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DISTILLERY

Small batches of Corn Whiskey, crafted beyond the watchful eyes of "revenuers", is part of the lore of the region. In 2002, this risky business was brought into the daylight when Rodney Facemire obtained the license for the smallest still in the nation.

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About our cover: Photographer Amanda Haddox captured lillies in bloom on Plum Orchard Lake in Plum Orchard Lake Wildlife Management Area in Fayette County. The lake is nestled between Haystack and Packs mountains on Plum Orchard Creek. To see more of Haddox's images, turn to page 16.
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Welcome

A Passion for Nature

Some years ago, I visited the Brooks Bird Club's Allegheny Front Migration Observatory, located annually on rocky, windswept Dolly Sods. There I discovered an operation awhirl with activity: some bird banders were seated at a sheltered table, quickly collecting data on their winged captives, while others roamed the mist nets, gently untangling birds, placing them in paper bags, and delivering them to the data collectors. Among the banding station observers that day were several attentive children, who, after a time, were each invited to release a bird back into the wild. (Today, to avoid injury to the birds, visitors to the observatory do not come in contact with them.) For a long moment, as the children eagerly took their places in line, I looked on wistfully; then, the child in me gave a firm yank on my elbow and nudged me to the end of the line.

When my turn finally came, the banders did not raise an eyebrow, but rather placed a black-and-yellow bundle of urgency and pulsing life—a lovely Cape May warbler—into my cupped hand. Clasping it gently, I admired the bird's exquisite beauty and marveled at how I had managed to get such an up-close view of this creature of the Canadian woods. Then, as I slowly unfolded my fingers, I watched with delight as the bird burst forth from my palm—like a feathered missile—back to the skies over Dolly Sods, back to its long journey south.

It is easy to understand how bird banders become passionate about this activity. Indeed, many of them have volunteered for more than 20 years. Some spend many weeks each season camped near the station.

The rest of us are generally content to enjoy our state's many bird species through our windows or binoculars. Yet, many of us experience nature as intimately as the bird banders, just in different ways. Helen Efw, for example, knows well the berries, nuts, and wildflowers of her woodlands, and, with tender care, coax their natural colors to come forth to enhance her beautiful basketry. And when avid outdoorsman Ed Rehein takes a hike, he pauses in awe to ponder the artful sculpting and painting of 200 million sandstone that are only accomplished through the ages by nature's steady hand. And as for passion for our forests, there is no one more ardent than Dr. Ken Carwell, who, in this issue, unlocks the mysteries of the bygone days of elegant train travel, when the world had yet to be graced with wonders such as the Styrofoam packing peanut.

Anywhere in West Virginia, a brief walk, or even a glance out the window, offers surprise and delight and a chance for connection with nature. May you find delight in the pages of this issue of Wonderful West Virginia and in your own close encounters.

Shelia M. Carter
Editor

Reader Picks

Kudos for Café Cimino

It's worth the trip to Sutton to try Café Cimino's meatballs and pasta. They hit the spot. The meatballs are hearty size but have a delicious, light taste. They come with a delicate pasta and sauce that are a treat. I followed them up with a cheesecake that melts in your mouth. The cafe is located in a historic building with a wonderful atmosphere, and the staff treats you like you're an old friend. I highly recommend it. (For more information, visit the website: www.cafecimino.com or call 1-877-924-6466.)

Jerry A. Shaw
Culloden, WV

Note: Picks should be no more than 150 words. Be sure to send contact information for your pick and your name and town. E-mail readerpicks@cannongraphicsinc.com, or write to Wonderful West Virginia Magazine Reader Picks, c/o WVDNR, Bldg. 3, Rm 663, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. E., State Capitol Complex, Charleston, WV 25305.
Letters to the Editor

It's Elementary
I teach at Springfield/Greenspring Elementary School in Hampshire County. I use your magazine in the first grade to instill a pride in my students to be happy to live in such a beautiful state, and to be proud to live in the mountains. The pictures are great to keep the interest of 1st graders. Thanks.

Jerry Raible
Cumberland, MD

Loyal Reader
I have been a subscriber to this magazine for over 60 years. I believe it was formerly WV Conservation. Anyway I started receiving the mag as a gratuity for fighting forest fires when I was in high school. I have kept my subscription current.

John L. Stanley
South Charleston, WV

Editor: Thank you for telling us your story! We appreciate your letter and your loyal subscription. West Virginia Conservation was a small, black-and-white publication that debuted in 1936 and focused on hunting, fishing, trapping, and the regulation of these activities. Its name was later changed to Outdoor West Virginia. In the 1960s, the publication's format was enlarged to 8 1/2 by 11 inches. With the influence of the late photographer Arnout Hyde Jr., who would later become editor-in-chief, color landscapes and other beautiful photographs were featured and the content was diversified. It was during this time that the name was changed to Wonderful West Virginia.

What Goes Around...
I enjoyed reading the Rock Springs Park article in the June issue of Wonderful West Virginia. I am a longtime subscriber to the magazine ... I have done some research on Rock Springs Park and the carousels that operated there. The last carousel that operated there until the park closed is currently in storage. Many of the horses have been sold over the years. There are still some of the original horses with the carousel.

I live in Parkersburg and I’m active with the National Carousel Association (NCA). I’m currently serving the NCA as a Director, Census Chairman, and Chairman of the Identification Committee. I maintain the NCA database of operating carousels in North America. I publish the carousel census for our membership every two years. You may view my online census at the Web site: www.nca-usa.org/NCAcensus.html. I'm also working on a historical census of defunct carousels and parks.

As lifelong West Virginians, my wife and I look forward to receiving each issue.

Patrick Wentzel
Parkersburg, WV

Due to changing water levels, Summersville Lake (pictured right) offers a rich variety of photographic opportunities. In the summer, when lake levels are high, I recommend an overlook constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on Highway 129, about a mile west of its intersection with U.S. 19. The overlook faces east, so to have the sun at your back, wait until midafternoon to photograph.

The overlook provides many elements of good composition, including interesting foreground, midground, and background and good framing. The wooden fence at the edge of the overlook and some nearby overhanging tree branches make a compelling foreground and can also frame your image. There is a small ridge close by on the left-hand side of the viewpoint that helps to fix and frame the lower left corner of the image. Long Point, a rock promontory that juts out dramatically into the middle of the lake, is a perfect focal point of the photograph. The lake and ridges beyond Long Point make a pleasing and harmonious background. All in all, it's a great place to enjoy and photograph the beauty of West Virginia.

Your assignment this month: experiment with composition. When you size up a potential shot, pay attention to the relationship between the foreground and background, look for a distinct focal point, and try to find an interesting frame, such as tree branches.

Ed Rehbein
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happyhiker1@suddenlink.net
Arboreal Mysteries Unraveled

By Kenneth L. Carvell

Long ago, in several cities across West Virginia, cypress trees, which are not native to our state, mysteriously began to grow and thrive. Around the same period, trees with lovely purple blooms began to dot the landscape, especially near coal towns and logging operations. How did these odd occurrences come about? If you’ve ever wondered, or, if we’ve made you curious, read on, as forestry expert and sylvan sleuth Dr. Ken Carvell unlocks these and other natural history mysteries.

A black-and-white infrared image of cedar trees in Jackson County. Arnout Hyde Jr.
Many West Virginia cities and towns have a few old cypress trees. Though they are southern trees and not native to the Mountain State, they have, for many years, withstood the cooler climate here and reached large size. At one time, there were five old cypresses in Morgantown, and I have seen some of similar age in Fairmont, Clarksburg, and Beckley.

An increment borer showed that three of the Morgantown trees were all about the same age and apparently planted in the early 1890s. A search of old newspapers on microfilm uncovered an interesting story that suggests how these trees came to reside so far north of their native habitat.

In 1893, a World’s Fair, known as the Columbian Exposition, was held in Chicago. People from all over the United States attended. The excellent railroad passenger service at that time made it easy to spend a week visiting the many pavilions. It was customary to buy a trip ticket at the local railroad station that included train fare, hotel accommodations, travel to the fair ground, and a prepaid entrance fee. Trains left weekly on Sunday afternoon and arrived back at the home station late Saturday evening. One newspaper report states that a large crowd of people returned from the exposition, each carrying a potted cypress tree. A cypress seedling was a gift to each person visiting the Louisiana Pavilion.

These cypress trees later provided important information. In the 1960s, when I planted cypress in moist ground on West Virginia University forest land, I had proof that this southern tree would withstand the climate and reach merchantable size in West Virginia.

Although the common cedar tree in West Virginia is eastern red cedar, there is another cedar that occurs locally, but only on very specific sites. This is northern white cedar, often called arbor vitae, which means “tree of life.”

Many people associate northern white cedar with New England and eastern Canada, where it often dominates swamps and provides excellent cover and browse for deer. Yet, its range extends south through the Appalachians, where it is found along streams, but only where the soils are underlain by limestone. Early settlers in the state knew about this tree and often transplanted it to cemeteries as an ornament.

Northern white cedar is found in similar situations as far south as the North Carolina mountains. These southern stands produce larger trees and more board feet of lumber than their northern counterpart. The longer growing season results in trees that grow faster and reach large size earlier.

There are particularly large concentrations of this cedar in Monroe County, West Virginia, and in adjacent Alleghany and Craig counties, Virginia. During World War II, many landowners in these counties permitted their cedar stands to be cut to aid the war effort. Northern white cedar wood does not shrink or swell with changes in moisture content; thus, it has always been a preferred wood for boat decking. (Today, the wood is used to make expensive canoes.) Contributing these cedars to the war effort in the 1940s was considered a very patriotic act. I have visited several of these stands in more recent years and all have come back satisfactorily with handsome, northern white cedar.
What is that large tree with the purple blooms and heart-shaped leaves?

Throughout the past century, a fast-growing tree native to China and Japan has become well established in the mountains and valleys of West Virginia. Known as the princess tree, prince's tree, or paulownia (pronounced pah-LOE-nee-uh), it has large, heart-shaped leaves, which look like those of the catalpa, and purple, snapdragon-like blooms that attract immediate attention. The tree, which spreads on its own, is particularly common along the New and Monongahela rivers, but it is also found in our southern counties.

Although some paulownia trees were introduced as ornamentals due to their beautiful flowers and fast growth, most were established accidentally. In bygone days, many products imported from Asia, including the heavy crockery used in logging and coal camp mess halls, came in wooden crates, carefully packed in paulownia seed pods to assure safe arrival. After the crockery was unpacked, the boxes, along with the pods and seeds, were discarded. This explains the tree's abundance in remote areas of central and southern West Virginia. It is particularly common around former logging and mining towns.

Apparently, there are now more paulownia trees growing in the eastern United States than in the Far East, and many logs are being exported back to their native area, where they command a high price. Today, paulownia trees are being sought out and exported much the way ginseng has been collected and exported for two centuries.

Why was Norway spruce rather than red spruce planted in the spruce belt of the Mountain State?

At elevations of 3,200 feet and higher, red spruce was the predominant species in the original forests of this state. It is estimated that there were 440,000 acres of this conifer in West Virginia. Between 1880 and 1920, most of these trees were harvested for pulpwood and lumber. After the logging, most red spruce areas suffered blow-down of the few remaining spruce, and many areas burned repeatedly, producing sites dominated by wild grasses, ferns, and scattered fire cherry and aspen.

The U.S. Forest Service started planting these denuded lands in the 1920s using seed collected from surviving native red spruce. Seedlings were grown in small tree nurseries, and local labor was used for planting crews. This work was later continued by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC).

Yet, from the beginning, it was obvious that red spruce seedlings could not fight the herbaceous competition on these vastly altered sites. After the first year, survival counts often showed that less than 10 percent of the trees were alive. However, foresters soon learned that Norway spruce, a popular ornamental, effectively fought the competition and withstood the fall and winter matting down of herbaceous vegetation that smothered the delicate red spruce seedlings.

For years after these plantations were established, it was difficult to convince people that the trees were Norway and not red spruce. Before these two species reach cone-bearing age, they look very similar, even to a trained botanist. However, when they become large enough to bear cones, the difference is very evident. Norway spruce cones reach a length of six to eight inches and are very conspicuous, even at a distance. Red spruce cones are only two inches in size and difficult to see from the ground.

Actually, Norway spruce is a desirable, fast-growing tree with attractive, pendulous branches. Since Norway seeds germinate and establish seedlings naturally, many of these stands today are acting as seed sources for new spruce to be established on former spruce sites.
Who was "Pop" Wriston?

Wildfires were, and still are, a major problem in the forests of southern West Virginia. Among the early conservation activities by the Game, Fish and Forestry Commission, a forerunner of the present state Division of Forestry and Division of Natural Resources, was a traveling educational program that preached the gospel of fire prevention and conservation.

The program used a Model-A Ford truck equipped with a power plant mounted behind the driver's seat. The truck also had a portable screen, a projector, lantern slides, and motion pictures. There were living accommodations as well, including an ice box and a tent. Emory N. "Pop" Wriston and a helper used this portable home and movie theater for three years, traveling to all corners of the state.

Wriston and his assistant would usually set up on a court house lawn or some other central location. They would present education programs on forest conservation and forest fire prevention to groups of all ages. At that time, motion pictures were new, and Wriston's program always attracted a large audience, especially when word got out that it was free. Wriston recalled once showing a film on fire prevention in Mingo County when the woods were visibly ablaze on three hillsides surrounding his outdoor "theater." In the three years that Wriston worked on this project, he gave 512 programs in 38 counties.

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Longtime Wonderful West Virginia contributor Kenneth L. Carvell retired from a 35-year career as a professor of forest ecology, cultural and historic interpretation, and other courses at West Virginia University. He writes from his home in Morgantown.
ALERT!

By Scott Shalaway. Illustrations by Barry Wooldridge

Foreign invaders invariably exact a harsh toll on the natural world. Think multiflora rose, multicolored Asian ladybird beetles, house sparrows, and European starlings, to name a few. Most exotic species cannot compete with native species, but the few that do often succeed with catastrophic ecological consequences.

At the moment, West Virginia stands on the threshold of another such invasion, but there may still be time to squelch it. The emerald ash borer (EAB) is an Asian beetle that entered the U.S. near Detroit, Michigan, in the mid-1990s, though it was not officially identified until 2002. It probably arrived in wood packing commonly used to ship all manner of goods.

Adult female EABs lay eggs in the crevices of the bark of ash trees. After the eggs hatch, the larvae bore into the tree and eat the cambium layer between the bark and wood. Over time, the galleries created by the borer’s feeding activities girdle and eventually kill branches and entire trees. An infested tree typically dies within two to three years. Green ash, white ash, black ash, and several horticultural varieties are susceptible to damage by the emerald ash borer.

“Our forests are one of our state’s greatest assets and commercial resources, and the emerald ash borer is one of many invasive species sitting, literally, on our doorstep,” said West Virginia Commissioner of Agriculture Gus R. Douglass. “The Department of Agriculture’s Plant Industries Division will be working very closely with the Division of Forestry in the coming year to do everything we can to address the threat posed by EAB.”

As of April 2007, the emerald ash borer had not been detected in West Virginia, and it’s up to all residents and visitors to keep it that way. EAB has been found in one county in Maryland (Prince George’s), and the entire states of Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana are under a USDA quarantine to restrict the spread of the beetles beyond the borders of those states. That means ash nursery stock, firewood from all hardwood species, any mulch or wood product that might contain ash, and, of course, the borers themselves may not leave the quarantined states. Firewood from all hardwood species is included because after hardwoods are cut and split, it’s difficult to identify firewood to species.

“The emerald ash borer may be the biggest threat facing West Virginia’s forests today,” said State Forester Randy Dye. Transportation of infected firewood is the main problem. Campers often bring their own firewood to West Virginia campgrounds, Dye explained.

So far, the emerald ash borer has killed more than 25 million ash trees in the quarantined states, so it represents a serious threat to the forests of all adjacent states. West Virginia’s best defense is to observe the quarantine guidelines. Do not bring any firewood into West Virginia from affected states. Do not import or purchase ash nursery stock, mulch, or other ash wood products from those states.

And spread the word. Tell friends, neighbors, and coworkers about the emerald ash borer, and question the origin of any ash nursery stock you may obtain. For more information, visit the West Virginia Division of Forestry Web site at www.wvforestry.com/eab.cfm or call (304) 558-2788.

 Syndicated columnist Scott Shalaway writes from his home in Cameron in the Northern Panhandle and is a regular contributor to Wonderful West Virginia.
Surprise and Delight

Hiking the

Meadow River

Text and photographs by Ed Rehbein

Towering sandstone cliffs, a boulder-lined riverbed, rolling white-water rapids—sounds like the New River area, doesn’t it? Now add a rock-walled grotto, a 30-foot sandstone pinnacle, a stone chapel, a couple of waterfalls, and (if the season is right) an ice angel! Where can you find all this? Not at the New River but along the lower Meadow River in Fayette and Nicholas counties. If I had only one day to hike in southern West Virginia, this is where I’d go.

My wife, Phyllis, and I have spent many happy hours hiking the cliffs of the New River Gorge, yet we both prefer the cliffs bordering the Meadow River. We have found them to be unsurpassed in beauty, size, and variety. Around every turn lies a surprise. It might be a bold rock buttress, a sheer cliff face, a cave, or an overhanging rock ledge that defies gravity. Or it might be something more subtle, such as intricately carved weathering patterns etched into the sandstone cliffs, or mosaics of red and brown hues created by the weathering of iron-bearing minerals in the rocks. For us, hiking here offers continual delight and discovery.

With its headwaters in northern Summers County, the Lower Meadow River is fed by a series of glades, meadows, and wetlands known as the Big Meadows. This is where the river gets its name. Though born in the serenity of meadows and glades, the river’s last few miles are anything but calm. Indeed, its lower reaches embody the wild character of West Virginia.

As the Meadow River approaches its confluence with the Gauley River at Camptown Ferry, it picks up slope and speed. The last six miles of the river drop at a rate of 94 feet per mile. By comparison, the Upper Gauley River drops 28 feet per mile, and on the best stretch of whitewater on the New River, the slope is about 20 feet per mile. By any standard, the Meadow River’s last run is swift and steep.

Phyllis and I also appreciate the Meadow River’s accessibility. It is surprisingly easy to get to this untamed mountain river. The best access is at the Kevin Ritchie Memorial Bridge, which crosses the Meadow River on U.S. Highway 19. (The West Virginia Legislature named the bridge in honor of Kevin Ritchie, a 34-year-old EMS paramedic who was killed while assisting accident victims on the bridge.) From time to time, while driving U.S. 19, I noticed a few cars parked off the berm just north of the bridge. I made a mental note to check it out some day. My only regret is that I didn’t do this sooner. This is a great spot from which to explore the Meadow River both upstream and downstream.

(Note: If you enjoy exploring areas that are off the beaten path, watch for parked vehicles in spots such as this one. They may indicate some interesting places that others already know about.)

However, rather than park off the highway, I recommend turning west on Underwood Road, which is the first intersection north of the bridge. Then take an immediate left turn onto Dietz Road and park at the pullout at the curve at the top of the hill. Hike down the dirt road that parallels U.S. 19. After passing a waterfall on your left, walk a few yards further down and look for an obvious fork in the road. It’s next to a large rock outcrop with an overhanging ledge. The left fork is the best way to explore the Meadow River upstream. Take the right fork to explore the rock cliffs and the Meadow River downstream.

The downstream cliffs are called the Main Meadow in New River Gorge, Meadow River, and Summerville Lake Rock.
The Meadow River offers some of West Virginia’s most challenging and dangerous whitewater.
Climber's Guide, Third Edition, Steve Cater's latest guidebook to rock climbing routes in southern West Virginia. This book is an excellent resource for hikers looking for new and interesting places. To find the Main Meadow, continue down the right-hand fork of the dirt road. As you proceed, the cliffs of the Main Meadow will be on your right and close to the road. But don't charge into the brush right away to reach the cliff face. Wait until you come to a wide spot in the dirt road where ATVs have made ruts around a mud hole. Then look to the right for a slightly worn path leading straight to the cliffs.

If you follow these directions, you will be at the base of the first set of cliffs called the Jan Wall, where the climbing routes begin. From here the challenge is to follow the base of the cliff line for about a half mile to the Moon Wall, which is at the end of the Main Meadow section. Though not a long trail, it is challenging nonetheless because it isn't marked. Rather, the way has been forged by rock climbers exploring the cliffs. Some sections of the trail are level and flat along linear stretches of the cliff line. But occasionally, the cliff line breaks down, and boulder fields and rhododendron hinder progress. When picking your way through these difficult stretches, a good rule of thumb is to hug the cliffs. And along part of this path, I mean that quite literally!

I won't describe the details of this portion of the hike because I'd rather that you discover it for yourself. I must mention, though, that there are two waterfalls along the way. They only have water during the spring or after a heavy rainfall in the summer, but they are good landmarks. The end of the Main Meadow cliffs is about 900 feet beyond the second waterfall. After reaching the end, double back until you find one of several paths that lead back down to the dirt road. There's a short, easy path about 150 feet east of the second waterfall.

Once on the dirt road, you can double back to the parking area or press on to the banks of the Meadow River, which are just a short distance down the road. At the Meadow River, the dirt road intersects an old, narrow-gauge railroad bed. This relic of bygone logging days runs on the north side of the river. (The main line railroad formerly ran along the opposite side of the river—that is, the south side—and that rail bed is gradually being converted into a rail trail.) The north side rail bed runs downstream beyond the road intersection for about a mile. Along the way, you'll
encounter two areas where the railroad bed has slipped away into the river. Don't let these breaks in the road deter you. Continue until you reach a true dead end. Phyllis and I tried to bushwhack beyond the end, but all we got for our efforts were a lot of scratches and a case of poison ivy.

Along this downstream stretch, the Meadow River is as rough and rugged as any West Virginia mountain stream. The grade steepens, the gorge narrows, the whitewater builds, and the boulders just get bigger. Some of the boulders are as big as a house. Brave men and women have kayaked this portion of the Meadow but only at great risk. This section has claimed the lives of three expert paddlers and may be the most dangerous stretch of whitewater in West Virginia. Though dangerous to kayak, the Meadow River is a thrill to watch. During high water, the rolling waves and thunderous rapids are exhilarating. Even in low water, its boulder-lined bed and tree-lined banks are beautiful.

Even with all this to boast about, there's still more to the Meadow River. Upstream another set of striking sandstone cliffs are definitely worth exploring because they hide a surprise or two. To access the river upstream, take that left-hand fork in the dirt road that I mentioned earlier. The road descends to the Meadow River and ends below the U.S. 19 bridge. It intersects the narrow-gauge railroad bed, which continues upstream. To explore the upstream cliffs, called the Upper Meadow Walls, hike the railroad bed for about three quarters of a mile. Look for a faint path breaking off to the left toward the cliffs. If you come to a little camp by the river's edge, you've gone too far. Backtrack about 80 paces to find the trail to the cliffs.

The trail leads to the base of one of the tallest sets of cliffs that I've seen in the New River region. Called the First Buttress, it's a vertical-to-slightly-overhanging wall of sandstone some 120 to 140 feet high. The wall is orange and brown from weathering and will have you craning your neck to appreciate it. Continue to the right along the base of the cliffs to the Second Buttress, and remember there are surprises around every corner. In this case, you'll be amazed by a column of sandstone some 30 to 40 feet high. My jaw dropped the first time I saw it. Pinnacles or pillars of stone are fairly rare around here and are exciting to find. This one is mushroom shaped with a tree growing on top. The pinnacle guards the entrance to a deep, V-shaped notch in the cliff wall. This secluded cove of stone, called the Grotto by rock climbers, has a couple of small caves, some overhanging roofs of stone, and a trickle of water down the back wall. The Grotto is a great place to spend some time exploring.

After leaving the Grotto, continue hiking east along the base of the Second Buttress. Watch the cliff wall carefully, for there is a unique structure carved in the sandstone. Look for a four-foot-wide, hemispherical hollow in the cliff at about eye level. The hollow was probably once filled with some soft material such as shale or mudstone. The soft material has eroded away and left a fascinating feature behind. The normally linear bedding layers of the sandstone cliff have been squeezed, sliced, diced, and rolled into an elaborate mosaic of color and stone. It defies description, but I liken it to the stained glass windows of a chapel. Because of the rounded roof and stained glass effect, I call this place the Little Chapel of Stone. To me, it is a work of art. I could study and reflect on its subtleties and beauty as much as any lover of the fine arts could relish the painting of a master.

The Third Buttress lies beyond an enclosed passage formed by a large slab of sandstone that slipped off the cliff and wedged itself against the wall. The Fourth (and last) Buttress is a little further upstream, but it's worth the trip. To see it, retrace your steps back to the road that runs along the Meadow River. Take the road upstream for about three quarters of a mile and watch for the first creek that crosses the road. Follow the creek up to the cliffs of the Fourth Buttress. This buttress is split by a small stream that cascades over the cliff and makes a lovely, little waterfall. It was in this small cove, cut by the stream, that I saw the "ice angel"—the remains of a large icicle that had grown on the cliff wall. Warm temperatures and sunshine had carved this mass of ice into an elegant sculpture that was hauntingly human in form. From the Fourth Buttress, the return trip to the parking area is about two miles.

If you're like me, you'll return to the Meadow River as soon as you can. Wonders abound, beauty is abundant, and the river is wild and wonderful. Happy trails!

Ed Rehbein is an avid hiker, photographer, and writer. He lives in Beckley with his wife and hiking partner, Phyllis. Ed's photography can be viewed online at www.photographyart.com.

A lingering ice formation, or "ice angel," captures the author's imagination.
Since she was a little girl, Helen Efaw has roamed the woods of Plum Run, a quiet community in rural Marion County, gathering the fruits of nature. Growing up, she learned to forage for flowers, nuts, berries, roots, and bark to use in cooking, tea making, and crafts. Today, she lives in the same house where she was born and uses the same natural bounty to create exquisite woven and dyed baskets of many shapes and designs.

The daughter of Arthur A. and Ida A. Parker, Helen married Earl Efaw Jr. in 1953 at age 19. The couple moved to Norfolk, Virginia, where they lived for 15 years while Earl served in the Navy. While Earl was deployed on many overseas missions, Helen worked for C&P Telephone. In 1966, the couple adopted a baby girl, Brenda Kay. Three years later, the Efaw family returned to Marion County, where Earl found work at the Osage #3 coal mine. After returning home, Helen and Earl became foster parents to two boys, Richard Smallwood and Michael Hurley. Helen is very proud of her two grandsons, Richard's sons Eric and Adam.

Though a gifted artisan, Helen did not start weaving baskets until 1996, when she was 62 years old. Up until then, her craft of choice was quilting. "I loved creating new designs specific to the individual for whom I was making the quilt," Helen says.

All that changed, however, when she watched an artisan from Franklin, West Virginia, weave a basket. This woman helped Helen create her first basket, a twill-weave market basket. "After that, everything else went on the back burner, including the velvet crazy patch quilt that was to be my daughter's Christmas present," Helen admits. "It was as though I couldn't get enough." Helen bought the book Lynn Siler's Baskets and taught herself to weave. After that, her passion took flight.

To create her beautiful works, Helen uses reeds from plants similar to bamboo that grow on Malaysian islands. Her dyes come from local plants such as black walnut, blackberry, elderberry, beets, jewelweed, butternut, hickory nut, and yellow root. Her favorite colors come from black walnut hulls, which produce dark-brown hues, and butternut hulls, which produce a honey color.

Helen gathers the natural materials for her stains and soaks them for two to three days. She boils them in water and strains them, then repeats this process several times. If she is making the whole basket the same color, she pours the...
hot stain over the finished basket. If she is working on a multicolored design, she stains the individual reeds prior to weaving them.

"Dying a basket is like magic," Helen says with a smile. "It covers all my mistakes." Helen does not use glue or nails in any of her designs, but rather weaves the reeds tightly to make baskets that are both beautiful and very strong.

Though she didn't know it for some time, Helen is not the first gifted basket weaver in her family. According to neighbors and friends, Helen's grandfather, Turner Ashby Fluharty, made baskets for gathering eggs and feeding horses from materials he found in the woods. He used white oak strips for weaving and various roots and berries for dyes. Helen remembers seeing these baskets in her grandfather's home, but she had always assumed that he had bought them.

Helen first showed her work at the Designers Craft Guild in Morgantown. In 1997, her baskets debuted at Tamarack. In addition to these locations, her baskets are also featured at Mandy's Artwork in Fairmont, Hostetlers Riverside Market in Bruceton Mills, and My Sister's House in Salem.

Helen gained national exposure for her basketry when she was asked to contribute a miniature basket shaped like a drum for the 2000 West Virginia State Christmas Tree displayed in Washington, D.C. Helen says she was proud to represent the state in this way.

But for Helen, basket weaving means much more than creating beautiful objects. "Basket weaving is therapy," she explains. Her gift has been a comfort since Earl passed away in July 2005.

Helen also enriches the lives of others by teaching basket weaving to friends and family and to students in Fairmont State College's Community Education program. In addition, she teaches classes at Pickett's Fort State Park in Fairmont. Her students range from children to seniors. She was especially delighted by an 86-year-old student of hers who now has her own little shop. "I especially enjoy watching an elderly person's eyes light up when they see what they can do," Helen says.

Because she enjoys sharing her craft widely, Helen prices her works affordably. Her baskets generally range in price from $35 to $65. Specialty pieces such as her gorgeous Noah's Ark basket are $95 for the small size and $120 for the large size. Other specialty baskets that vary in price include covered wagons, donkey carts, and Christmas sleighs, to name but a few. Helen also goes to great lengths to customize her baskets according to her customers' requests.

The gentle-spirited artisan says she is grateful that she can still pursue the craft she loves. "I really feel blessed that God has let me do this because many people my age are disabled," she says.

For more information about Helen Efax's baskets, visit www.basketsbyhelen.com, or contact her at IWeave2@aol.com or (304) 825-1143.

A resident of Morgantown, David Kisamore enjoys writing about wildlife and interesting people in his home state. He is a regular contributor to Wonderful West Virginia.
Gallery
Amanda Haddox, www.in-my-minds-eye.com
Heather Kessler, www.westvirginiaimagery.com
and Brenda Griffin

Little Beaver Lake State Park
Amanda Haddox
Heather Kessler teaches beginner photography classes at MountainMade in Thomas, West Virginia. For more information about upcoming classes, visit www.mountainmade.com or call 877-686-6233 or 304-463-3355.
Congratulations to Charles Simmons of Keyser, West Virginia, who won a state park vacation package for completing the survey published in our May 2007 issue. His prize is a three-night stay in a cabin at a State Park of his choice.

Wonderful West Virginia magazine wishes to thank each of the 5,926 respondents who completed our survey. That is a 16.5 percent response rate. Fantastic! Your input will be quite helpful, and we hope to share the results with you in an upcoming issue.

Harry F. Price
Publisher
Autumn sightseers exploring the Dolly Sods area might be surprised at the amount of activity occurring directly across from the Red Creek Campground. Upon closer inspection, curious visitors discover that the frenzy is centered around a series of almost invisible mist nets and a bird banding station.

What the visitors have stumbled across is known as the Allegheny Front Migration Observatory (AFMO). The AFMO is just one of many long-term research projects and field activities undertaken by the Brooks Bird Club (BBC).

Founded in Wheeling in 1932, the BBC has grown into a statewide organization that is at the forefront of environmental education and research throughout West Virginia. Not only do members contribute valuable information on the outdoor world, but they do so while having the time of their lives among close colleagues and friends. In October of this year, the club will celebrate its 75th anniversary.

The club's namesake, Alonzo Beecher, or A. B., Brooks, was born in 1873 and grew up near present-day French Creek. Though his family had no money to send him to college, this did not prevent Brooks from reaching his dream of higher education. He taught himself surveying and eventually created a map of every road and structure in Upshur County. Brooks used the money he earned from surveying and map sales to pay for college.

Brooks later became one of West Virginia University's first forestry graduates. Shortly after college, he developed a survey of all of West Virginia's forest resources and published the book West Virginia Trees. In 1921, he became the Chief Game Protector for the state's first Conservation Commission. Many noteworthy accomplishments took place under his tenure, including the creation of Watoga State Park and Seneca State Forest.

In 1926, Brooks became the first staff naturalist for the Oglebay Institute at Oglebay Park. He led nature walks each Sunday morning in Ohio County that regularly attracted more than 100 participants. These informal gatherings soon evolved into the West Virginia Nature Association.

The association consisted of many smaller clubs, including the botany, astronomy, nature poetry, and bird study groups. At the first bird club meeting, Dr. Matthew Zubak proposed that the association's name be changed to honor A. B. Brooks. The club still proudly bears his name today.

Brooks also operated one of the country's first outdoor education centers. His fascinating programs helped educate a multitude of both amateur and professional naturalists, who in turn went on to open the eyes of thousands to the natural world. Brooks is also fondly known by many as West Virginia's first forester.

Within a few months of its founding, the club published...
the first issue of The Restart. This important periodical is still published today and is the state’s first and longest running ornithological publication. Produced quarterly, The Restart is the official scientific publication of the BBC. Each issue contains interesting articles on field observations, bird banding notes, and reports on the club’s many outings.

In addition to The Restart, the BBC also publishes the quarterly Mail Bag, a newsletter that keeps members abreast of environmental issues, club outings, special activities, and other important events.

And speaking of field activities and events, the BBC hosts a number of local, regional, national, and even international trips. Outings can range from an afternoon of birding in the West Virginia highlands to a two-week excursion halfway around the world. Recent excursions have been to Arizona, Texas, Costa Rica, Switzerland, Spain, Ireland, Italy, and South Africa. The annual November weekend trip to the Delaware Bay area to observe tens of thousands of migrating snow geese, as well as many other species of birds, is a club favorite.

Between outings, the BBC Wheeling Chapter continues to conduct monthly meetings at Oglebay Park’s Schrader Environmental Center in Wheeling. The meetings typically include a covered-dish dinner followed by an interesting program on birds, wildlife, or related environmental topics.

Besides taking fascinating outings, the BBC conducts an annual Christmas bird census, participates in the West Virginia Bird Atlas Project, conducts breeding bird and fall hawk migration surveys, and operates the Allegheny Front Migration Observatory (AFMO) Bird Banding Station.

The AFMO at Dolly Sods began in 1958 and is one of the oldest continuously operated banding stations in the nation. Bird banders come not only from all corners of West Virginia but from surrounding states as well. Some volunteers have been participating for more than 20 years and some spend seven to eight weeks at the station. For most of the banders, it is both an important tradition and a lifelong passion. Since the banding station was founded, more than 200,000 birds have been banded. The total number of bird species banded is 120. The operation starts each year on August 15 and runs to October 15.

Over the years, many birds banded at the AFMO have turned up halfway around the world. Birds banded by the club have been found as far away as Mexico, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Quebec, Manitoba, and Alaska.

Bird banders must serve an apprenticeship for several years before earning a license from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. Banders must be able to determine the species of a bird and its gender, take required measurements and collect any other pertinent field data, band the bird, and release it unharmed in a short period of time. Visitors are always welcome to observe activities at the banding site.

Two other long-running BBC projects are the annual foray and sortie. The foray is an 8- to 10-day excursion held in June, usually at a 4-H or other youth camp in West Virginia. The annual sortie is similar to a foray but smaller in scale. The sortie is held in late May or early June so as not to conflict with the foray.

The foray is designed so that participants can pursue many outdoor interests. While birding is the primary activity, all aspects of nature are studied, including botany, geology, butterflies, mushrooms, and other related topics. Evenings are punctuated by campfires, storytelling, charades, and other recreational activities. The club offers scholarships to the foray outings to both students and adults.

Beloved West Virginia naturalist A. B. Brooks, for whom the club was named

© The Brooks Bird Club’s periodical The Restart is the state’s first and longest running ornithological publication.
Begun in the early 1940s, forays have contributed greatly to an understanding of our changing forest environment. Forays and sorties often have provided new information on nesting birds, plants, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians in West Virginia. Habitats in nearly every area of West Virginia have been studied during these outings. The club's findings are compiled in The Restart.

In 1973, the BBC adopted a national wildlife sanctuary program to discourage habitat destruction by development. Today, the program has sites in all of West Virginia's 55 counties, as well as in all 50 states. A total of approximately 150,000 acres is now protected by this program.

The club also assists WVDNR with the Wildflower Pilgrimage, held annually at Blackwater Falls State Park. The BBC has provided field leaders for this popular weekend since 1963.

From its humble beginnings at Oglebay Park, the BBC has grown into one of the country's most respected nature organizations. The BBC now has approximately 2,000 members who come from all walks of life and nearly two dozen states. Headquartered in Wheeling, the BBC maintains a number of affiliate clubs in West Virginia (see sidebar).

Not willing to simply rest on its past achievements, the BBC continues to explore West Virginia's hills to better understand the changing environment and to educate the next generation of amateur and professional naturalists.

The club will celebrate its 75th anniversary October 26-28, 2007, at Oglebay Park in Wheeling. Participants will reflect on the organization's noteworthy history while enjoying all of Oglebay's amenities. Groups will hike on the same trails that A. B. Brooks used to conduct his morning nature walks. The weekend will also feature addresses by Chandler S. Robbins, author of Birds of North America, and Ken Kaufman, author of the Kaufman Field Guides series. For more information about the club and the anniversary celebration, visit www.brooksbirdclub.org.

Juanita Slater is a longtime member of the BBC. She serves on the club's board of directors and is also the club's membership secretary.

Jamie Fenske is also a BBC member. He enjoys writing on nature and travel topics and is a frequent contributor to Wonderful West Virginia.
BROOKS BIRD CLUB
AFFILIATES

For nature study, friendship, and great fun, check out a meeting of the Brooks Bird Club chapter nearest you. Here is a list of affiliates and contacts:

**Wheeling Area**
Wheeling Chapter
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**Charleston Area**
Handlan Chapter
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**Huntington Area**
The Leon Wilson Bird Club
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**Parkersburg Area**
Mountwood Bird Club
Richard and Jeanette Esker
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eskerrb@verizon.net

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The Handlan Chapter of the Brooks Bird Club is named for John W. Handlan, pictured here in his birding garb in 1931. Handlan, who grew up in Wheeling, was the first president of the Brooks Bird Club after its founding in 1932. He later moved to Charleston, where he worked as a copy editor at the Charleston Gazette and wrote a nature column, "Signs Along the Trail." Photo courtesy of John Williamson
When J. T. Bowers walked into Baker's barbershop in Ridgeley, West Virginia, on October 15, 1914, it wasn't for a shave and a haircut. Bowers wanted to cast his vote in the local election. There was an important issue on the ballot; indeed, it had been the hot topic among townspeople all year. The question to be decided by voters was, should Ridgeley incorporate and become a town?

South Cumberland, the Potomac River, and Ridgeley in 1895. Herman and Stacia Miller Collection, courtesy of the City of Cumberland, Maryland.
The VOTE That Made All the DIFFERENCE

By James Rada Jr.
Every one of Ridgeley's 1,300 residents seemed to have an opinion and Bowers was no exception. He believed in incorporation and he knew he had to make his opinion count. What he didn't know was just how hard that would turn out to be.

Ridgeley's roots date back to when early Americans first began to move west. In 1748, Eastern Seaboard planters founded the Ohio Company to develop the fur trade through the Allegheny Mountains. In 1750, the company built a small storehouse on the south side of the Potomac River.

"The building was stoutly constructed, and was large enough so that it not only provided space for the accommodation of trade goods and precious furs, but also served as the residence of the agent and his family," wrote Gordon Kershaw in Allegany County—A History. Ohio Company agents might be considered the first residents of what would become Ridgeley, West Virginia.

Because of its stout construction, the storehouse served as a defensive location and was eventually referred to as Fort Ohio. It was considered the northernmost of a chain of forts that helped protect settlers during the French and Indian War.

"Fort Ohio stocked 4,000 (English Pounds) worth of merchandise purchased in London for the Indian trade in the Ohio," wrote Mary Rigglesman Frye in her manuscript History of Ridgeley, West Virginia.

In the early 1800s, the Charles Ridgeley family settled in the area and built a home on the banks of the river, across the street from the present-day Ridgeley Town Hall. Ridgeley made the bricks for the home in his own brickyard and used stones from the Potomac River to form the foundation.

According to Frye, the town, or at least a part of it, was originally named St. Clairsville. "It was given the name because of a donation of 10 acres of land to the county seat by a man named St. Clair, to encourage erection of the Blue Bridge crossing the Potomac River from Allegany County, Md.,” she wrote.

Later, John P. Barn cord opened the first grocery store in the town. Barn cord was also in charge of the post office, and he called the mailing address Barn cord, West Virginia. "Thus we had two towns, St. Clairsville and Barn cord, and a flag station at Ridgeley— which was very confusing to the public," wrote Frye. In 1898, R. A. Radcliffe was appointed postmaster and named the town after the Ridgeley family.

As Ridgeley grew, residents found themselves sorely in need of amenities that the county government couldn't afford to give them, such as better lighting, more police protection, and sewers. The way for the town to get these things was to incorporate and charge a municipal tax to residents. "It is the only way in which the people can have what they so badly needed for some time that is lights, protections, walks and sewerage, which will come in the course of a few years," reported the Cumberland Evening Times in 1914.

Incorporation became a much-debated issue for the town, with citizens lining up on both sides. At a public meeting held on October 2, Keyser attorney W. C. Grimes and Mineral County Sheriff C. E. Nethkin spoke in favor of incorporation.

"It was clearly shown at the meeting that many were in favor of the progressive move of the town; it was also evident that there were some against it. It seems however that as the time for deciding the question is at hand those in favor of the question are in the majority," reported the Cumberland Evening Times.

Opposition came from people who said house rents
would go up anywhere from $6 to $12 a year (about $125 to $250 in today's dollars) if the town were incorporated. Those in favor said that municipal taxes wouldn't increase rents by that much and would be offset by elimination of the county roads tax and the district road levy. Fire insurance rates would also be lower in an incorporated town, proponents of incorporation said.

In anticipation of a big voter turnout, the polls opened at 6:45 AM. However, it was anticipated that the majority of voters, who were employed by the Western Maryland Railroad and didn't get off work until 5:30 PM, would cast their ballots after 6:00 PM.

The Cumberland Evening Times reported that by 3:00 PM, 135 votes had been cast, and those in favor of incorporation were claiming a 20-vote lead. While 135 votes might seem like a small number in a town of 1,300, only 237 men were registered to vote in Ridgeley that year. In 1914, the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote, was still years away from ratification.

The number of registered voters in the voting district of which Ridgeley was a part increased from 343 in 1912 to 407 in 1914, and the Cumberland Evening Times noted, "The increase is in Ridgeley alone as there is scarce if any increase in the rural district."

When J. T. Bowers strode into the barbershop shortly before 6:00 PM to cast his vote, the election judge told him that because he had left Ridgeley for three months earlier in the year, he wasn't eligible to vote in Ridgeley's election. It didn't matter that Bowers hadn't wanted to move. He had had to move because the house he had been renting in Ridgeley had been sold. He hadn't been able to find a new place to live in a reasonable time, so he had been forced to move across the river to Cumberland. Bowers had stopped looking for a place to live in Ridgeley, however, and by August he had moved back to the town. Still, the election judge maintained that Bowers hadn't lived in Ridgeley long enough, so his vote didn't count.

Bowers was turned away, and at the end of the day, 210 men, or 89 percent of the registered voters in town, had voted. The final tally was 105 for incorporation and 105 against.

Bowers knew he had to take action. If he had been allowed to vote, the outcome would not have been a tie. Incorporation proponents R. A. Radcliffe, William Everstine, C. A. Jewell, Ferman H. Moreland, H. E. Valentine, and G. W. Spangler petitioned the Mineral County Circuit Court to allow Bowers' vote to count. Bowers' lawyer argued that "during the time that Mr. Bowers lived in Cumberland, he never gave up his claim to a vote in Ridgeley as he only was in Cumberland until he could get back in Ridgeley," reported the Cumberland Evening Times.

Some six weeks later, on November 28, 1914, Judge F. M. Reynolds ruled that Bowers' vote counted. Thus, Ridgeley was allowed to incorporate. Then the search began for candidates to be the founding fathers of Ridgeley. Among the candidates for mayor and town councilmen was a full slate put forth by the Socialist Party. In the first election, held January 7, 1915, James T. Vandergrift was elected the town's first mayor.

After a long stretch of rain in December 1914, the Cumberland Evening Times compared the streets of Ridgeley to those in Venice, Italy, which at times must be traversed by boat. "So much is needed in the way of general improvement for the town that it is rather hard to say which is most important," the newspaper commented. "One thing, however, and that is lights with proper police protection, seems to be the general cry from all parts of town. Little by little with the same well done, and not to over do anything, will eventually accomplish much for the town."

Ridgeley's population has decreased since the early 1900s, largely due to the exodus of industry in the middle of the last century. According to the U.S. Census, the town has about 700 residents. Though smaller, it still has a mayor and a town council, and it still provides citizens with the services they need. Incorporation ultimately helped residents recover from floods in 1924, 1936, and 1937 that put most of the town buildings under water. The 1936 flood in particular sent eight feet of water down the streets of the town and displaced 1,200 people for two days.

J. T. Bowers' story is proof that every vote counts. Indeed, in Ridgeley, West Virginia, in 1914, one vote made all the difference.

James Rada, Jr. is an award-winning journalist who is also the author of four historical fiction novels about western Maryland and the surrounding region.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Details</th>
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| August 2 - 4 | West Virginia Blackberry Festival  
Clarksburg  
304-622-3206 |
| August 3    | Free Summer Concert:  
1937 Flood/Bil Lepp  
Prickett's Fort State Park  
Fairmont  
304-363-3030 |
| August 3 - 4 | Meadow Bridge Homecoming  
Festival  
Meadow Bridge  
304-484-7502 |
| August 3 - 4 | Bluefield Downtown Street Fair  
Bluefield  
304-327-9686 |
| August 3 - 5 | Fenton Festival of Glassmaking  
Williamstown  
800-319-7793 |
| August 3 - 5 | Multifest  
State Capitol Grounds  
Charleston  
304-421-1585 |
| August 4    | Bike the Park Day  
Watoga State Park  
Marlinton  
304-294-5550 |
| August 4    | Walk Between the Parks  
Canaan Valley Resort State Park  
Davis  
304-866-4121 |
| August 4    | Longhunters and Landgrabbers  
Fort Randolph  
Point Pleasant  
304-675-7933 |
| August 4    | Greenbrier Challenge  
Greenbrier River Trail  
304-572-6708 or 304-254-9196 |
| August 4    | Fiddles and Vittles Special Train  
Cass Scenic Railroad State Park  
Cass  
304-456-4300 |
| August 5    | 12th Annual Car Cruise  
Tomlinson Run State Park  
New Manchester  
304-564-3651 |
| August 5    | Fishing with a Friend  
North Bend State Park  
Cairo  
304-643-2262 |
| August 5 - 11 | Cherry River Festival  
Richwood  
304-846-6790 |
| August 6 - 11 | Manning District Fair  
Mannington  
304-986-1911 |
| August 6 - 11 | Mason County Fair  
Point Pleasant  
304-675-5463 |
| August 6 - 11 | Magnolia Fair  
Matewan  
304-426-6621 |
| August 6 - 12 | Tyler County Fair  
Middlebourne  
304-758-4932 |
| August 7 - 11 | Tri-County Fair  
Petersburg  
304-538-2278 |
| August 8 - 11 | Wirt County Fair  
Elizabeth  
304-275-3192 |
| August 8 - 11 | Whitesville Big Coal River Festival  
Whitesville  
304-854-1224 |
| August 10 - 11 | Adaland Mansion – Murder Mystery Dinner Theater  
Philippi  
304-457-1587 |
| August 10 - 12 | Logan County Arts, Crafts & Antique Festival  
Logan  
304-752-1324 |
| August 10 - 12 | Avalon Music, Arts & Crafts Festival  
Avalon  
304-947-5600 |
| August 10 - 18 | West Virginia State Fair  
Fairlea  
304-645-6660 |
| August 11    | Dairy Day  
Prickett's Fort State Park  
Fairmont  
304-363-3030 |
| August 11    | Mountain Festival/  
Annual BBQ Cook-off  
Canaan Valley Resort State Park  
Davis  
304-866-4121 |
| August 12    | Athens-Concord Town Social  
Concord University Campus  
Athens  
304-384-5348 |
| August 12    | Lebanese-American Heritage Festival - Mahrajan  
Oglebay Park  
Wheeling  
304-233-1688 |
| August 13 - 19 | Town & Country Days  
New Martinsville  
304-455-4275 |
August 16
Brunch with Margaret Blennerhassett
Blennerhassett Island Historical State Park
Parkersburg
304-420-4800

August 17
Free Summer Concert: Mon River Big Band
Prickett's Fort State Park
Fairmont
304-363-3030

August 17 – 19
African-American Culture & Heritage Festival
Charles Town and Ranson
304-725-9610

August 18
CCC Reunion at Camp Woodbine
Richwood
304-846-6790

August 18 – 19
Civil War Weekend
Greenbrier State Forest
Caldwell
304-536-1944

August 19 – 25
Taylor County Fair
Grafton
304-363-3403

August 19 – 25
Jefferson County Fair
Ranson
304-724-1411

August 22 – 25
Pendleton County Fair
Circleville
304-567-3300

August 22 – 25
Appalachian Festival
Beckley
877-987-3847

August 22 – 26
South Charleston Summerfest
South Charleston
800-238-9488

August 23
Taste of Appalachia – Beckley
Beckley
304-256-1776

August 23 – 26
Pete Dye West Virginia Classic
Bridgeport
304-848-2027

August 25 – 26
West Virginia Honey Festival
Parkersburg
304-485-6437

August 25 – 26
WV Festival of Foods
(Charleston Civic Center)
Charleston
304-345-1500, ext. 220

August 27 – September 1
Barbour County Fair
Philippi
304-823-1328

August 30 – September 2
Charleston Sternwheel Regatta
Charleston
800-733-5469

August 30 – September 3
National ATV & Dirt Bike Rally Week 2007
Pineville
800-732-6980

August 31
Free Summer Concert: Grkmania
Prickett's Fort State Park
Fairmont
304-363-3030

August 31
Murder Mystery Train
Cass Scenic Railroad State Park
Cass
304-456-4300

August 31 – September 2
Labor Day Weekend
North Bend State Park
Cairo
304-643-2931

August 31 – September 2
West Virginia Italian Heritage Festival
Clarksburg
304-622-7314

August 31 – September 2
Oak Leaf Festival
Oak Hill
304-663-1608

August 31 – September 2
Jane Lew Firemen's Arts & Crafts Festival
Jane Lew
304-457-3097

August 31 – September 3
Stonewall Jackson Heritage Arts and Crafts Jubilee
Weston
304-269-1863

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Tale of the Devil: The Biography of Devil Anse Hatfield
By Coleman C. Hatfield and Robert Y. Spence
$18.95, 6 x 9.5, 328 pages, Paperback

The story of the legendary Devil Anse Hatfield, Tale of the Devil begins with Hatfield's childhood in frontier Appalachia and goes on to describe his Civil War days as a noted Confederate soldier. Filled with rich detail, it offers a captivating and enlightening view of the Hatfield-McCoy feud, as well as the postfeud years. Because this book contains much information from grandson Coleman A. Hatfield’s exhaustive manuscripts, journals, and audiotapes, which were compiled over a lifetime, it is both authentic and entertaining. It also features “insider” information that has never before been published.

More Than Beans and Cornbread:
Traditional West Virginia Cooking
By Barbara McCallum
$14.95, 190 pages, 7.25 x 10, Paperback (spiral bound)

With this little volume, you’ll discover the joys of breaking bread “West, By God, Virginia style.” A favorite for years, it is full of down-home goodness, featuring “old West Virginia family recipes” that call for common, simple ingredients. Included are recipes for Beef Pot Roast, Sweet-Sour Baked Beans, and Scripture Cake. As McCallum says, this book celebrates a time when cooking and eating were ends in themselves, not just the “joyless science” they are becoming.

Rail-Trails: Mid-Atlantic
By Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
$15.95, 5.5 x 8.5, 198 pages, Paperback

All across West Virginia, former railroad corridors have been converted to public, multiuse trails that provide safe places for walking, hiking, and biking. This official Rails-to-Trails Conservancy guidebook includes detailed descriptions of 22 of the most popular rail trails in the state. It also contains descriptions of trails in Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C.; maps; contact information; and more.

West Virginia Birds: An Introduction to Familiar Species
By James Kavanagh
$5.95, 8 x 22, Laminated double tri-fold

This easy-to-carry pocket guide is what every state nature lover needs. Shown in vivid color are common species of birds that are found across West Virginia, including perching birds, waterfowl, doves, and woodpeckers. It lists birds' common and scientific names and sizes, as well as all of the bird sanctuaries in the state. This is a great resource for the beginner or seasoned birder.
Discover the Ashland Company Store - a West Virginia coal company store reborn to its original use, complete with old money vaults and tin ceiling!

Relax in a handmade rocking chair, thumb through a novel set in the McDowell County Coal fields, or sample West Virginia jams, jellies, sauces and other gourmet treats.

Browse through historic relics and memorabilia from the southern West Virginia coalfields, including miners hats and dinner buckets, coal company scrip, and photos and letters from the period.

Like the original coal company stores, we've got something for everyone - Hatfield McCoy Trail passes and logo merchandise, snacks, souvenirs and local crafts. Y'all come see us!

Coal Camp Café
At the Coal Camp Café you will find a selection of sandwiches and box lunches to go as you enjoy the nearby Hatfield McCoy Trail. Dinner is served as well and features the traditional coal camp meal of "pinto beans and cornbread". Or, try our daily West Virginia specialties. Enjoy your meal in our vintage lunch room, at one of our outdoor picnic tables, or on the trail! Breakfast and lunch.

West Virginia Crafts
The Ashland Company Store is a great place to find authentic West Virginia handmade crafts, including quilts, candles and soaps, coal figurines, artwork and local jams and jellies, many from Tamarack-juried artisans. Read the stories of our crafters, who may apply skills handed down through generations or use unique local materials for their products. Check our schedule to see if one of our local crafters is on site giving demonstrations or offering a class. Many of our artists accept custom orders for quilts, woodwork, or other art pieces. Take home a special memory of beautiful southern West Virginia!

Coal Fields Museum
Our store is a living museum of coal history, from our window displays of original merchandise and store records to our special exhibits of coal mining hats, lanterns, and dinner buckets. Check out the historic panorama photos - and maybe identify a relative who once worked in the mines.

See examples of coal company scrip from many different mines and perhaps even purchase a replica of the Ashland Coke and Coal Company scrip!

McDowell County WV was once the largest producer of coal in the U.S. Visit us to discover the people and their history that made this possible.

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