

# Friends of Blackwater Canyon

October 2005

501 Elizabeth Street Room 3, Charleston, WV 25311 • 304-345-7663 • www.saveblackwater.org • info@saveblackwater.org

## Draft Mon Forest Plan Threatens Blackwater!

Comment by 11/14/05

Do you approve of *five times more logging* in Monongahela National Forest, with clearcuts *doubling* in size? Unless concerned citizens speak out NOW, increased logging in the Blackwater Canyon will be part of the Forest Service's new "Plan" for the Monongahela National Forest.

People who love the Blackwater Canyon must *speak out*, and say a resounding NO to this Forest Service proposal!

Comments are due by Nov. 14. Here are the facts: Three-quarters of the Blackwater Canyon area is in public ownership, most of it managed by the Monongahela National Forest. Under the draft

management plan preferred by the National Forest, commercial logging — currently *prohibited* in much of this part of the Mon — can begin *next year*. And the Forest Service proposes to cut *five times as many trees* and to *double* the size of clearcuts in this plan.

### A warning from the past

*continued next page*

"The State of West Virginia is mightily proud of its glorious natural scenery, but the State also shows to us what happens when man flies in the face of nature. Today, I have seen many square miles of splendid mountains which have been denuded of timber. I have seen yellow streams carrying eroded silt and soil from the steep slopes."



President Franklin D. Roosevelt  
Mountain State Forest Festival  
October 1, 1936

## Writers Honored at Blackwater Conference

The second annual Friends of Blackwater Membership Reception and Awards Banquet was held at Timberline Four Seasons Resort on September 24. Awards were given to writers who celebrated the Blackwater area.



**Charlie Baer** was born in Columbus Ohio. He completed his masters degree in botany at Ohio State and PhD in plant physiology at the University of Maryland. He taught the first ecology courses at West Virginia University and started the state chapter of the Nature Conservancy in 1963. Charlie worked with the National Park Service to evaluate potential National Natural Landmarks. Blackwater Canyon was in that report, as well as, Cranesville Swamp, Greenland Gap, Cathedral State Forest and Big Run Bog. Now in his 86<sup>th</sup> year, Charlie works to preserve West Virginia's natural beauty and unique ecology.

**Margaret Calwell** is a strong supporter and source of encouragement to Friends of

## Blackwater Trail Update

*By Judy Rodd*

There is an imminent, deadly arrow of destruction poised and aimed at the heart of the Blackwater Canyon.

The arrow of destruction is Allegheny Wood Product's public land-grab: their plan to turn the beautiful, intimate Blackwater Canyon Trail into a commercial logging road.

In just a few weeks, we expect the release of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) by the Forest Service on AWP's catastrophic proposal.

Make no mistake about it; *when that Draft EIS is released, we who love Black-*

*water are going to be in a fight that will test every fiber of our being.*

We must be prepared and willing to defend — *as never before* — West Virginia's scenic "Crown Jewel," her "Natural Treasure," as Senator Robert C. Byrd put it.

To defeat the forces of greed and privatization, and to protect the Canyon Trail from bulldozers and mega-machines, will take every bit of public opinion, media outcry, and scientific and legal expertise that we can muster.

*continued next page*



Judy Rodd (l) presents Margaret Calwell Writer's Award with her son, Stuart Calwell, by her side. Story continued on page 8

<b>Inside:</b>			
Director's Update .....	2	A Tribute to Arnout Hyde Jr. ....	4
Stuff Your Bag Sweepstakes .....	2	Calendar of Events .....	5
Timberline's Fred Herz .....	3	Signs of Fall in Spruce Country .....	5
Field Volunteers Foreman & Null .....	3	In memory of Drew Forrester .....	5
In memory .....	4	The Allegheny Front .....	6,7
Writers Honored Continued .....	8	Welcome Lena's Bakery .....	11
Trail Expansion Project Underway ...	9	Blackwater Roots Distributed .....	11
North Fork Watershed News .....	9	Charlie Black a.k.a. Baloney Man .....	11
Biking Blackwater .....	10	Get Away to Fiddler's Roost .....	12
Welcome Canyon Rim .....	10	Cabin For Sale .....	12

# Director's Update

## Monongahela Forest

from page 1

The Blackwater Canyon region includes Table Rock and the Red Run Valley, Olson Fire Tower, Big Run Bog, Canaan Loop Road, Canyon Rim Trail, the Blackwater Canyon Trail, Engine Run, Plantation Trail, Railroad Trail, and Mountainside Trail.

This beloved area needs *more* protection, not less. Tell the Forest Service to make all of the Blackwater Canyon Region of the Monongahela

Forest into a 6.2 protected area! Keep the log trucks, skidders and roads out!! Send a comment to the Forest Service from [SaveBlackwater.ORG](http://SaveBlackwater.ORG).

## Blackwater Trail

from page 1

And to carry on that fight, as always, costs money — for mailings, for ads, for our staff, and for lawyers' and scientists' expenses. We usually save our quarterly fundraising pitches for a separate letter, and devote the Blackwater Newsletter to news and issues, but the *frightening fact* of this looming arrow of destruction demands that we lay the financial aspect of this fight on the line here.

If you want Friends of Blackwater to be ready and able to work with you to defend our beloved Canyon against this vicious attack — *please* make the best financial contribution that you can today.

We would not ask you if it were not so important.

Thank you so much for your support. Together, we can and we *will* protect this magnificent landscape for all of our children and grandchildren!

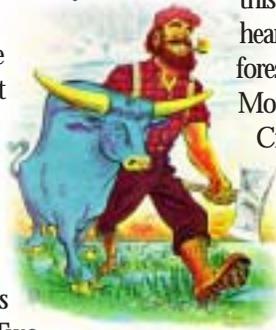


Judy Rodd after a picnic at Big Run; Photo by Joe Collins

Dear Friends,

Blackwater Canyon glows with fall colors. Head up to Tucker County and enjoy it!! Go out to Lindy Point and see the view. Drive just two miles beyond the Park Lodge and hike in on the new trail one-half mile. You can check out lodging and restaurant options on our website. Take a bike ride from Thomas down the railtrail. Downhill from MountainMade at Coketon, cross the bridge and turn left on the wide gravel Canyon Trail. You will pass the coke ovens before entering the heart of the Canyon. Two hours later you'll be in Hendricks. Call Highland Scene Tours at 877-223-5388 to reserve a shuttle back.

Have a great Autumn!!



## Babe is with us!

From the land of the great lumberjack Paul Bunyan's birthplace, I compose this message. The voice of

this mythical man can still be heard in the depths of the forest...Paul Bunyan urges Mountaineers to cherish their Crown Jewel. Fight to save the Blackwater Canyon from a wealthy timber company and rich land developers or you'll have Paul Bunyan to deal with.

Jim Mahrer  
700 Woodland Ave NW  
Bemidji, MN  
56601

## Stuff your Santa Bag Sweepstakes

Begin or renew your annual membership with Friends of Blackwater before December 1 and you will be eligible for the Friends of Blackwater Sweepstakes Gift Box: Five books, two t-shirts, one toy flying squirrel, a tote bag, and three posters. Just write the word "sweepstakes" on your remittance envelope. And until December 1, you can help expand our network of supporters by enrolling two friends for the price of one. Complete the following form and include an additional \$35 to enroll a friend or relative as a member of Friends of Blackwater. A gift membership card will be sent to them.



Expand Our  
Network:  
Two For One  
Membership  
Until Dec. 1st

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

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# Special Friend and Volunteer:

## Timberline Renaissance Man, Fred Herz

For a guy from Bucks County, Pennsylvania who knew by the time he was ten that he wanted to study the biology of oceans and travel the globe, it would seem that West Virginia got in the way of Fred Herz's dreams. But now—as this year marks Timberline's 20th Anniversary—he will tell you that he is doing exactly what he wants, where he wants.

Fred first ventured into the Allegheny Highlands while studying biology and chemistry at Columbia Union College outside Washington, D.C. He and his friends took trips into Smoke Hole Canyon, the Dolly Sods Wilderness, and experienced winter camping on Spruce Knob. Upon graduation in 1985, his family purchased the 450-acre Timberline Four Seasons Ski Resort—perhaps the last ski resort of its size and significance east of the Mississippi that remains family owned.

The Herz Family invested both money and sweat in constructing a ski lodge and 20-plus trails after their first year of ownership. One of the first ski trails built was two-mile-long Salamander Run, named for the populations of endangered Cheat



(l to r) West Virginia Inventor and Entrepreneur Fred Herz and Governor Joe Manchin

Mountain salamanders that required the precaution of an environmental impact study before construction could begin. Salamander Run is within 50 feet of the Dolly Sods Wilderness and is the longest slope in the south.

As additional investments were made in snow making equipment, chair lifts, and new trails, the resort's success did not escape the attention of real estate investors in the resort business.

"When ski conglomerates approach us to buy Timberline, we turn them down," said Fred.

Timberline's unique rustic charm and family-friendly style arises from a personal interest in a client's individual needs. It has 35 ski trails that provide about 14 miles of downhill skiing and many more miles of cross-country skiing, two triple-chair lifts, a beginner double-chair lift, and state-of-the-art snow-making equipment. This year, \$700,000 has been invested in the construction of a new trail.

"We would like to name our newest trail in honor of Senator Byrd, pending his acceptance of the gesture. He has done so much to bring honor and attention to the State of West Virginia, and he has never had a ski slope named in his honor," says Fred.

Timberline is an exemplary case of the economic boost tourism brings to Tucker County. Timberline employs 340 local

*continued on page 11*

## Field Volunteers Jenny Foreman and Matt Null

Jenny Forman is a senior marketing major at Virginia Tech. She has worked for River & Trail Outfitters for



the past three years as a raft guide. Jenny's parents have a cabin in Canaan Valley, and it

is one of Jenny's absolute favorite vacation spots. Because Jenny would hate to see any of the area destroyed, she sent an email to Friends of Blackwater asking for newsletters and bumper stickers to distribute around the Blacksburg, Virginia area. Jenny is very glad to help and will continue to spread the news about the importance of preserving the Blackwater Canyon.

Matthew Null is a senior at Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia. He is an English major whose concentration is in poverty studies. In Spring 2005, Matt's short story, "Local Earth" was published in *Shenandoah*, a national literary review. Matt was raised in Nicholas and Wetzel Counties. Even though Matt does not get back home as often as he would like, he follows West Virginia's environmental issues very closely. Because generations of his family have enjoyed fishing, camping, canoeing and hiking the Mongahela National Forest, and especially the Blackwater River, Matt distributes our newsletters around Lexington and hopes to someday work on our North Fork Watershed Project.



# In Memory of Arnout Hyde Jr.

By Sheila McEntee



The Friends of Blackwater community was saddened by the death of Arnout “Sonny” Hyde Jr. on August 9, 2005. Perhaps the state’s most renowned photographer, Sonny captured on film the natural beauty of the state he loved so well and, in the process, stirred the hearts of generations of West Virginians. As editor of *Wonderful West Virginia* magazine, which he helped found in the 1960s, Sonny instilled pride in many state residents by publishing articles and photographs that showcased the history, wild nature, and exceptional character of West Virginia and its people.

Sonny loved the Blackwater Canyon and he was a strong supporter of the work of Friends of Blackwater. Over the years, he found many opportunities to publish articles and photographs that both highlighted the canyon’s magnificence and advocated for its protection. Because *Wonderful West Virginia’s* subscriber base includes a large percentage of out-of-state readers—many of

them loyal, native West Virginians—Sonny helped raise awareness about the plight of the Blackwater Canyon well beyond state borders. He was also quick to donate his photographs to help raise money to sustain the work of Friends of Blackwater.

West Virginia and Friends of Blackwater have lost a true friend, artist, and advocate in Arnout Hyde. In addition to his wife, Teresa, and his daughter, Lucia Hyde Robinson, he leaves the gift of his extraordinary work, which forever evidences the grandeur and uniqueness of his beloved West Virginia. And although his long battle with prostate cancer has ended, his indomitable spirit continues to inspire his nephew, Rob Taylor, who will compete this November in an Ironman Triathlon in Florida to raise money for the Prostate Cancer Foundation. To learn more about Rob’s effort, or to pledge a gift in Arnout Hyde’s honor, visit [sonny’sfight.com](http://sonny’sfight.com).

## *In memory*

In memory of **Anna Steele Fernster** by Mary M. Morgan - Anna was my older sister who after retiring from Marshall College in Huntington moved to Canaan Valley. As long as she was able, she was a great hiker. Anna was also a prize-winning weaver and artist who drew from the Blackwater Canyon her constant source of inspiration to her artistic expression.

In memory of **Isabella Burchfield** by Samuel Burchfield - Isabella was my wife for 48 years. She loved the Blackwater Canyon, where we vacationed for many years.

In memory of **Timothy C. Gavin** by Sally Jackson - Tim was my brother who would have been 45 on August 18. While kayaking the Blackwater, Tim drowned in March 1998 doing what he loved at his favorite place. He would want this special place saved.

In memory of **Paul Clark** by Shawn Hartje - Paul was a San Francisco attorney and member of the West Coast paddling community who died last April in a road cycling accident. He was my whitewater partner when we both lived in Morgantown and Elkins. Paul worked for the Natural Research Defense Council, where he was instrumental in drafting many of the state’s fishing regulations.

In memory of **G. R. Mayfield** by Cleo Mayfield

In memory of **Paul Teter** by Hazel Oliff

In memory of **Harol and Ruth Miles** by Carol Sue Miles

# Blackwater Area Calendar of Events

## NOVEMBER

- 5-6 Basic Hand Weaving with Kate McComas: Mountain Made Studios, Thomas, WV. Learn to thread a loom and design and weave fabric for a simple project: purse, placemat, pillow top or rag rug. Looms available for student use only. \$20. 463-3376
- 5-6 Papermaking Using Local Plants with Rob Richards: Mountain Made Studios, Thomas, WV. Process locally harvested plants into fiber and then into pulp and finally into paper. \$10. 463-3376.
- 5-6 Introduction to Glass Bead Making with Tamra Tafford: Mountain Made Studios, Thomas, WV. Learn how to use hot glass to produce lampworked beads. \$40. 463-3376.
- 12 Taste of WV Holidays: Elkins; Sample WV's best holiday cuisine at the Chamber of Commerce Taste of WV Holidays. The Elkins High School Cafeteria is being transformed into a festive holiday taste event with the area's best restaurants and caterers on site. Tickets are just \$10 each and may be purchased at the Chamber of Commerce Office. 636-2717.
- 12-13 Winter Stained Glass Suncatchers with Lynn Gundry: Mountain Made Studios, Thomas, WV. Make a suncatcher with a winter theme for yourself and one for a friend. \$15. 463-3376.
- 12-13 Red Dogwood Basketry with Connie & Tom McColley: Mountain Made Studios, Thomas, WV. Create baskets, wreaths or outdoors structures. FREE
- 23-27 Canaan Thanksgiving Celebration: Canaan Valley Resort; Crafts, games, contests, hayrides, and winter walks. Thanksgiving dinner will be served in the Hickory Room Thursday Eve. 866-4121.

Visit and Shop West Virginia Anytime!



# Signs of Fall in the Spruce Country

By: J. Lawrence Smith

Fall is the season that cannot be overlooked due to a patchwork of color spread across the landscape created by the variety of colors on the trees. The proper name for the season is autumn, but "fall" has become familiar from hardwoods shedding their leaves at this time.

This is the season when it could be said that Nature turns down the flame of the year. When the season is ended, the land and bare trees await the breath of winter.

The rolling expanses of Dolly Sods seem a carpet of Christmas color in October, where the bright red of huckleberry bushes contrasts sharply with the green of spruce. Elsewhere, the red of red maple and red oak along with the pumpkin orange of sugar maple bring rainbow hues to mountain slopes.

The fluffy heads of cottongrass can hardly be overlooked in many of the bogs in Canaan Valley, Blackwater Falls State Park and along Dolly Sods. This is a characteristic plant of the Far North that came here during times of widespread glaciers and cooler climate long ago.

Birds of prey—hawks, eagles, ospreys, falcons—migrate southward along

Allegheny Front. The broad-winged hawk reaches peak numbers in mid-September when hundreds, even thousands, have been observed in a day at Bear Rocks.

Large numbers of songbirds make their way along the mountain with proper wind and weather conditions where they are netted and banded. Among the more numerous species are the ruby-crowned kinglet, Swainson's thrush, black-throated green warbler and blackpoll warbler.

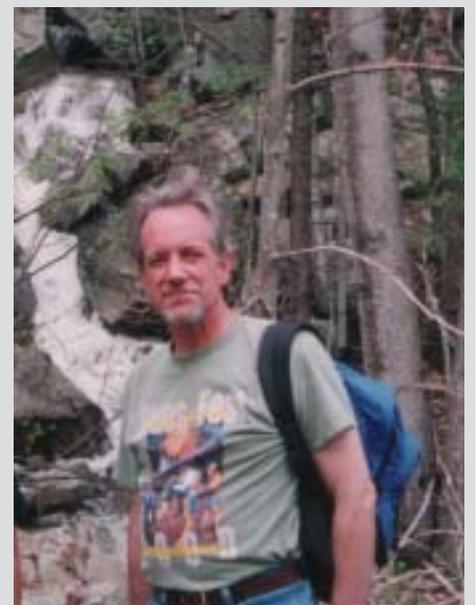
Late in the fall is a time to look for birds from the spruce country of Canada such as white-winged crossbills, evening grosbeaks and, rarely, pine grosbeaks. A day becomes memorable when these birds are seen amid snow-encrusted spruce trees.

Fall is ended and winter comes early to the high mountains of Tucker County when the season still seems very much with us at lower elevations. A rare treat is to see the high country fit for a Christmas card when the spruce is laden with snow beneath a crystal blue sky as another becomes a memory.

## In memory of Drew Forrester

by Tom Rodd

G. Drew Forrester, born September 5, 1952, in Pittsburgh, PA, died Monday, June 21, 2004 at his home in Martinsburg. He was a strong supporter of Friends of Blackwater. Drew was a social worker and held two master's degrees. I first met Drew in Greenbrier County as a "hippie homesteader;" I last saw Drew when we hiked the Blackwater Canyon together with Zeke Applegate. Drew will be missed by many; and we will keep fighting for the human and environmental justice that Drew fought for all his life.



Drew hiking the Blackwater Trail

# Treasures of

## *A Place in Time in the Wilds of the Allegheny*

By Hazel (Smith) Oliff



### *A Memory of the Front*



*The Smith Sisters: Mary, Victoria and Hazel with Huckleberry Harvest*

*West Virginia is divided into two physiographic provinces by an escarpment known as the Allegheny Front. East of the Front is the Appalachian Valley and Ridge Province, 4,000 square miles in extent. The streams are in a trellis pattern characteristic of strongly folded mountains. Parallel ridges and valleys have been formed with a general northeast, southwest direction. Most of the Valley and Ridge Province is drained by the Potomac River. West of the Front, covering an area of 20,000 square miles, is the Allegheny Plateau. The rivers here are dendritic (treelike). These waters eventually reach the Ohio River. Famous areas along the Front include Dolly Sods, Roaring Plains, Seneca Rocks, Spruce Knob, North Fork Mountain and Stack and Bear Rocks. The Allegheny Front is famous for red spruce, huckleberries, rattle snakes, hawk migration and bird banding.*

### *Allegheny Front Threatened by Industrial Land Use*



The Helmick Run/Laurel Run area of the Allegheny Front is threatened by both strip mining and industrial wind turbines. Buffalo Coal and Nedpower Mt Storm are proposing major land disturbances in this scenic area. The mining project will cause the degradation of an important wetland area at Helmick Run and Lunice Creek. Nedpower's wind project with 200 mega-wind turbines will impact human health and reduce property values and could kill many of the 300,000 birds and bats a year that migrate through the project site. Tell the Governor to **Stop the destruction of the majestic Allegheny Front**, a natural resource of great value. Call the Governor at 888-438-2731 and send a comment on Nedpower to DEP, Andy Weaks, 2031 Pleasant Valley Rd, Fairmont 26554, [aweaks@wvdep.org](mailto:aweaks@wvdep.org) or visit our website.

Several years ago, my sisters and I revisited "The Plains" on the high plateau atop the Allegheny Front where, as children, we went with our mother to pick huckleberries.

Up at daybreak, excited and anxious for adventure, we milked the cows and rushed through our chores before beginning the mountain hike from our farm in the Allegheny Fore Knobs. Near the top, we took the trail of an abandoned railroad grade South toward Bear Rocks. Along the way, we filled our water jugs from the headwaters of Welton Run with cold spring water flowing down the side of the mountain. From there, the path became much

steeper and more difficult, forcing us to follow a narrow trail through rock ledges winding its way to the top. Carrying our buckets, a sandwich and water jug, we walked through stands of stunted red spruce and beech trees, arriving at the crest of the Allegheny with the rising sun. We would stop to admire the magnificent unveiling of mountain after mountain all the way to Virginia. Weather permitting, we picked berries until the buckets were filled, many times not leaving until evening. Through these experiences, I learned to appreciate the land, the rugged unyielding terrain, and the unsurpassed beauty of the Allegheny Front.

# of the Allegheny Front

## Ralph Bell

### West Virginia's Premier Bird Bander

By Cindy Ellis

Half an hour before sunrise, the night stars still shine as volunteers leave warm bedding and hear their steps crunch along a path to a rocky outcrop near Red Creek campground in the Dolly Sods Wilderness. Flashlights glow as they raise finely knitted panels of mesh netting on slender poles. Pink and gold streaks of



*Ralph Bell bands the 200,000th bird, a Black-throated Blue Warbler*

light edge across the horizon and the questioning notes of thrushes are heard. So begins another day at the Allegheny Front Migration Observatory, (AFMO).



BrooksBirdClub.ORG

**Allegheny Front Migration Observatory held each year at Dolly Sods**

West Virginia's Brooks Bird Club recently completed its 48th year of bird banding. Be sure to visit the banding station next year. Banding takes place in the Dolly Sods Wilderness across from Red Creek Campground. Visit the Brooks Bird Club website for information on this past bird-banding season and next year's schedule.

Since 1958, bird banders have worked here, each year in August through October, on the high mountains above Canaan Valley. They hope their efforts will add to what is known about populations and migrations of northeastern birds. Among the founders of the AFMO is Ralph Bell, who deprecatingly terms himself a sheep farmer from Pennsylvania. This graduate of Penn State University has been studying birds since childhood, has been a licensed bird bander since 1954, has long attended West Virginia's annual Wildflower Pilgrimage, and was awarded an American Bluebird Society award for contributions to bluebird conservation in 1983.

His familiarity with and appreciation for the mountains of West Virginia have been gained by more than 50 years of visits and work here.

He's seen nearly 90 species of birds on the Allegheny Front, sometimes 8,000 or more per season, as they have been carefully detained at a small study hut on a canyon rim. And, at age 90, he has a perspective not shared by many of us, regarding changes in the mountains and valleys.

At the hut, overlooking the nets, volunteers both veteran and new, watch for flashes of color and hurry to gently transport Black-throated Blue Warblers, Juncos, and other species so they may be weighed, measured, and counted. Ralph Bell has been there hundreds of mornings, and seen many spectacular sunrises at Dolly Sods. He is outstandingly qualified to request that our state's officials try to help keep this area preserved and protected for the birds, and for those who are enriched by seeing them there.



*Following is a letter Ralph Bell wrote to WV Governor Joe Manchin expressing concern about industrial wind projects on the Allegheny Front:*

### No More Windmills

Dear W. Va. Gov. Joe Manchin,

I do not live in W. Va., but it is my favorite state because I often get there and see the beauty of your state. I am a member of the Brooks Bird Club of Wheeling and get to their outings and also I have assisted with the Wildflower Pilgrimage since 1966.

I have seen the wind turbines near Thomas and am worried about the effect on people who live nearby. There is evidence that many bats and birds will be killed and we need them to help control all insects, especially the mosquitoes that carry WEST NILE. Wouldn't it be better to install generators at water dams and let the water furnish electricity instead of causing problems for people, bats and birds by permitting future wind turbine construction?

Sincerely,  
Ralph Bell

# Writers Honored at Blackwater Dinner continued from page 1



**Charlie  
Baer**



**Margaret  
Calwell**



**Roy  
Clarkson**



**John  
Cuthbert**



**George  
Hall**



**Cindy  
Phillips**

Blackwater. Her love for Tucker County and the Canyon is fueled by her vivid memories of growing up in Davis. Calwell's amazing childhood comes to life in her first book, *Speak to the Past: A Memoir Fat With Words*. Her stories tell of Davis' rich cultural and industrial history. Calwell describes clambering over huge boulders to take "the old way" to the foot of Blackwater Falls to swim. Calwell lives in Charleston and attributes her inspiration for writing to her Aunt Pearle Digman Mott, who was the vital statistics clerk of Davis and the author of *History of Davis and Canaan Valley*.

**Roy B. Clarkson** was born in Cass, West Virginia on October 25, 1926 as the youngest of eleven children. His childhood memories are filled with the whistle of Shay engines, the whine of saws at the mills, the smell of newly sawn lumber, and the exciting stories about people and events of this colorful town. He started working at the Cass sawmill at seventeen while still attending Green Bank High School. Roy was appointed to the faculty of the Department of Biology at West Virginia University in 1956. He retired from there as Professor Emeritus of Biology in 1992. He has published over 30 papers in scientific journals in the fields of plant taxonomy and plant distribution. His other research interest, the history of lumbering in West Virginia, has resulted in a popular book, *Tumult on the Mountains-Lumbering in West Virginia, 1770-1920*. In 1990, Roy's sequel, *On Beyond Leather Bark* was published. These books document the colorful history and the destruction caused by timbering in the Blackwater and other areas.

**John Cuthbert** is Curator and Director of the West Virginia and Regional History Collection and Special Collections at the West Virginia University Libraries. John has written

extensively on the history and cultural heritage of West Virginia. John is curator of thirty history and fine arts exhibits, including *David Hunter Strother; One of the Best Draughtsmen the County Possesses* and he co-authored a book by the same name on Strother's art published by WVU Press in 1997. This show of West Virginia art toured five states from 1997 to 2002, highlighting the work of Porte Crayon (Strother's pen name) who drew and wrote about Blackwater Canyon when it was still a wilderness in the mid-Nineteenth Century. Strother's stories and engravings about Blackwater, published in Harper's Monthly in the 1850s and 1870s, made the area famous across the country. John worked with Strother's descendants to have his original drawings donated to WVU.

**George A. Hall** was a 13-year-old boy scout when he made his first observations on birds during a short hike. George's interest in birds grew with him, and in 1950 when he made West Virginia his permanent home, he began conducting intensive and systematic studies on the birds of West Virginia. In 1983, George authored *West Virginia Birds*—the first published catalog of the birds of West Virginia since 1944. Later, he and Albert Buckelew, Jr. wrote *The West Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas*. The Atlas was a special project of the Brooks Bird Club in cooperation with the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. George is a professor emeritus of West Virginia University, where he earned his bachelor's degree in chemistry and taught for forty years. George is a long-time member of the Brooks Bird Club and is a frequent contributor to its publication, *The Redstart*.

**Cynthia Phillips** grew up in Newburg, Preston County. She has a biology degree

from Fairmont State College and a certificate in Cultural Resource Management from West Virginia University. In her spare time, and as a labor of love, she created a charming, pictorial history of Tucker County, published in August of this year. In *Images of America: Tucker County*, miners and railroaders, teamsters and woodhicks stare out at us from Blackwater's industrial past. Cindy became interested in the faces of Tucker County history while taking part in an oral history project when she was an Americorps volunteer. She also lends support to the Tucker County Historical Society, New Historic Thomas, and Thomas Education Center. Cindy donates a portion of her book sales to Tucker County Connections, a school program that encourages fifth-graders to learn about the area's resources, history and heritage.



See our website for a complete list of these authors' books:  
SaveBlackwater.ORG

# Watershed Update



Friends of Blackwater welcomes **Sandra Gardner** as coordinator for their North Fork Watershed Project.

Thanks to local businesses that showed their support with generous donations toward the 3rd Annual Watershed Celebration Day: Lena's Bakery, the Purple Fiddle, Canyon Rim Bikes, H & H Hardware, Wilderness Sports, LaFontaine Bakery, Backbone Farm, Kingsford Charcoal, and Shop 'N Save. Also a special thanks to Cindy Phillips who signed her new book, *Images of America: Tucker County*.



The North Fork Watershed tour led by Marshall Leo from the DEP took Celebration Day participants past coke ovens built in the late 1800s

## State Park trail expansion project underway with a lot of help from Friends

Blackwater Falls State Park Superintendent Rob Gilligan hosted a meeting with Friends of Blackwater and Tucker County Trails on Sunday, September 25 to discuss next year's trail expansion project inside the park. Scheduled for completion before Autumn 2006, the new 1.5-mile trail will begin across the road from the Gentle Trail, cross the Tank Run tributary to the Blackwater River, and continue to the town of Davis.

We are happy to report that the project is supported by the Conservation Fund and the West Virginia Trails Coalition. Both groups made a donation of \$1,000 each.

Other sources of support, include Tucker County Trails, Blackwater Falls State Park, NiSource, Norcross, and Aeolian Enterprises.

The Blackwater River Trail will guide hikers and bikers through the 500-acre parcel of land added to the Park in 2001. Remember, it is because of Friends of Blackwater and its strong membership, that this land was purchased. We are currently in the research and engineering stage of the project. Once the bridge and trail work is completed on the new Blackwater River Trail, a boardwalk in a wetland area rarely seen by tourists will begin. But for now, the bridge

project is getting closer to its next phase: organizing volunteers.

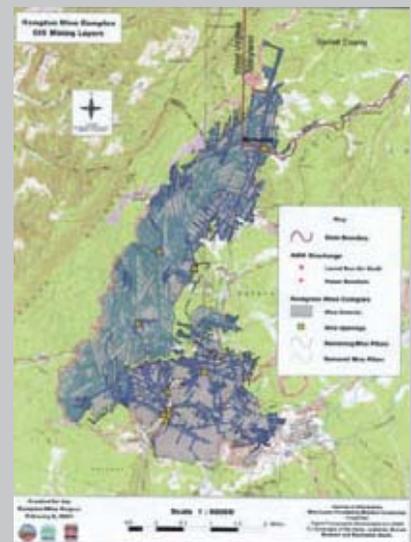
Join our trail volunteers network. Call the North Fork Watershed office at 463-4068 to work on the expansion and upcoming tree planting events later this year.



Left: Friends of Blackwater members (l) Christine Christianson and (c) Nathan Anderson and Blackwater Falls State Park assistant superintendent (r) Melissa Brown take in the beauty of the trail as they survey area where the new bridge will be built.



Making rainmakers was highlight of the children's activities scheduled for Watershed Celebration Day hosted by North Fork Volunteers Seth Pitt, Jenny Beckstead and Cade Archuleta.



Map of Coketon/Kempton Mine Pool with Flooded Tunnels

# Biking Blackwater

Blackwater Bikes, P.O. Box 190, Davis  
304-259-5286 blackwaterbikes.com

Blackwater Falls State Park, Davis  
800-CALL-WVA blackwaterfalls.com

Blackwater Outdoor Adventures  
Route 1, Box 239, St. George  
304-478-3775 blackwateroutdoors.com

Canaan Valley Resort State Park  
800-622-4121, canaanresort.com

## Canyon Rim Outfitters Thomas 304-463-3366

NEW

At the intersection of Routes 32 and 219 in Thomas, Canyon Rim Outdoors is the fusion of the old Buffalo Creek Bike Shop in Elkins and a new friendship between Ben Quarles and Tom Samples when they moved to Thomas with a mutual interest in mind: a biking rental and repair center at the head of the Blackwater Trail. Besides biking services, Canyon Rim has an ice cream parlor and restaurant. Give them a visit!

Highland Scene Tours, Canaan Valley and Blackwater Falls State Park  
877-223-5388 highlandscenetours.com

Timberline Four Seasons Resort, Canaan  
800-SNOWING timberlineresort.com

Timberline Mountain Biking Center  
Canaan Valley 800-SNOWING  
timberlineresort.com/summer/biking.asp

Mike Caplinger, a West Virginia historian specializing in the railroad industry and Henry Gassaway Davis, has given us valuable help with our Blackwater history projects. Mike was seriously injured and hospitalized last month and is now home recovering. We wish him well in his return to health and hope he will soon be up at Blackwater.

Send get well wishes to  
243 Fields Park Road  
Morgantown WV 26508



# Firsthand Biking Report on the Blackwater Canyon Rim Trail

By John Sherwood, DCSki Columnist

May 13, 2002 — A roaring noise stopped me in my tracks right after I started pedaling up the Canyon Rim Road. I turned around and peered down into the Blackwater Canyon. Among the trees, I spotted a powerful cascade of water. This was not my first time on this trail, but I had no idea there was a big waterfall just outside of Douglas, WV! Amazed by this discovery, I resolved to check out this hidden wonder and take some photos on my return trip. The waterfall is just one of the many treats offered by the 9 mile long Canyon Rim trail. This trail, also known as the Olson



Tower trail, is rated intermediate because it requires a reasonable amount of climbing, and fording of several

streams. Much of the trail follows an abandoned road, full of large rocks, ruts, potholes, gullies, and other obstacles. The major climbs fall at the beginning and end of the journey. The ride back to Douglas is all downhill. What I liked about the Canyon Rim Trail, besides the great views, is its difficulty level. The trail falls somewhere between rail grade and single track in the mountain biking continuum. In short, it is a good way to get your feet wet (literally and figuratively) without worrying about extreme challenges of many single track trails in the West Virginia highlands. My wife loves this trail, and she is no Sue Haywood (a national champion mountain biker from nearby Davis). During last year's exceptionally dry summer, I even did the uphill portion of the trail on a cyclocross bike. I have to admit - it was a struggle. I ended up taking US 219 back, fearing that my rims (and my behind) would get bashed up in the descent. Based on that experience, I would advise people to stick to mountain bikes for this trail. This time, we tackled the trail on Trek Fuel 90 mountain bikes

(that's what Sue Haywood rides too!) and had no problems going over baseball size rocks and small streams.



We stopped for lunch at the promontory near mile 7 and watched falcons circling above the canyon. I brought my handy MSR stove along so we had a hot meal—freeze dried chicken with rice! After eating, we endured the toughest climb of the trip: the final one mile slog up to Olson tower. The one redeeming aspect of this leg is that it is on a graded Forest Service road rather than the mottled Canyon Rim road. The reward for the climb is an unforgettable panoramic view of the region from the top of the fire tower.

## About the Author

John Sherwood is a columnist for DCSki. When he's not hiking, biking, or skiing, he works as a historian at the Naval Historical Center. His newest book, *Afterburner: Naval Aviators and the Vietnam War*, was recently published by the New York University Press.

## DIRECTIONS:

To locate the eastern end of the Canyon Rim (Olson Tower) Trail, take Douglas Road (CR 27) from Thomas, WV through villages of Coketon and Douglas. Where paved Douglas Road ends, dirt FR 18 starts its ascend - this is the Canyon Rim Road. When parking, make sure that you don't block any gates or private pathways. Don't confuse this trail with the Blackwater River Trail located at the bottom of the Canyon.

## HerZ (continued from page 3)

residents during peak ski season. Off-peak seasons bring tourists who enjoy

Timberline's quiet mountain retreat. From nature walks in the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge to restaurants and horseback riding to a network of mountain biking trails that interconnect with the cross-country slopes/trails of White Grass Touring Center and Dolly Sods, Timberline is truly a four season destination resort with a pristine outdoor charm.

Fred is a special volunteer, because he likes connecting with people like Friends of Blackwater Director Judy Rodd, Mother of Dolly Sods Helen McGinnis, and Highlands Conservancy Administrator Dave Saville, to help strategize on ways to promote preservation of West Virginia's most scenic natural areas.

"Preservation of the most wild and scenic areas in Tucker and surrounding counties is critical to continuing the natural legacy of the state," he explains. "The arrival of Corridor H into the Allegheny Highlands will present new challenges and opportunities for sustainable recreation and ecotourism related industries like alpine and cross country skiing. We need this to balance out the state's dependency on notoriously eco-unfriendly industries. It behooves authorities, environmentalists and developers to work together in a deliberate coordinated fashion to come up with a cooperative plan which respects and leverages both sides' perspectives, wisdom and expertise."

"Rationally speaking, preservation of wild, scenic and ecologically significant areas has always drawn visitors to Timberline and keeps us all in business. Timberline has pioneered this idea of high quality "eco-development" which resonate with the natural surroundings."

He believes these coordinated efforts fit into a long-term sustainable vision for future growth in our region and that it is a win-win strategy for everyone.

"Cooperation will provide sustainable growth to the economy while preserving West Virginia's treasured legacy, its wild and scenic places, its wildlife and its traditional Appalachian culture," he added.



## Open for business in Thomas, West Virginia: Lena's Bakery

On Front Street in Thomas, there's an old-world style bakery with cushioned window seating and quaint, historic charm named after anyone whose name is Lena. When owners Cynthia Bentley and Mike and Betty Leigh opened the bakery this past May, they thought they were honoring Cynthia's Great Nanna. She was the wife of Cynthia's Great Grandfather who was a pastry chef in Jersey City. Only problem: Nanna's name was Anna, not Lena. Rather than change the name, Lena's owners decided that the bakery could belong to all the Lenas of the world.

Lena's Bakery is best known to locals and tourists for its quiche dishes and oversized cinnamon rolls that come with a choice of caramel or vanilla icing, and sprinkled with pecans.

For lunch, Lena's features four sandwiches on freshly-baked bread: the Asparagus Melt, Veggie Melt, Cold Veggie and Grilled Chicken. On Wednesdays and Thursdays, Calzones with fresh marinara sauce are served. YUM!

### Blackwater Roots

Blackwater Canyon  
West Virginia's Crown Jewel  
Yours to Enjoy, Yours to Protect!

Friends of Blackwater and the North Fork Watershed Project proudly present their new history publication, *Blackwater Roots*, featuring the Nineteenth Century writings and drawings of David Hunter Strother and a Family Stories column that highlights the lives of Tucker County natives. To subscribe or submit a story send your request to [info@saveblackwater.org](mailto:info@saveblackwater.org).

Friends of Blackwater also just published a tri-fold, glossy brochure featuring the beauty of the Canyon and the message, "West Virginia's Crown Jewel: Yours to Enjoy, Yours to Protect." Spread the word and build our network. Request a packet of the brochures to distribute among your friends.



**Charlie Black, a.k.a. Baloney Man, representing Friends of Blackwater as he and his wife, Janice Black, serve peach cobbler at the Charleston Multifest.**

**High Allegheny National Park... Yes!**

## Friends of Blackwater

www.saveblackwater.org  
501 Elizabeth Street, Rm 3  
Charleston, WV 25311



*Address Service Requested*

NON-PROFIT  
ORG  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT NO. 1409  
CHAS., WV 25301



## Cabin for Sale!

by Michael Burton  
mburton2000@yahoo.com

Leadmine Road, Tucker County  
[wv.craigslist.org/rfs/96957064.html](http://wv.craigslist.org/rfs/96957064.html)

## Get away to the Fiddler's Roost



The Fiddler's Roost Bed and Breakfast is located in a turn-of-the-century coal company duplex that has been tastefully renovated for comfort. The building, which is right next door to the Purple Fiddle and facing the river in downtown Thomas, West Virginia features eight private rooms, each with its own unique personality of style and nostalgia. Enjoy patchwork quilts, eclectic antiques, and handmade guest soaps. There are five bathrooms—none private—a living and dining space, and a community kitchen. Telephone service is available and every room is provided with a VCR and television for watching a wide selection of complimentary movies from the living room library. A stay at The Fiddler's Roost starts at \$49 on weekdays and \$69 on the weekends.



Nearby, guests can visit quaint shops, hear live traditional music, and discover the growing arts community in Thomas. With the Allegheny Highland trailhead directly across from the Fiddler's Roost,

Guests may also hike, bike or ski the rail trail, where historic coke ovens, stone culverts, and spectacular waterfalls can be seen.

The Fidler's Roost is owned by John and Kate Bright who also own a pretty famous establishment next door: The Purple Fiddle Coffeehouse. The Purple Fiddle offers wholesome food and beverages that rejuvenate a weary tourist. After all, The Purple Fiddle was voted "Best Post-Trail Hangout 2003" by Blue Ridge Outdoors magazine and as you might have heard, they boast the best beer selection imaginable. If you are lucky,

you will be able to catch a Mountain Music Weekend performance and understand what makes the Purple Fiddle and the Fiddlers Roost all so magic.

Guestrooms: **Eliza Jane**-overlooks the valley with two double beds and pet allowance; **Lark In the Morning and Shady Grove**-one double bed and pet allowances; **Morning Dew**-overlooks the valley with one queen bed, one single bed and pet allowance; **Blackberry Blossom**-one queen bed and no-pet rule; **June Apple**-one double bed, one twin bed and no-pet rule; **Soldier's Joy**-two double beds and no-pet rule; and **Fire on the Mountain**-four bunks, wooden floor and no-pet rule.

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### The Fiddler's Roost

Post Office Box 87  
Thomas, WV 26292  
**(304) 463-4040**

**Kate and John Bright, Innkeepers**