finishes a bear sculpture at his Willamstown shop.

Johnny Hall of Logan commissioned Ferguson to create art and furniture, including two life-size bears with teeth bared (for him); two life-size, placid bears (for his wife); and a massive wooden bench. The bench features two bears on either end holding lanterns and a deer's head embossed in the middle of the seat back. The bench is composed of four separate, large pieces that fit together.

Hall says, "When I see something I like, it doesn't take me time to make up my mind." He saw Ferguson's folk art sculptures and immediately ordered the custom art. Ferguson figures Hall's commissioned pieces weigh about a ton. Fortunately, he charges by the piece not the pound.

Ferguson's customers usually find him through word of mouth, and he has many repeat clients. He makes many of his creations on location at private homes or public parks, especially in the case of stump sculptures. Some of his art is on display at Parkersburg City Park and Williamstown's new Fenton Park. When severe thunderstorms damaged trees in several Marietta, Ohio, parks in 1998, Ferguson was asked to turn seven trees into art.

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David Ferguson sculpts fallen trees at the new Fenton Park in Williamstown. (Below) Ferguson has a gift for hand carving small figures as well as creating large statues with a chainsaw.

"I quickly realized that I was consumed by carving"

– David Ferguson

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Ferguson's artistry has its hazards, though. The whine of a two-stroke, revved engine; the blur of a spinning blade; plumes of smoke; and chunks of flying wood surround him as he works. Ferguson protects his legs with well-worn Kevlar chainsaw safety chaps. The chaps are designed to stop the chain from turning, with hundreds of Kevlar strings that release from the chaps when the outer covering is breached. "These chaps have saved my legs from injury a couple times," he says.

Ferguson pulls out his favorite chainsaw—a six-pound, Red Max "Zenoah" by Komatsu. Brian Ruth of Masters of the Chainsaw, a company that places professional carvers at fairs and other public demonstrations, designed the chainsaw specifically for carving. Its light weight and thin blade are now indispensable to Ferguson.

"Until I got this, my lightest saw was about eight pounds. It's only two pounds, but it makes a huge difference in how long I can work," Ferguson explains. He demonstrates the taxing nature of his art by holding the chainsaw saw at arm's length. The lighter chainsaw also allows for more intricate and refined work, though Ferguson uses a variety of chainsaws to sculpt a block of wood.

White pine is his wood of choice because it cracks less than other woods as it dries. He has also sculpted many oak, maple, cedar, catalpa, and walnut logs. Any chunk of wood stood upright is a blank canvas for the talented carver.

Ferguson's art isn't created a little at a time. He works the whole piece of wood at once, from top to bottom. Ferguson explained the four stages it takes to create his art, noting that each stage may have several steps.

The first stage in chainsaw carving is called *blocking*, which is rough cutting large, square chunks from a tree trunk to create a general shape. Once he is through with this stage, the general outline of the work takes shape. His favorite chainsaw for blocking has a 26-inch blade.

The second stage, called *boasting*, involves refining the rough shapes by cutting smaller chunks of wood away. Ferguson uses a 16-inch chainsaw with a shorter, finer blade for this step.

The third stage is *detail*. Here Ferguson's new, specialty chainsaw gets a workout. He uses it to carve out the mouths and teeth of his growling bears, as well as fur, feathers, and other intricate details.

Finishing is the last stage and may entail using a propane torch to burn off the rough edges and splinters. This process leaves the wood slightly charred, which helps accentuate the texture of the carving. In this stage, Ferguson also uses a wire brush to further smooth the sculpture. He then coats the wood with at least three layers of protective, clear spar urethane. Ferguson prefers to let the color and grain of the wood come through, rather than paint it.

There is little waste at Ferguson's shop. His mistakes are usually reborn into other pieces. He points to an unfinished sculpture of a turtle on the floor of his workshop. "That turtle was an eight-foot-tall grizzly," he says. "When I started, I made lots of mistakes." He grabs one of his bears by the head and says, "If I'd made a mistake with this one, it would have just been shorter."

A West Virginian by choice, Ferguson is fiercely proud to be able to support his family by doing what he loves and respects. Wood carving has become his profession and his life. Many West Virginians and visitors to the state have enjoyed his work. One of his more whimsical pieces is on display in the lobby of the Parkersburg Airport. It's a bear carrying a briefcase. The pairing is as unlikely as chainsaws and art.

Ferguson's chainsaw art can be purchased at Tamarack in Beckley, online at www.mountainmade.com, and at his shop in Williamstown. Ferguson will be demonstrating chainsaw art at the Jubilee at Stonewall Jackson's Mill and Conference Center in Weston September 2-5. His Web site is www.dwhittlings.com.

Steven Wayne Rotsch is an award-winning photographer who has been photographing the great outdoors for more than 30 years. He has worked as a photojournalist for the Associated Press, *the* St. Louis Globe-Democrat, *the* St. Louis Post-Dispatch, *the* Illinois State-Journal, *the* Clarksburg Exponent-Telegram, *and as the personal photographer for West Virginia Governors Joe Manchin III, Bob Wise, and Gaston Caperton. He has owned Positive Image Photography, an industrial, editorial, and commercial photography company, since 1975. His Web site is www.stevenrotsch.com.*

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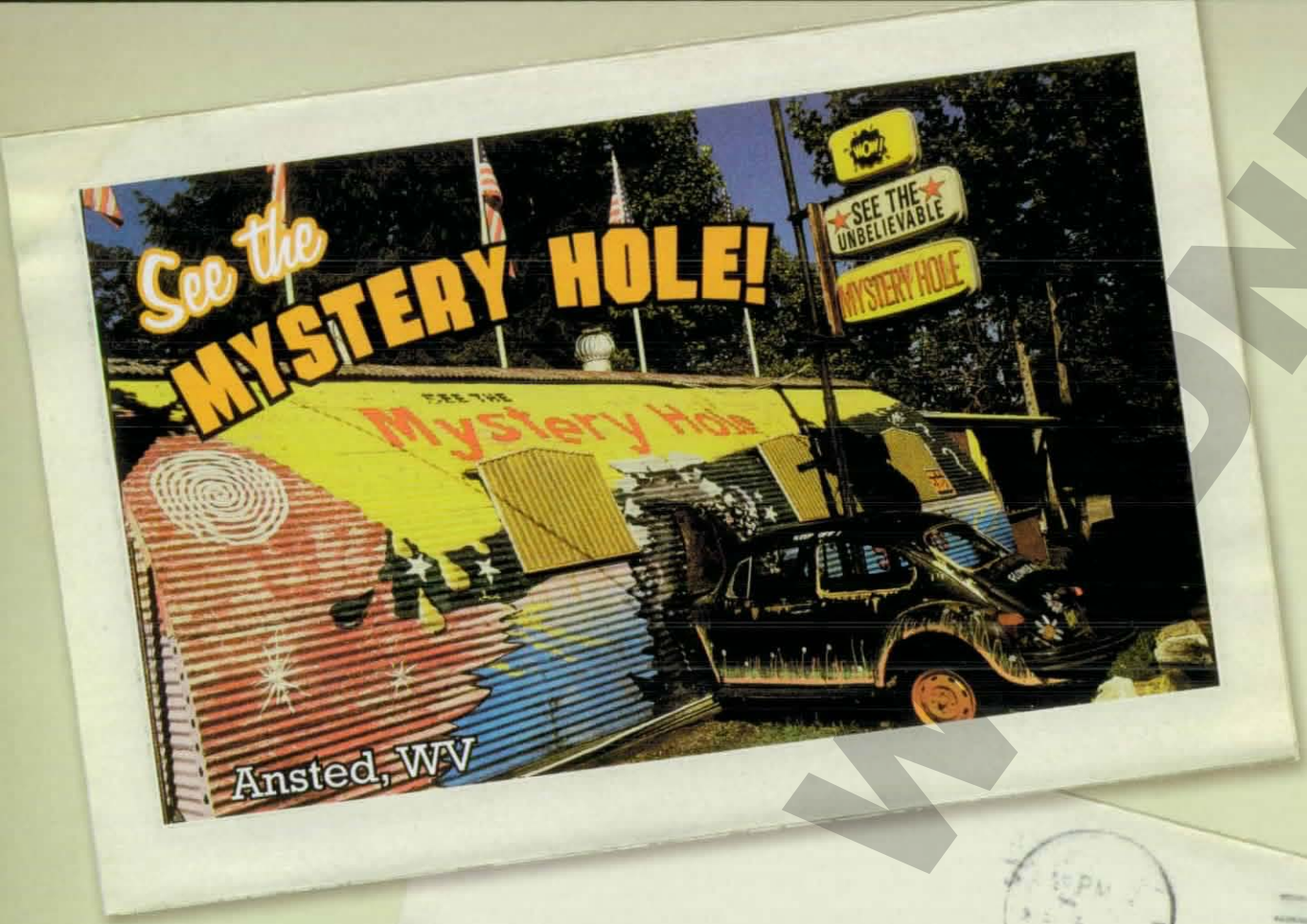

Still A Mystery After All These Years.

By Nicole Sheets Photographs by Steve Shaluta

It was a warm, sunny day. Hawks, trees, and people in shorts went about their business with the calm of lambs, unaware of the powers at work a few miles up the road. After cruising through hairpin turns on U.S. Route 60, trying to enjoy the scenery without careening into it, my car was drawn, as if by an unseen force, into the parking lot of the iconic Mystery Hole in Ansted.

If the monster truck tires, red-and-yellow paint job, and Volkswagen beetle, half swallowed by the building, don't catch the eyes of motorists, the gorilla perched on

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the roof does. "We call her Mimi," said Mystery Hole owner Will Morrison of the prominent primate. Morrison and his wife, Sandy, both from Erie, Michigan, bought the Mystery Hole in 1999. Mimi is a replacement for the original gorilla, which was stolen in 1998, after the death of Don Wilson, the attraction's founder.

The building's front room displays clippings about the Mystery Hole dating back to the early 1970s. A recent Associated Press headline reads, "Erie Couple Buys Eerie West Virginia Attraction." The Morrisons, both in their early 40s, look younger than their years, perhaps a benefit of their daily contact with the Mystery Hole.

When I asked what compelled them to buy the place, Will responded with a broad smile, "We're still trying to figure that out." Sandy added, "He always says Mr. Wilson picked him because it definitely takes the right person to run the Mystery Hole."

By the time the Morrisons bought the Mystery Hole, the attraction had suffered vandalism and needed repair. "I think everyone was afraid of the work that was here," Will said. Although the Morrisons never met Mr. Wilson, they claim his mysterious and creative spirit is still palpable. "He was prepared," Will said of his predecessor. "He had a lot of stuff for us," including replacement parts he'd built and notes he'd left behind.

Wilson's widow, Mary Jean, who has lived in Ansted for more than 50 years, says the Mystery Hole was a project her husband began after retiring from a career as a sheet metal mechanic in nearby Alloy.

While he dedicated himself to the project, Mary Jean didn't like to spend too much time in there. "It always gave me a headache," she said. "My husband used to tell me it was all in my head."

The rules governing amusement park rides apply to the Mystery Hole—visitors with heart problems, high blood pressure, or vertigo should stick to the gift shop.

A quick leaf through comments in the Mystery Hole visitors log gives an inkling of what patrons are in for: "cool," "weird," "dizzy," "better than a six pack," "it made Bill laugh," "a strange end to our honeymoon" are just a few of the comments.

The tour is indeed a mind-over-matter event. Or as Louie Flores, a repeat Mystery Hole visitor from Glen Ferris, said, "Your eyeballs and your ears are arguing." I tagged along as he and his family brought friends from Maine for their inaugural visit.

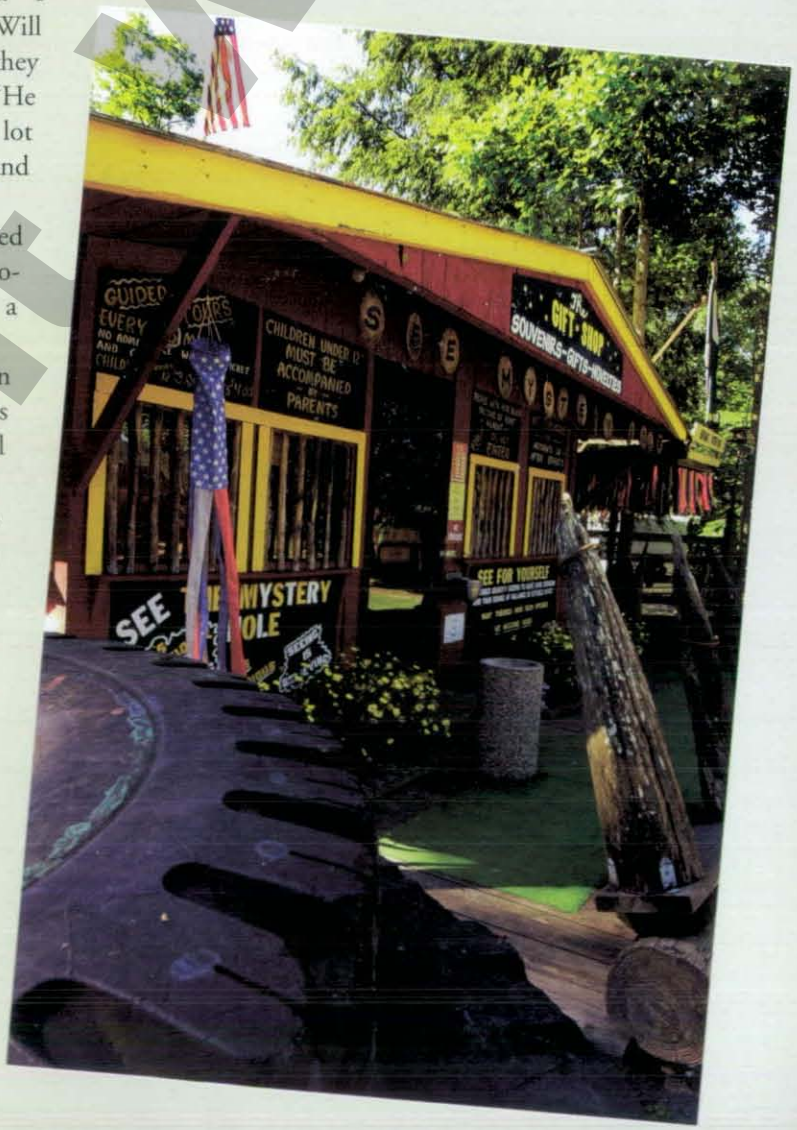
The 10-minute excursion ushers you through rooms built in the heart of the Mystery Hole. It's a place where water flows uphill and gravity is an afterthought. By the end of the tour, it's a challenge to regain your equilibrium. "You weren't walking that way when you came in," Will noted, as I and the other thrill seekers made our clumsy way to the exit.

Will wouldn't hazard a guess about how many tours he's given. "I used to keep track, but I gave up," he said. While the Morrisons see many visitors from Ohio, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and other nearby states, they've logged tourists from all over the United States and from at least 41 other countries, as well.

The Mystery Hole's power transcends the language barrier. Will recounts one tour group in which no one spoke English. They just stood down there and laughed the whole time," he said.

For many folks, visiting the Mystery Hole once is not enough. People return because "every time they feel different or they see something different," Will explained.

Like any good tourist attraction, the Mystery Hole tour concludes in the gift shop. It's a place of upbeat nostalgia, with toe-tapping golden oldies and



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classic rock on the stereo; an array of coffee mugs, license plates, and patches celebrating West Virginia; Bible verses; and homespun humor (such as the "hillbilly flashlight": a box of matches on the end of a stick). And there's exclusive Mystery Hole merchandise, including toothpick holders, can coolers, hats, shot glasses, "I survived" T-shirts, and, of course, the infamous orange and black bumper stickers.

"The Mystery Hole is famous for the bumper stickers for some reason," Will said. "They've been the same for 32 years." Tourists have told the Morrisons they've spied Mystery Hole bumper stickers from California to New York City. "Someone said they'd seen one on a cab a few years back," Will reported. Whitewater rafters have been known to affix the stickers to their paddles. Will has one on his truck. "Looks like you could use one on your car too," he said, eyeing my Honda.

When your job is guardian of the Mystery Hole, it's hard to stay anonymous. Each season the attraction garners media attention, and it's recommended in a sample travel itinerary in the *2005 State Travel Guide*. "When we go out, we like to be incognito," Will said. But Will is often recognized as the tour guide; both he and Sandy are featured in the Mystery Hole brochure. What is the secret of this powerful Ansted enigma? Why have the lively and personable Morrisons devoted themselves to its care? And why do so many people put these bumper stickers on their cars? Perhaps, like a spicy gumbo or a love affair, the Mystery Hole is a pleasure better savored than analyzed.

Whatever your theory about the Mystery Hole's bizarre gravitational powers, "there's definitely something there," Sandy said. "We're proud to keep it going."

Nicole Sheets recently returned home to West Virginia after two years as a Peace Corps volunteer in Moldova. She is a freelance writer and taught at the Governor's Honor Academy this past summer. She lives in Huntington.

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Art Happens

By Karen Carper
Photographs by Karl Badgley

This article is the fifth in a series developed by the MountainMade Foundation titled The Passion and Process of Art. The series highlights the work of West Virginia artisans.

It's hard to say whether flamework glass found Genny Zbach or if the artist discovered its magic for herself, but there is no denying the two were drawn together into a match that was meant to be. Her opinion on the subject is expressed with two simple words: "art happens."

A beadworker since the late 1960s, Zbach started her own business, Genny Z, in 1985, peddling necklaces and earrings on the streets of Morgantown. Genny Z now occupies a large foyer in the heart of Zbach's Fairmont home. Here, she crafts her own glass beads, buttons, jewelry, and sculptures. "Making my own glass changed my work profoundly," the artist says of her switch from beadworker to flamework glassmaker. "Color, shape, style—it is all up to me now."

A 1995 glass demonstration in Washington, D.C., inspired Zbach to try glass making. Watching an artist make beads by melting stained glass shards onto a hot, twirling metal rod, she thought, "I can do that." The artist says she was drawn to the process and excited by the idea of making her own beads. "When I saw the demonstration of flame-worked beads, I knew immediately what I had to do."

She began by twirling pencils, which doesn't sound like a difficult task, but can be surprisingly strenuous if done for long periods of time. It was especially challenging for Zbach, who suffers from muscular dystrophy. At first, 5 minutes of twirling was hard, but she eventually worked her way up to 20 minutes, and this gave her the confidence to go on. In just two years, Zbach went from tentative exploration to

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In two years, Zbach went from tentative exploration to international recognition.

international recognition for her glasswork.

First, she wrote a grant for funding from the Professional Development for Individual Artists program administered by the West Virginia Division of Culture and History, and was awarded $5,000 for studio equipment and education. She also applied for and received a scholarship at the Corning Museum of Glass in New York, where she took two sculptural classes with glass masters Emilio Santini and Loren Stump in 1997.

Later that same year, Zbach won the prestigious Yamagata Fellowship presented by VSA Arts. Active in 96 countries around the world since 1974, the organization represents disabled artists. Few fellowships are awarded and Zbach is the only West Virginian to have received one. Her work traveled the globe and was on display at the 1998 Cultural Para-Olympics in Nagano, Japan. This led to her designation as a Distinguished West Virginian by Governor Cecil Underwood, who presented her with the state's highest civilian honor in 1997.

With Stump, Zbach learned to make signature canes as a way of "signing" her better pieces. "It's like painting a very thick picture in glass," she explains. The round "picture" of her initials "GZ" is about one to two inches thick. The picture is sandwiched between clear glass domes and attached to a *punty*, or handle, on each end. The core is heated to 1,700 degrees Fahrenheit, then stretched and pulled into a 30-inch by 1/8- to 1/4-inch *murrini*—a little picture cane—elongating and shrinking the letters inside. "The whole image is still there," she says. Using tile nippers, she cuts off a tiny slice of the cane, which is imbedded into the work.

Made of soft patterned, dichroic glass, this one-of-a-kind broach resembles the eye of a peacock.

Zbach works with three kinds of glass, each of which comes in long, narrow rods shaped much like wands. "Glass is an incredibly difficult medium," she says. There are different "rules" for handling the different types of glass. When heated, each is a soft and workable liquid for a different period of time, so each is used for a specific type of work. The different types of glass, which cannot be mixed, also require different cooling times.

Borosilicate, a durable, hard glass available in many different colors, can do magical things depending on how it is heated. For example, an amber rod can go from deep vermilion to shades of blue and from transparent to opaque. The changes are determined by the intensity of the heat, which is controlled by a mix of oxygen and propane.

A soft glass used primarily for beads, *Moretti* comes in a variety of colors, like crayons. The colors can be mixed to make other colors, but this glass does not have color-changing capabilities and requires more careful use. Zbach often applies more than 10 layers of Moretti glass to create the desired effect for her beads.

The properties of Bullseye glass are between borosilicate and Moretti. "Its unique colors are useful in matching antique beads," Zbach says. It's also good for sculptural work such as the intricate spiders, ants, dragonflies, and beetles she creates.

Dichroic refers to glass that has been treated with metallic oxides, causing it to reflect one color and refract another. "A red glass may appear opaque and sparkling red, but when you hold it up to light, it turns a transparent teal," the artist explains. "This is a surface treatment available on all types of glass." The magic of this shimmery, sparkly glass is what captivates Zbach. "You can just climb into that glass and stay all day," she says.

Using a large, table-mounted torch, Zbach heats glass rods to 1,500 to 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit. At the correct temperature, the glass can be pulled or stretched into various shapes such as her popular leaves, or made into beads. It becomes pliable at 1,200 degrees and can be worked easily at 1,500 to 1,700 degrees—a good range, according to Zbach. "At 2,000 degrees, it gets floppy and hard to control," she says.

Beads are made using a *mandrel*, a stainless steel rod dipped into a special clay that will hold the glass while it's

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Tom McColley

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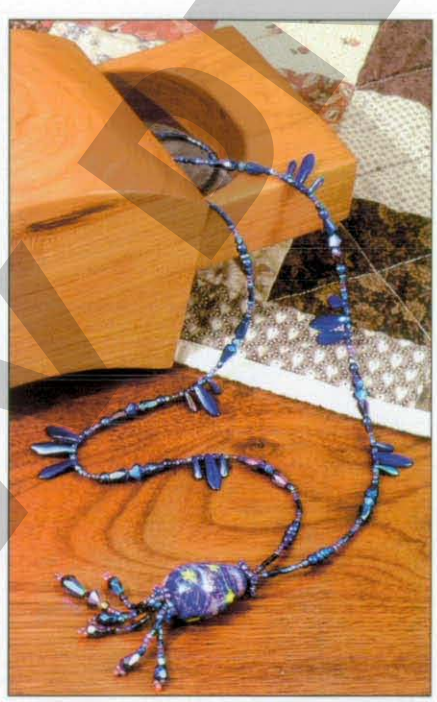

(Left) Surrounded by bouquets of colorful glass rods at her home studio in Fairmont, Genny Zbach displays one of her intricately sculpted glass bud vases. (Right) Genny Z is known for her superb sense of color. The colors of the night sky sparkle in the celestial necklace, with "murrini" stars embedded in the pendant.

hot and release it as it cools. Held in one hand, the mandrel is heated on the end where the bead will be made while the molten glass is wrapped around the area with the other hand. Both the mandrel and the glass rod must be rotated to distribute heat evenly and keep the glass from flopping. This twirling action is like what you do to keep honey on a stick, Zbach explains. The consistency of the glass can be from that of cold molasses to warm honey. "It's a constant balancing act of rolling the rod between the thumbs and forefingers. It takes a lot of concentration and coordination."

After shaping, the glass must be cooled slowly in an annealing oven. Much like a kiln, the annealing oven cools the outside of the glass at the same rate as the inside. "If the skin cools too fast while the core is still hot, it causes breakage," Zbach explains. Many different pieces can share the oven, but all of them must be the same type of glass. Before annealing, Zbach tests each piece for strength, tapping it with a tool or twisting and flicking it with her fingers. If heated and worked properly, glass is amazingly strong.

Primarily a self-taught artist, Zbach first began working with beads at age 16. In what she describes as her "hippie days," she began making beaded jewelry to sell. In the late 1960s, hitchhiking in the eastern United States with a group of friends, she was able to earn money selling daisy chain necklaces and other beadwork. Her travels took her from West Virginia to Florida to Ohio and later, Boston.

She met her husband, Larry Zbach, in Morgantown. The couple married in 1972 and lived in New York for 10 years while he attended Union Theological Seminary. From the architecture to street art, Zbach was mesmerized by the city. "I really discovered art there," she says. In addition to her jewelry, she did pen-and-ink drawing and oil painting while in New York. She also got involved in the folk music scene, learning guitar, autoharp, both mountain and hammer dulcimer, and bowed psaltery. While employed at the UTS Women's Center, she developed a nine-part series on Appalachia. "I knew then it was the place I wanted to come back to," she says. The Zbachs finally returned to West Virginia in 1982.

In August, Zbach began teaching at the new studios recently constructed on the second floor above the MountainMade Country Store in Thomas. "Nothing would be sadder than to lose my ability to work glass before passing it on," Zbach says. In addition to teaching workshops,

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the artist would also like to bring her youngest daughter, Micah, into the business as a partner. Now attending Fairmont State College with a double major in business and art, Micah has been involved with the business since she was very young. "She is very artistic and has helped me keep the business organized," Zbach says, noting that "glass is climbing to the top of the arts field in popularity."

Losing her ability to do the work she loves is a reality Zbach accepts with exceptional grace. Diagnosed with muscular dystrophy in 1989, she has adapted to the many changes it has made in her life and now looks forward to one day having more time for her other interests, such as painting and music. "Life is not boring, it's an adventure," she says. "Art and music are fascinating. It's so exiting making something out of nothing."

There is no doubt she will find many ways to continue her creative path. For now, making jewelry is the perfect match. "I can't do large pieces because I can't support the weight, and jewelry is good also because I'm a detail freak."

While she admits her disability has had a significant impact on her life, Zbach credits it for giving her experiences she would not have had otherwise. "I'm proud to be a disabled person. It's brought me to places I would have never been," she says.

One such experience occurred in 2001. Partially confined to a wheelchair, Zbach found it increasingly difficult to maintain the mobility needed to attend art shows and sell her work. She needed a lift for her van, but the $2,400 price tag was more than she could manage. Tom McColley, an artist friend, organized a project he called "Lift Genny Z." The project was promoted entirely by word of mouth among artists. Zbach made a cane with the word *LIFT* and embedded it into special glass "kisses" for anyone who donated $100 or more. "I thought it would take years," she recalls, but in a little over a month, McColley called and said, "Order it." From buying her own shampoo and groceries to delivering her work to shows and galleries across the state, this gift of independence has been priceless. "The artists in West Virginia bought this for me," she beams.

In the mid-1980s, the young artist witnessed something that made a lasting impression on her. At a music festival in Connecticut she saw a woman dressed in a long, black evening gown, presumably a member of the orchestra scheduled to play later that evening. She watched the woman walk stiff-legged on crutches and marveled at her grace. This vision has stayed with Zbach for years and encouraged her to continue pursuing her art despite hardship.

"She never knew what it meant to me," Zbach says. That her own example may inspire others makes her work even more meaningful. She hopes other artists will benefit from her experience and find the courage to go on with their work in spite of difficulties. "Someday someone might look at me and think, 'Genny did it. It didn't stop her.'"

Born in Wichita, Kansas, Zbach came to West Virginia as a very young child. Her parents met in Fairmont, her mother's hometown; got married; and moved to Kansas. "A big tornado came and moved us all back," Zbach says. The artist lives just three doors down from the house where she grew up and where her parents still live. She gives her father credit for introducing her to art. Sam Underwood would entertain his little girl by drawing pictures for her. "The ability to create an imaginary world through art combined with my love of nature still gives me all the inspiration I need," she says.

Genny Z products are available at the MountainMade Artisan Gallery and Country Store in Thomas, at the MountainMade at Stonewall gallery located in the lobby of Stonewall Resort in Roanoke, and online at www.mountainmade.com/wwv.

The MountainMade Foundation is a non-profit organization funded by a grant from the U.S. Small Business Administration. MountainMade promotes the work of West Virginia artists and craftspersons and provides professional development opportunities for artisans as well as workshops for the general public throughout the year. Participation in the MountainMade program is free and open to all artists and craftspeople living in West Virginia. For more information, visit the MountainMade Web site at www.mountainmade.com/wwv or call (304) 463-3355.

Karen Carper is a staff writer for the MountainMade Foundation. A native West Virginian, the former travel writer and journalist has written exclusively in and about her home state for six years. When she's not writing, Carper may be found bicycling or walking on the Allegheny Highlands Trail near her home in Elkins.

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September Events Statewide

September 1 – 4
Charleston Sternwheel Regatta
Charleston
(800) 733-5469

September 2
Murder Mystery Special
Cass Scenic Railroad State Park
Cass
(304) 456-4300

September 2 – 4
West Virginia Italian Heritage Festival
Clarksburg
(304) 622-7314

September 2 – 4
Oak Leaf Festival
Oak Hill
(800) 927-0263

September 2 – 4
Labor Day Weekend Celebration
Canaan Valley Resort State Park
Davis
(304) 866-4121, ext. 2677

September 2 – 4
Gospel Jamboree in the Hills
Mineral Wells
(304) 489-1063

September 2 – 4
Snowshoe Hill Climb
Snowshoe
(877) 441-4386

September 2 – 4
Snowshoe Splat on the Flat Paintball Tournament
Snowshoe
(877) 441-4386

September 2 – 5
National ATV and Dirt Bike Rally Week
Lyburn
(800) 592-2217

September 2 – 5
Stonewall Jackson Heritage Art and Crafts Jubilee
WVU Jackson's Mill
Weston
(800) 287-8206

September 2 – 5
Labor Day Weekend
North Bend State Park
Cairo
(304) 643-2931

September 2 – 5
Fenton Annual Labor Day Signing Events
Williamstown
(800) 319-7793

September 3 – 4
Oglebay Resort Labor Day Celebration
Wheeling
(800) 624-6988

September 3 – 4
Country Music Festival
Point Pleasant
(304) 675-5737

September 3, 10, 17, and 24
Fiddles and Vittles
Cass Scenic Railroad State Park
Cass
(304) 456-4300

September 3 – 4
Apple Butter Weekend
Blennerhassett Island Historical State Park
Parkersburg
(304) 420-4800

September 4
ACE Minden Mudfest XC MTB Race
Oak Hill
(888) 223-7238

September 4 – 10
Webster County Fair
Cowen
(304) 226-3069

September 5
Labor Day
Blennerhassett Island Historical State Park
Parkersburg
(304) 420-4800

September 5
Labor Day Festivities Ox Roast, Games & Carnival
Rowlesburg
(304) 454-2441

September 9 – 10
Nicholas County Potato Festival
Summersville
(304) 619-6795

September 9 – 11
Lincoln County Fall Festival
Hamlin
(304) 824-3981

September 9 – 11
Native American Powow and Veterans Gathering
Huntington
(304) 272-3859

September 9 – 11
Upper Potomac Fall Dulcimer Festival
Shepherdstown
(304) 263-2551

September 9 – 11
Mayhem in the Mountains– Snowshoe Downhill
Snowshoe
(877) 441-4386

September 10 – 11
Helvetia Fair
Helvetia
(304) 924-6435

September 10 – 11
Putnam County Homecoming
Winfield
(304) 755-5123

September 10 – 11
West Virginia Honey Festival
Parkersburg
(304) 485-6437

September 10 – 11
West Virginia Black Heritage Festival
Clarksburg
(304) 623-2335

September 10 – 11
Hampshire Heritage Days
Romney
(304) 822-7221

September 10 – 11
The Capture of Harpers Ferry 1862
Harpers Ferry
(304) 535-6029

September 10 – 11
Riverfront Festival–Moundsville
Moundsville
(304) 843-6002

September 10
Margaret Dennison Wildflower Walk
Kanawha State Forest
Charleston
(304) 925-2771

September 10 – 11
Civil War Weekend
Carnifex Ferry Battlefield State Park
Summersville
(304) 872-0825

September 11
CCC Reunion
Kanawha State Forest
Charleston
(304) 755-4650

Background photo: Cherry River by Clayton Spangler

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September 12 – 17
Craigsville Fall Festival
Craigsville
(304) 742-5447

September 14
Mississippi Queen at the Point Pleasant Riverfront
Point Pleasant
(304) 675-6788

September 15 – 18
Clay County Golden Delicious Festival
Clay
(304) 587-4455

September 15 – 18
West Virginia Oil and Gas Festival
Sistersville
(304) 652-2939

September 15 – 18
Treasure Mountain Festival
Franklin
(304) 249-5117

September 16 – 17
Grape Stomping Wine Festival
Summersville
(304) 872-7332

September 16 – 17
West Virginia Country Music Hall of Fame Fall Festival
Fairmont
(304) 363-4864

September 16 – 18
Nature Wonder Weekend
North Bend State Park
Cairo
(304) 558-3370

September 16 – 18
Autumn Rail Fans Adventure
Tygart Lake State Park
Grafton
(304) 265-6144

September 16 – 18
Flemington Days Fair and Festival
Flemington
(304) 265-5549

September 16 – 18
Wheeling Heritage Port Sternwheel Festival
Wheeling
(800) 828-3097

September 17
Fall Family Fun Weekend
Canaan Valley Resort State Park
Davis
(304) 866-4121, ext. 2677

September 17
Dream Run '05
Kanawha State Forest
(304) 768-5700

September 17 – 18
Country Roads Festival
Hawks Nest State Park
Ansted
(304) 658-5196

September 17 – 18
Hancock County Old-Time Fair
Tomlinson Run State Park
New Manchester
(800) 225-5982

September 17 – 18
Mothman Festival
Point Pleasant
(304) 675-9726

September 17 – 18
Wine and Jazz Festival
Morgantown
(877) 989-4637

September 18
Oktoberfest – Shepherdstown
Shepherdstown
(304) 876-2551

September 20 – 23
18th Annual Septemberfest Senior Fling
Blackwater Falls State Park
Davis
(304) 259-5216

September 22 – 24
Molasses Festival
Arnoldsburg
(304) 655-8374

September 23
Murder Mystery Special
Cass Scenic Railroad State Park
Cass
(304) 456-4300

September 23 – 24
Kanawha County Fair
Institute
(304) 341-8000

September 23 – 24
Gauley River Festival
Summersville
(914) 586-2355

September 23 – 25
Hardy County Heritage Weekend Festival
Moorefield
(304) 538-8080

September 23 – 25
Helvetia Oktoberfest
Helvetia
(304) 924-6435

September 24
Autumn Harvest Festival and West Virginia Roadkill Cook-off
Marlinton
(800) 336-7009

September 24
Heritage Days (Home Tours)
Romney
(304) 424-0736

September 24
Public Lands Day
Beech Fork State Park
Barboursville
(304) 528-5794

September 24 – 25
Spirit of America
Martinsburg
(304) 263-2106

September 24 – 25
National Hunting and Fishing Days
Stonewall Resort
(304) 269-0524

September 25
Ohio County Heart Walk
Wheeling
(304) 277-2756

September 28 – October 12
Fall Color Schedule
Cass Scenic Railroad State Park
Cass
(304) 456-4300

September 30 – October 2
Fall Photography Workshop
Twin Falls Resort State Park
Mullens
(304) 294-6000

September

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

Times and events are subject to change. To ensure you have a wonderful experience, please call ahead before attending an event.

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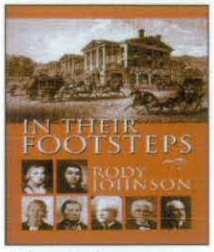
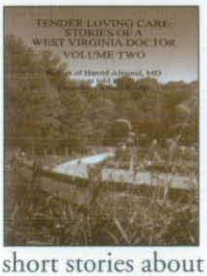
West Virginia Bookshelf

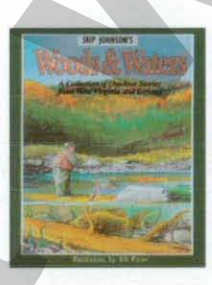


In Their Footsteps
By Rody Johnson
$15.95, 6 x 9, 273 pages, Paperback
Autographed copies available
Rody Johnson's search for his West Virginia roots uncovers stories of warriors, pioneers, salt kings, and politicians. This account of Johnson's ancestors chronicles the settlement of the Shenandoah Valley, the emergence of the state of West Virginia, and the Lewis and Clark expedition. He brings history to life through the lives of John Lewis, an Appalachian pioneer whose sons were heroes in the French and Indian War and served in the American Revolution; Patrick Gass, a member of the Lewis and Clark expedition; Braxton Avis, reputedly the youngest drummer boy in the Confederate Army; the Lewises of the 1800s, who brought a roughshod capitalism to the state; and Governor George Atkinson, a politician who defended the rights of Blacks and Whites. Johnson's affection for the region and dogged research combine to tell a fascinating story of West Virginia heritage.

Picturing West Virginia: A Century of Collecting by the West Virginia State Archives 1905-2005
By The WV Division of Culture and History
$12.95, 9 x 11, 120 pages, Paperback
Since its creation in 1905, the West Virginia State Archives has collected and preserved publications, records, photographs, and other materials that document the history of the Mountain State. The 150 images featured in *Picturing West Virginia* are an eclectic selection from thousands in the archives and represent a century of collection. The book provides an enjoyable pictorial journey through the state and its diverse scenery and heritage.



Tender Loving Care: Stories of a West Virginia Doctor Volume Two
By Harold Almond, M.D., as told to Greenbrier Almond, M.D.
$9.95, 5.5 x 8.5, 130 pages, Paperback
In 1997, Dr. Almond published *The Stories of a West Virginia Doctor*, a collection of 55 short stories about his experiences as a small-town doctor in central West Virginia. Due to the overwhelmingly positive response to the book, his son, Dr. Greenbrier Almond, wished to publish more of his father's stories. Using videotapes of his father's appearances on his television show, *Tender Loving Care*, Greenbrier has put into writing 70 additional stories of his father's very colorful life.



Woods and Waters: A Collection of Outdoor Stories from West Virginia and Beyond
By Skip Johnson
On Sale: $4.95, Reg. $ 9.95, 6 x 9,
206 pages, Paperback
Skip Johnson was the outdoor columnist for the *Charleston Gazette* for 30 years. This book is a collection of his best-loved *Woods and Waters* columns. Johnson, remembered for his dry sense of humor and extensive knowledge of the outdoors, regales readers with tall tales and fish stories from fishing trips in West Virginia and beyond. With titles like "Thank God for Deer" and "Crazy Crawler Man," you can count on an entertaining read.

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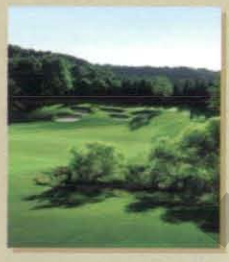

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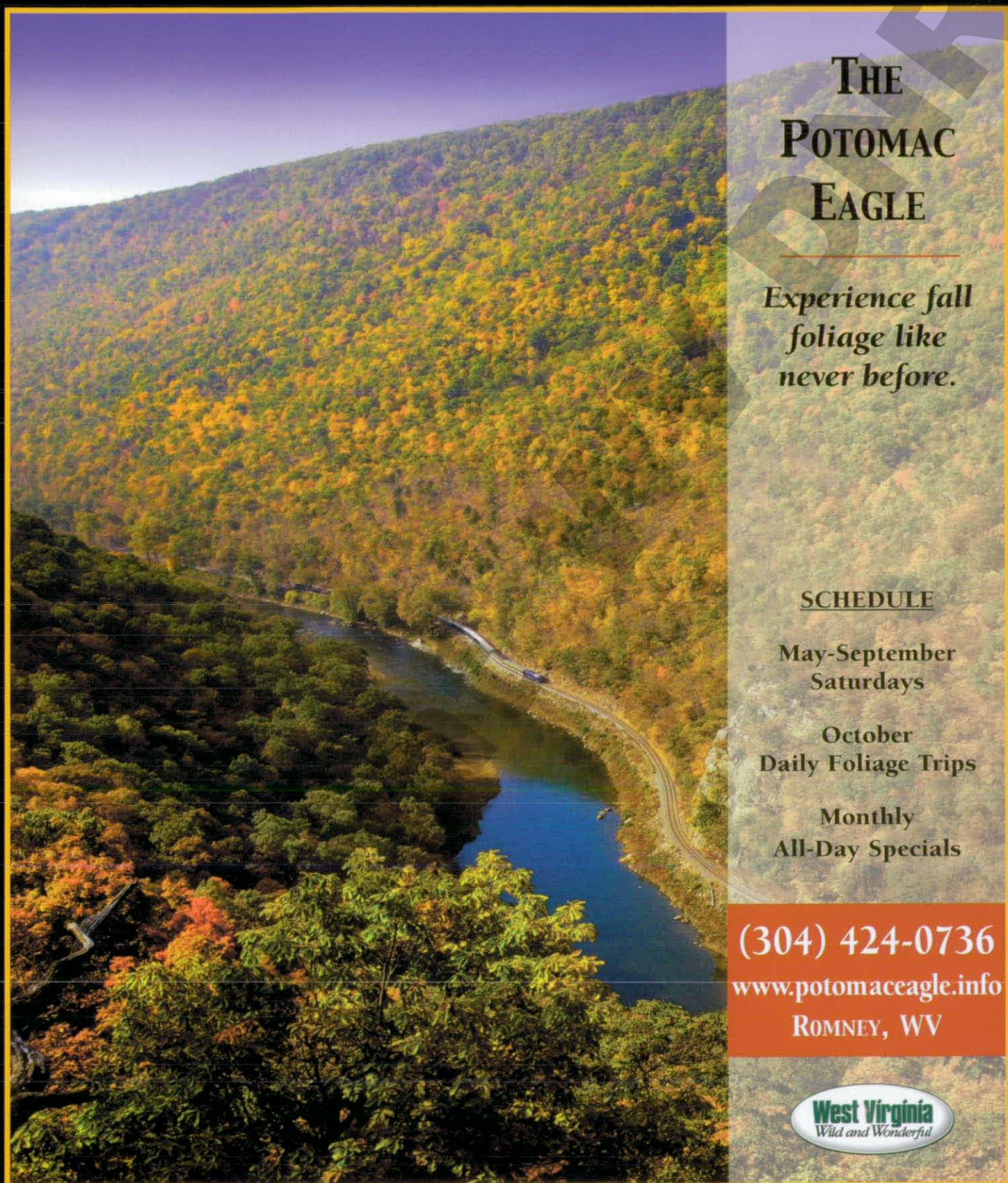
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