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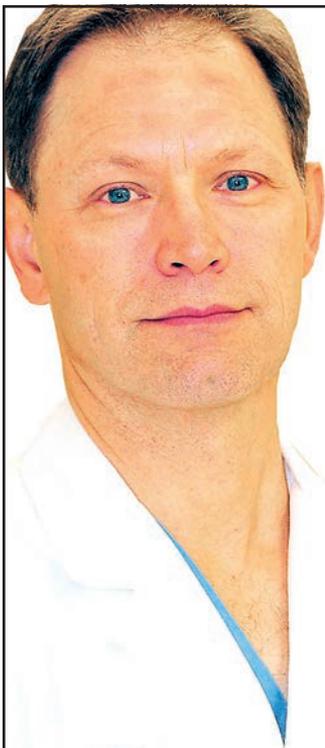


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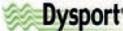


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Getting Creative

When I was a kid, I used to make what my dad dubbed “concoctions.”

I never really knew what I would toss into one of mine until I got going, but they were masterpieces!

Or so I thought.

You might be wondering what a concoction is. Well, for me, they were typically bowls of well-mixed, “whatever food struck my interest at that moment.”

They were never for my consumption, of course.

My dad always ate them.

I wasn't trying to be a good cook or anything, either.

Looking back, they were quite possibly a few steps from criminal.

My mom was never a fan of the creations, which, incidentally, my dad first taught me how to make. She was wise and mostly left the eating to him.

But there was that one time when she didn't see it coming. I think I was maybe 9 or 10 and had already been at it for years.

I volunteered to make her a tuna sandwich. I still feel a little bad about that one. I think it was the chili powder that put it over the top.

Sometimes late at night, I think I can still hear her coughing — and maybe crying a little.

Luckily for Brittany Bailey-Cline's family, her childhood kitchen creations came with the best of intentions.

And she now shares her kitchen concoctions — cupcakes, cheesecake and other pastry delights — with customers at the popular Busy Bee Bakery.

Bailey's new venture was born from the boredom of the early Covid-19 lockdown as the wedding photographer turned to baking to fill her days.

With lines wrapped around the building, she's now balancing two thriving businesses.

Business is also booming for the Village Wine Shop in White Sulphur Springs. As you'll read ahead, similar to Bailey, “wine fairy” Clay Elkins has found ways to adapt his business model in the face of Covid-19.

And as Cline and Elkins kick their businesses in to high gear, Charleston resident Steve Rotsch is simply kicking back for a bit after recently retiring following a career that

included 25 years as the official West Virginia Governor's Photographer.

He's still taking photos though and has big plans for travel when it's safe to do so.

•••

There was no professional photographer there to document any of my brilliant concoctions. Heck, it was the '80s so it was even well before cell phones enabled us to take photos of almost every single thing we saw and ate.

That's probably a good thing, too. No one would really want to see that mess anyway.

I slowed on the concoctions after the tuna incident — and it took years for my mom to trust anything I offered to her on a plate — but I did pass the tradition down to my oldest niece. She's a pretty good cook now, and still throws randomness into the pot when it calls for it.

I like to think it all began with me.

I know I said I don't do this anymore, but here's one last concoction.

What about a wine-flavored cupcake?

If you infused it with ramp-flavored wine, you'd really be cooking.

Happy concocting!



Michelle

Michelle James,
West Virginia South Editor

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Steve Rotsch recently retired after serving as the official photographer for five West Virginia governors. » Page 32

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Pour



The Village Wine Shop in White Sulphur Springs finds unique ways to help customers. » Page 48



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Erica Jones

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OUTDOOR



Springing to Life

Writer/photographer Ed Rehbein explores spring wildflowers at Glade Creek. » Page 24

DIVERSIONS



The West Virginia South events calendar will return soon.

ON THE MENU



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The Other Side



Photo by Thomas Fletcher

By Michelle James, West Virginia South Editor

From March snow to April rain and May flowers, spring surely runs the gamut when it comes to weather changes.

In West Virginia it can sometimes seem as though all four seasons happen in a single day. Other times, it might seem as though the snow or rain will never stop and the sun will never shine again.

But it always does.

Snowy spring days beget rainy spring days, beget warm, sunny spring days.

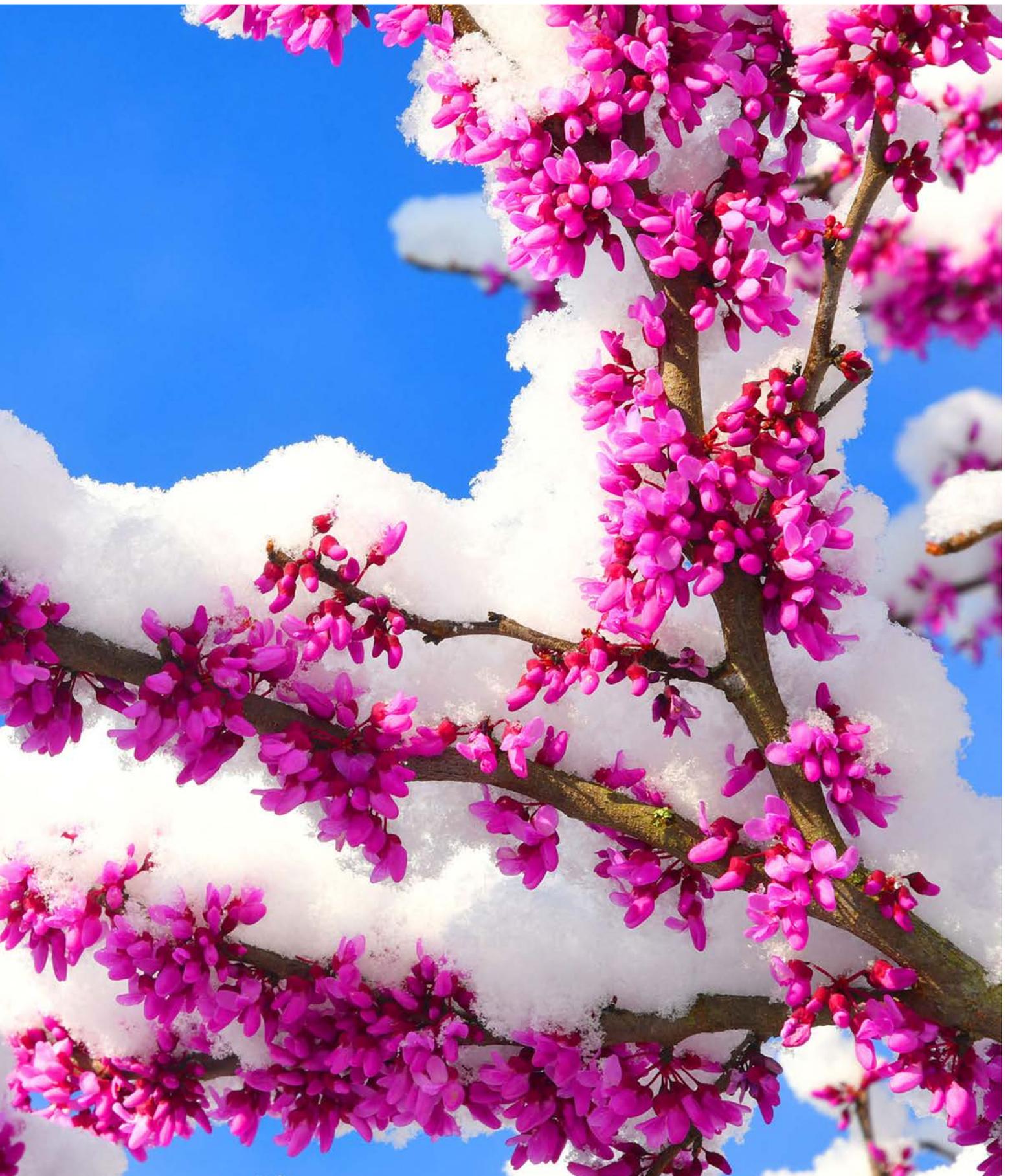
And as the sun fights to make its way through the storm, a colorful promise often appears in the sky. Brighter days are ahead.



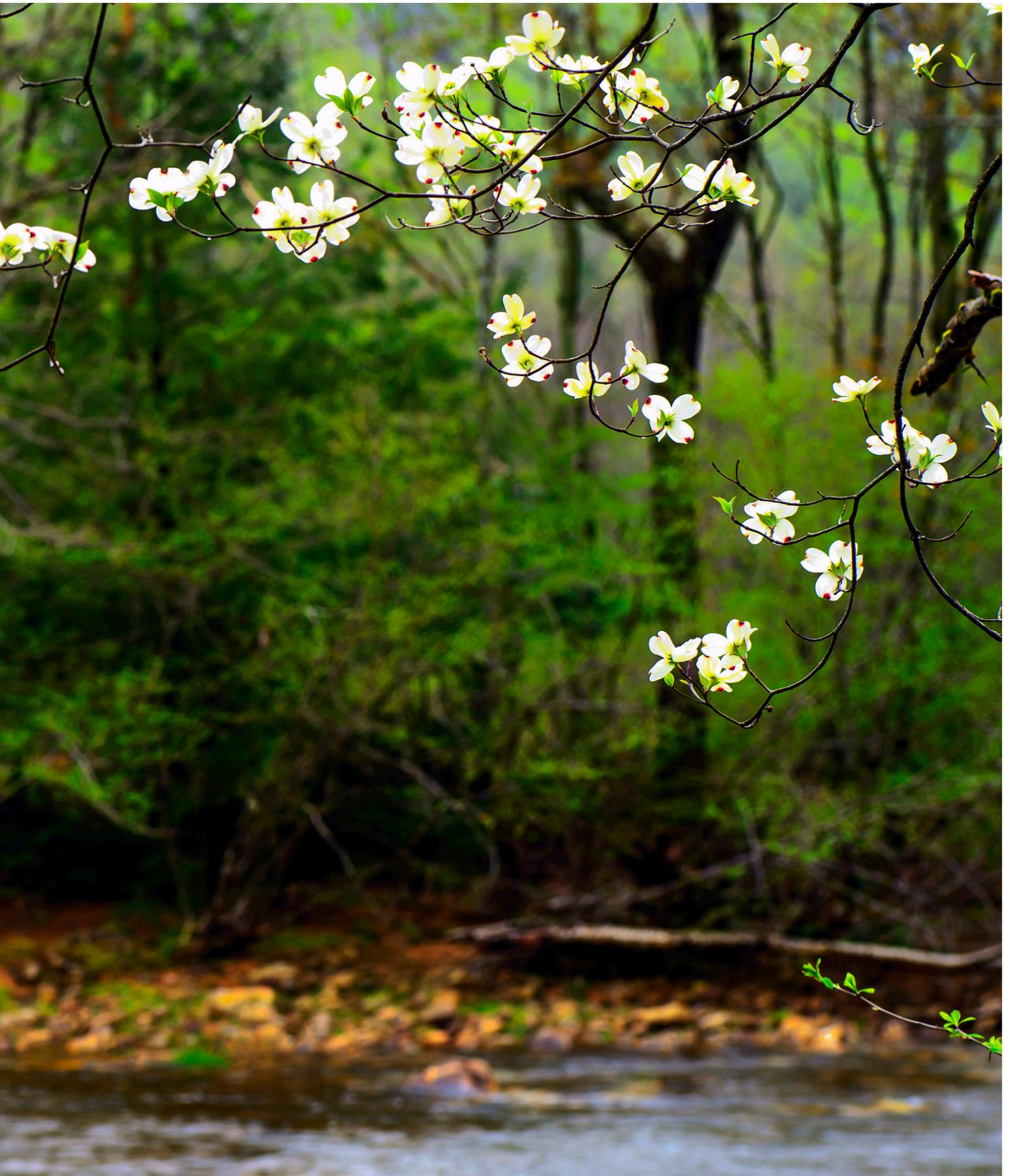


Seasons collide as a mid-April snowstorm covers the bright colors of a redbud tree in Beckley.













The King of Stink



Ramps are an Appalachian delicacy

By Debbie Moose, West Virginia South Contributor

Necessity is the mother of some crazy ideas.

Consider the coconut, for starters. Someone must have been pretty darn famished to lay eyes on that for the first time and think, “Time for lunch!” rather than ‘Duck!’

So it must have been with wild ramps.

In spring, the wide, strappy leaves of ramps sprout bright green from leaf-covered Appalachian forest floors like oversized lilies of the valley. But ramps are as far from those sweet-scented flowers of bridal bouquets as divorce court is from the altar. (Although over-consumption of ramps might justify a split.)

Ramps have been called the “king of stink.” The classic “Foxfire Book of Appalachian Cookery” says: “They’re not for ladies or those who court them.”

To say that these cousins of leeks and shallots are pungent is like saying that Jimmy Buffett likes margaritas. It's said that the penetrating aroma of ramps emanates from the skin for days after eating.

Yet, each spring along the Appalachians — North Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee and, particularly, West Virginia — festivals celebrate ramps, including music, food and ramp-eating competitions. The Feast of the Ramson, which has been going on in Richwood for more than 80 years, includes the crowning of the Miss Ramp Festival Queen. (Ramson is another term for ramps, and it sounds classy for an event that started out in the 1930s as a male-only stag party, according to news reports.)

Why? It's simple. The need for spring to arrive.

Kentucky native Ronni Lundy says about wild spring greens, including ramps, branch lettuce, poke and others, in her cookbook "Victuals": "It's not that winter doesn't have its pleasures in the mountains — it's just that it sticks around too long. That may be why mountain dwellers seem to have an absolute passion for wild spring greens — the more pungent, the better."

I have to take her word for it, because I've never experienced ramps, living as I have in areas that aren't the right climate for wild ramps. (They grow in rich, moist, deciduous forests.) I haven't seen them in grocery stores despite ramps having a moment in the gourmet sun a few years ago, when they were in New York restaurants and Martha Stewart Living magazine. You know a vegetable has made it when Martha slaps her spatula of approval on it.

When slogging through a gray winter, I can understand how, for Native Americans and early settlers, the sight of tender greens after months of eating dried and canned vegetables and roots

would make you giddy enough to eat something described as tasting like a cross between garlic and onions, times two; something that might have given the Grinch that pre-conversion facial expression.

Another factor may be the purported health benefits that ramp lovers tout. In a 2005 documentary on ramps titled "King of Stink," festivalgoers say that ramps "flush out the system" as a sort of internal spring cleaning. Others claim ramps boost the libido, but that would work only if both parties involved were consuming them.

According to "The Encyclopedia of North Carolina," edited by William S. Powell, Cherokee tradition says that ramps treat coughs and colds, and heal bee stings. Ramps contain vitamins A and C.

If they do have healing powers, then they might simultaneously cause a hangover and cure it if you overindulge on ramp wine from Kirkwood Winery in Summersville.

If you want to get poetic about the King of Stink, to find ramps, you have to venture into their world, to connect with nature. It's possible, but difficult, to grow ramps, so most are foraged from wild and often secret places, which adds to their allure.

I feel the same impulse that leads people to ramps. It draws me to other kinds of green things, like kale, spinach and Brussels sprouts. During the winter, I got such tender, sweet Brussels sprouts from a farmer that I went on about them for days. Who gets that excited about Brussels sprouts? Someone who might also be willing to chew on a green thing from the woods, if the winter has been dismal enough and the craving for spring that strong.

One more thing about ramps: They're the perfect vegetable for pandemic times. Eating them will ensure that people stay six feet away from you.



Caramelized Ramp & Lemon Ice Cream

Makes 1 quart

Ingredients:

- 4-6 small ramps, cleaned & white parts only
- 1 tbsp. butter
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 6 egg yolks
- 2 cups whole milk
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 tbsp. honey
- Zest of one lemon
- Juice of 1/2 lemon

Directions:

1. In a small sauté pan, melt the butter over medium heat.
2. Add the ramps & cook until golden brown in color. Set aside.
3. In a medium sauce pan, beat the yolks, salt & sugar (no heat) until pale yellow in color.
4. Add the milk & heavy cream. Cook over medium heat stirring constantly until the mixture becomes thick enough to coat the back of a spoon. Remove from the heat.
5. Put the ramps back on the stove & reheat. Add a cup of the cream mixture & deglaze the sauté pan.
6. Turn heat off. Pour ramp mixture into a blender. Add the honey & process until smooth.
7. Add to the other cream mixture & add the lemon zest & lemon juice. Blend well with a whisk.
8. Pour into a container, cover & let cool down. About 2 hours.
9. Pour mixture into an ice cream maker & make accordingly to the manufacturer's directions.
10. Place ice cream in an airtight freezer container & keep in freezer up till 2 months.

Recipe courtesy of Michele Koeniger



Radish Ramp Butter with French Bread

Serves 4

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup unsalted butter, room temperature
- 4 large radishes
- 2 tbsp. chopped ramps
- Sea salt for garnish
- Loaf of French bread

Directions:

1. Place butter in a small bowl and mash with the back of a wooden spoon.
2. Using grate the radish into the butter.
3. Add the chopped ramps and cream the mixture together.
4. Transfer to a small serving dish and serve at room temperature with the salt for a garnish and toasted French bread.



Roasted Corn Salad with Bacon and Ramps

Serves 6

Ingredients:

- 4 thick-cut slices of bacon, chopped
- Olive oil
- 4 cups frozen corn, thawed
- 6 ramps, root ends trimmed, white and green parts separated
- Kosher salt
- 3/4 cup halved cherry tomatoes
- 2 tbsp. chopped parsley
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Juice & zest of 1 Lime

Directions:

1. Add bacon to a large pan with a drizzle of olive oil, and cook over medium heat until just crispy (12 -15 mins). Using a slotted spoon, transfer bacon to a paper towel-lined plate.
2. Slice the white part of the ramps and chop up the green part.
3. Drain off all but 2 tablespoons of fat. Return pan to medium-high heat, then add the corn, sliced ramps (the white part), and a few pinches of salt.
4. Cook, stirring every 2 minutes, until the corn starts to turn golden brown; about 8 minutes.
5. Take the pan off the heat, then stir in chopped ramps (the green part), tomatoes, reserved bacon and chopped parsley.
6. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Add lime juice and zest. Blend well.
7. Serve warm or at room temperature.



Ramp Buffalo Chicken Dip

Serves 12

Ingredients:

- 1 (8 oz.) package cream cheese, at room temperature
- 1/2 cup ranch dressing
- 1- 1/2 tsp. ranch dressing powder
- 3/4 cup crumbled blue cheese, divided
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese, divided
- 2 cooked chicken breasts, shredded
- 1/2 cup Frank's RedHot Buffalo Sauce
- 4 sliced ramps
- 2 tbsp. chopped fresh parsley
- Tortilla chips, for serving

Directions:

1. Preheat an oven to 350°F, and place a rack in the middle position.
2. Add cream cheese, ranch dressing, ranch dressing powder, half of the cheddar cheese and 1/4 cup crumbled blue cheese & ramps to a large bowl, stirring to combine.
3. Fold in shredded chicken and hot sauce, and mix until evenly combined.
4. Transfer chicken mixture to a small, shallow baking dish, and bake for 20 minutes until mixture is warm and the edges start to bubble.
5. As soon as the mixture comes out of the oven, top with remaining 1/2 cup crumbled blue cheese and the other half of the cheddar cheese.
6. Place back in oven and cook for 5 minutes or until cheeses melts.
7. Right before serving, sprinkle the fresh parsley.
8. Serve with tortilla chips.

“ Our most potent memories include the taste and smells of foods we enjoyed as a child in part because it reminds us of who fed us a meal. ”

— Kilroy J. Oldster



Ramp & Sausage Lasagna

Serves 8

Ingredients:

- Olive oil
- 2 large bunches ramps, coarsely chopped
- 1 pound maple pork sausage
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 tbsp. red wine vinegar
- 1 qt. spaghetti sauce, of your choice
- 1 and 1/2 pounds whole milk ricotta
- 1 pounds fresh mozzarella, shredded
- 1/2 pound sharp cheddar, shredded
- 1 box lasagna noodles, uncooked
- Salt & black pepper, to taste

Directions:

- In a medium deep skillet, heat 2 tbsp. olive oil over medium heat until shimmering.
- Add chopped ramps and sauté until just softened, about 3 to 4 minutes. Remove to a clean bowl and set aside.
- In the same pan, brown the sausage. Add garlic and sauté for 1 minute.
- Deglaze with a splash of red wine vinegar, scraping up the fond.
- Add the spaghetti sauce, stir and bring to a simmer. Cover and simmer over lowest heat while you prepare the remaining ingredients.
- Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.
- Add ricotta cheese to ramps and season with salt and pepper. Stir well to incorporate ramps evenly throughout the cheese.
- Assemble. Taste the sausage tomato sauce and season as necessary. Spread a small amount of sauce (about a 1/2 cup) evenly into the bottom of a 9" X 13" lasagna pan.
- Lay down your first layer of noodles. Dollop with about 1/3 of the ricotta then ladle about 1/3 of the sauce.
- Spread evenly with a spatula, then top with about 1/3 of the mozzarella and cheddar cheeses.
- Add the next noodle layer, pressing pasta firmly into the first layer, then repeat layering.
- For the top layer, use the remaining ricotta and tomato sauce and a small amount of grated cheese. Reserve the majority of the remaining cheese to add at the end.
- Bake lasagna. Spritz a piece of tinfoil, large enough to cover the baking dish, lightly with olive oil spray.
- Cover the pan tightly (oiled side down) and bake in the preheated oven until bubbly and pasta is nicely al dente, about 45 minutes.
- Uncover, sprinkle remaining cheese over the top, and bake uncovered until cheese has browned, about 15 minutes.
- Allow to cool at least 15 minutes before serving.



Spring Potato Salad with Ramps and Radishes

Serves 6

Ingredients:

- 3 pounds yellow potatoes, cut into bite sized pieces
- 1 bunch radishes, julienned
- 1 bunch ramps, chopped
- Handful of fresh parsley, chopped
- 2-3 stalks of celery, chopped
- For the Dressing:**
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tsp. Dijon mustard
- Juice & zest of 2 lemons
- 3-4 small anchovies, smashed into a paste
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- Salt and fresh cracked pepper
- Good crunchy sea salt to finish

Directions:

- Place the potatoes in a sauce pot and cover with water. Bring to a boil & cook for about 10 minutes or until potatoes are soft but not mush. Drain well.
- To make the dressing: In a medium bowl, add the garlic, anchovies, dijon, lemon juice, and pinch of salt and pepper.
- Whisk. Then slowly add the olive oil, whisking the entire time. Adjust seasonings, if necessary.
- When the potatoes are done, add them to a large bowl and pour about 2/3 of the dressing over them while they are hot.
- Use a rubber spatula to gently fold the potatoes and dressing together.
- Let sit until mostly cool, then add the vegetables and the remainder of the dressing.
- Fold everything together, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate for a couple of hours.
- When ready to serve, let it come to room temperature.
- Sprinkle with a crunchy sea salt before serving. Enjoy!



Ramp and Goat Cheese Muffins

Serves 4

Ingredients:

- 4 oz. ramps
- 4 oz. scallions
- 3-4 oz. goat cheese, crumbled
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 cup semolina
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 1/4 cup Greek yogurt
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 1- 1/2 tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- Salt and pepper

Directions:

- Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.
- Chop the scallions thinly crosswise. Chop the ramps finely (about the same size as scallions).
- Beat the eggs and add them to the vegetables.
- Mix well and season with salt and pepper.
- Add yogurt, heavy cream and goat cheese and mix.
- In another bowl mix flour, semolina, baking powder and baking soda. Add to the vegetable mixture. Stir gently until combined.
- Distribute the mixture equally in sprayed and flour coated muffin tins.
- Bake for about 30 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.
- Let the muffins cool and then very gently remove them from the pan.
- Serve slightly warm or at room temperature.

Recipes courtesy of Chef Michele Koeniger



ERICA JONES

OPERATION UNDERDOG PRESIDENT AND CO-FOUNDER

If you run into Erica Jones in a park or most anywhere else, she's likely to have a leash in her hand. The question isn't really whether she's traveling with a dog, it's if she's traveling with one of her own, one she's rescuing or one she's fostering.

Since 2012, Jones has served as president and co-founder of Operation Underdog, fostering and transporting animals, writing grants, coordinating special events and assisting with finances for the Beckley-based non-profit that assists hundreds of local animals each year.

"Organizations like Operation Underdog are important in the community because, unfortunately, West Virginia does not have strong laws to protect animals," the life-long animal lover said. "We often see unwanted litters of puppies and kittens, because spaying and neutering isn't affordable or mandated. We often see injured animals running the streets because animal containment is not regulated or enforced. Operation Underdog provides homes for the homeless, vetting for those injured, spaying and neutering programs for those that can't afford it and out-of-state partnerships to help animal shelters decrease their population, in turn lowering the number of animals euthanized for space purposes."

Jones, who has been employed by the federal government for 17 years, shares seven children with her husband John. The couple also share three cats, four dogs and a 10-year-old foster dog named Pete, pictured with her here, who Jones said gives "the best kisses in West Virginia."

Anyone interested in adopting Pete or learning more about Operation Underdog can email opundo@operationunderdog.org.

WHAT IS YOUR MOST PRIZED POSSESSION?

Pictures of my daughter Harmony who passed away

SUNRISE OR SUNSET?

Sunset

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE BAND?

Casting Crowns

WHAT ARE YOU BINGE WATCHING NOW?

Golden Girls and home makeover shows

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE BOOK?

"When God Doesn't Fix It"

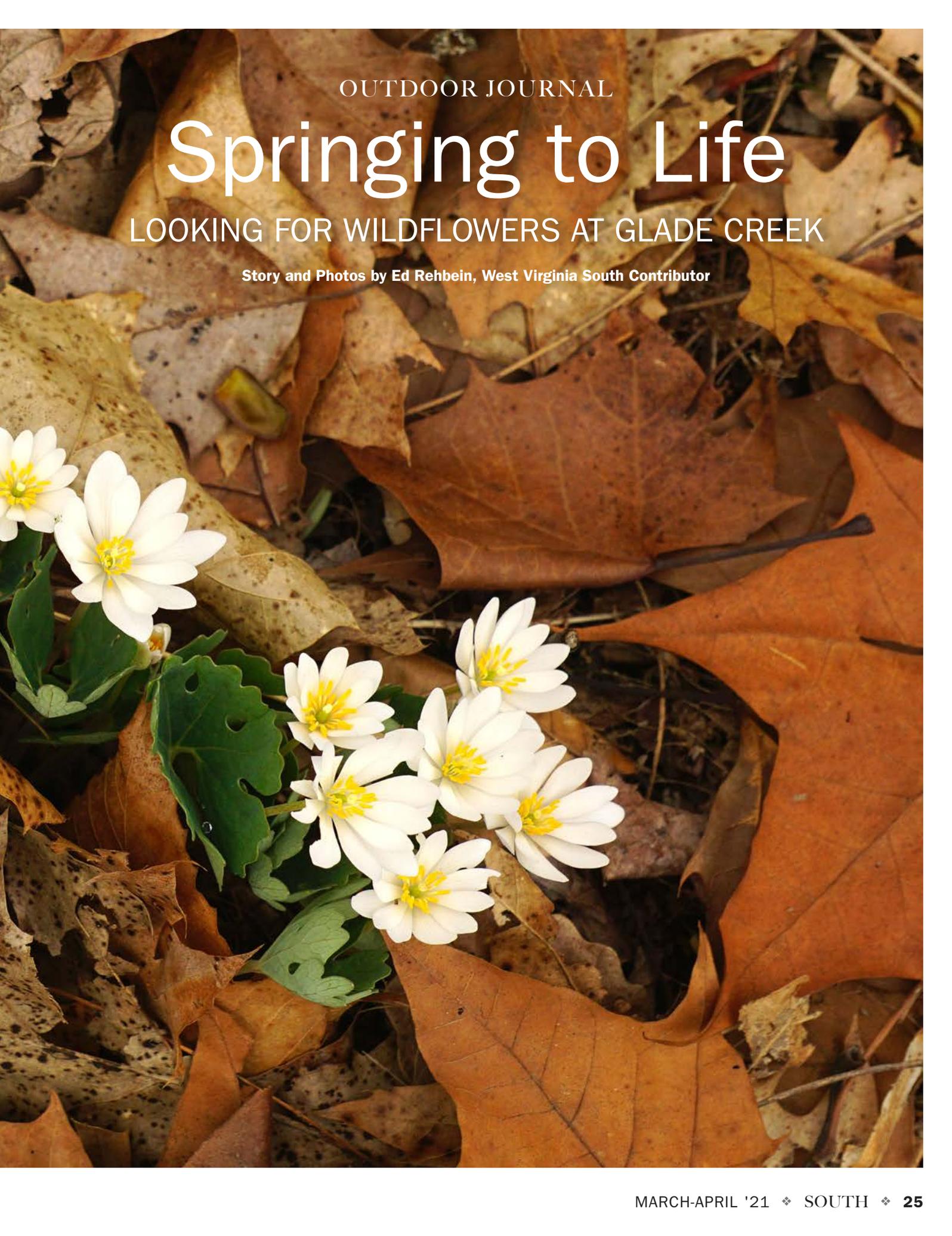
WHAT IS SOMETHING NO ONE KNOWS ABOUT YOU?

I am addicted to Mellow Yellow

Photo by Rick Barbero



Bloodroot



OUTDOOR JOURNAL

Springing to Life

LOOKING FOR WILDFLOWERS AT GLADE CREEK

Story and Photos by Ed Rehbein, West Virginia South Contributor



Large Flowered Trillium

“There are always flowers for those who want to see them.”

— Henri Matisse

After a long winter and spring begins to emerge, I want to see flowers-wildflowers and plenty of them. Fortunately we are blessed in the New River Gorge area, for wildflowers abound in spring.

After combing the gorge for wildflowers for the past 10 years or so, my wife Phyllis and I have noticed that some places are especially blessed with wildflowers. They are wildflower hot spots, if you will, and the Glade Creek Campground and areas surrounding it are some of those places. In fact when spring arrives, it's the first place Phyllis and I go to hunt for wildflowers.

Where is this Hot Spot?

The Glade Creek Campground is easy to find and get to. From Beckley head to Prince on W.Va. 41. Just before you cross the bridge over the New River turn right onto a well-graded and marked gravel road. Go 5.5 miles to the parking lot at the mouth of Glade Creek and pull in on the left-hand side. Later in spring the banks of the gravel road are covered in wildflowers, and we'll explore that later in this article. But for the earliest spring wildflowers head directly to the parking lot.

A gorgeous wildflower called bloodroot is our first target. It's a beautiful spring wildflower with numerous long, white petals, a yellow core, and a leaf that cradles the stalk like a glove. The bloom stands as a single stalk about five inches tall and is full of good cheer. You'll find them in abundance on the left side of the parking area as you enter it. They grow in clusters and individually and sprout all along the road that leads into the campground.

There's a particularly nice cluster sprouting up near the campground rest room. Bloodroot is one of the first wildflowers to bloom in spring, and it really stands out from the colorless forest floor. The red sap from bloodroot's underground stem was used by Native Americans to dye baskets and clothing. It was also used as an insect repellent.

When to go Spring Wildflower Hunting

Which brings us to a question Phyllis and I have mulled over every spring and that is: When should we begin our hunt for wildflowers and bloodroot in particular?



Wake Robin



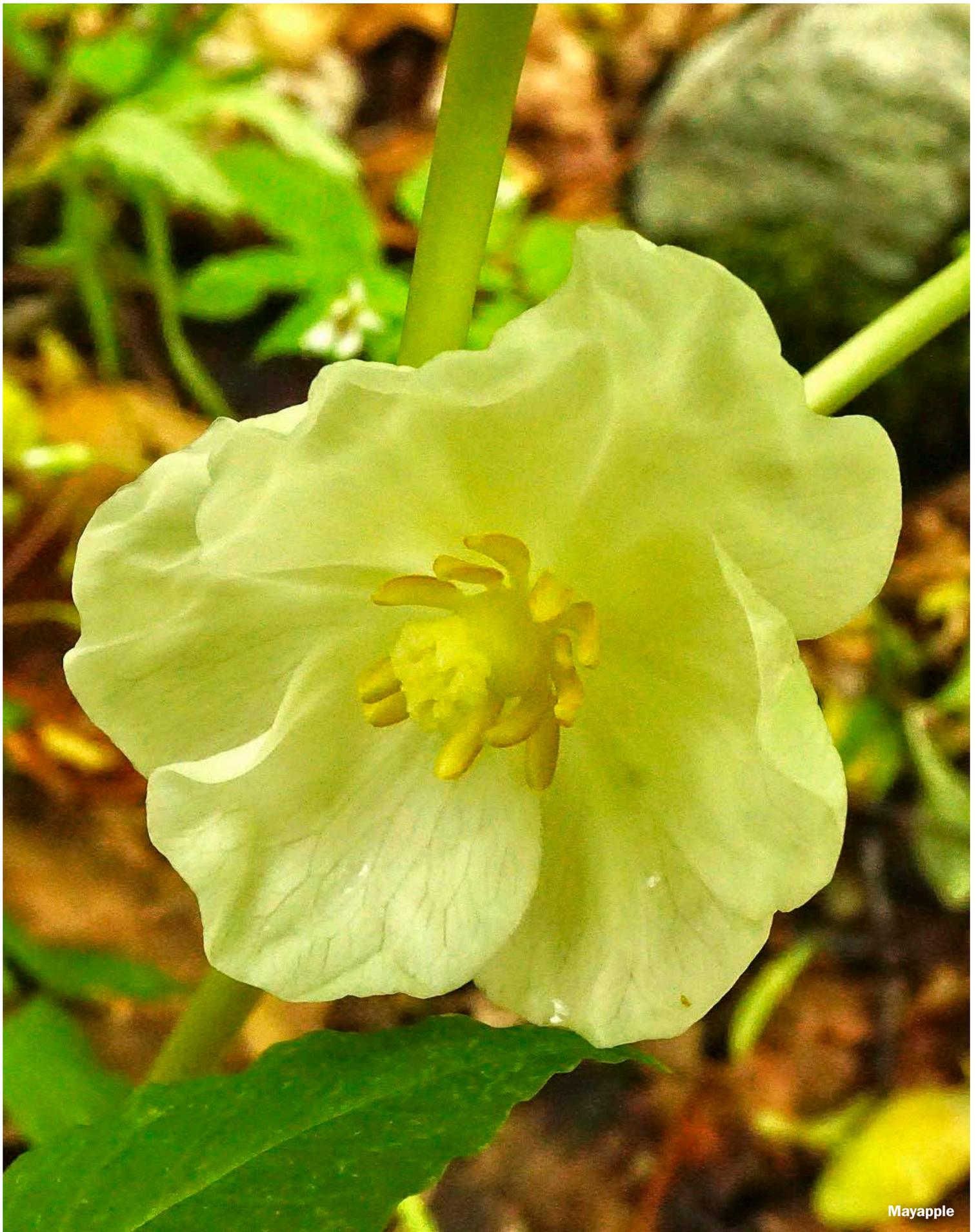
Hepatica

Naturally the time wildflowers begin to emerge varies from year to year depending upon the prior winter's weather. Fortunately we have kept records. At the Glade Creek Campground for the past five years we have found bloodroot at peak on March 18th, 24th, 19th, 27th, and 22nd. So as a rule of thumb plus or minus a couple days around the first day of Spring, you should find bloodroot flourishing.

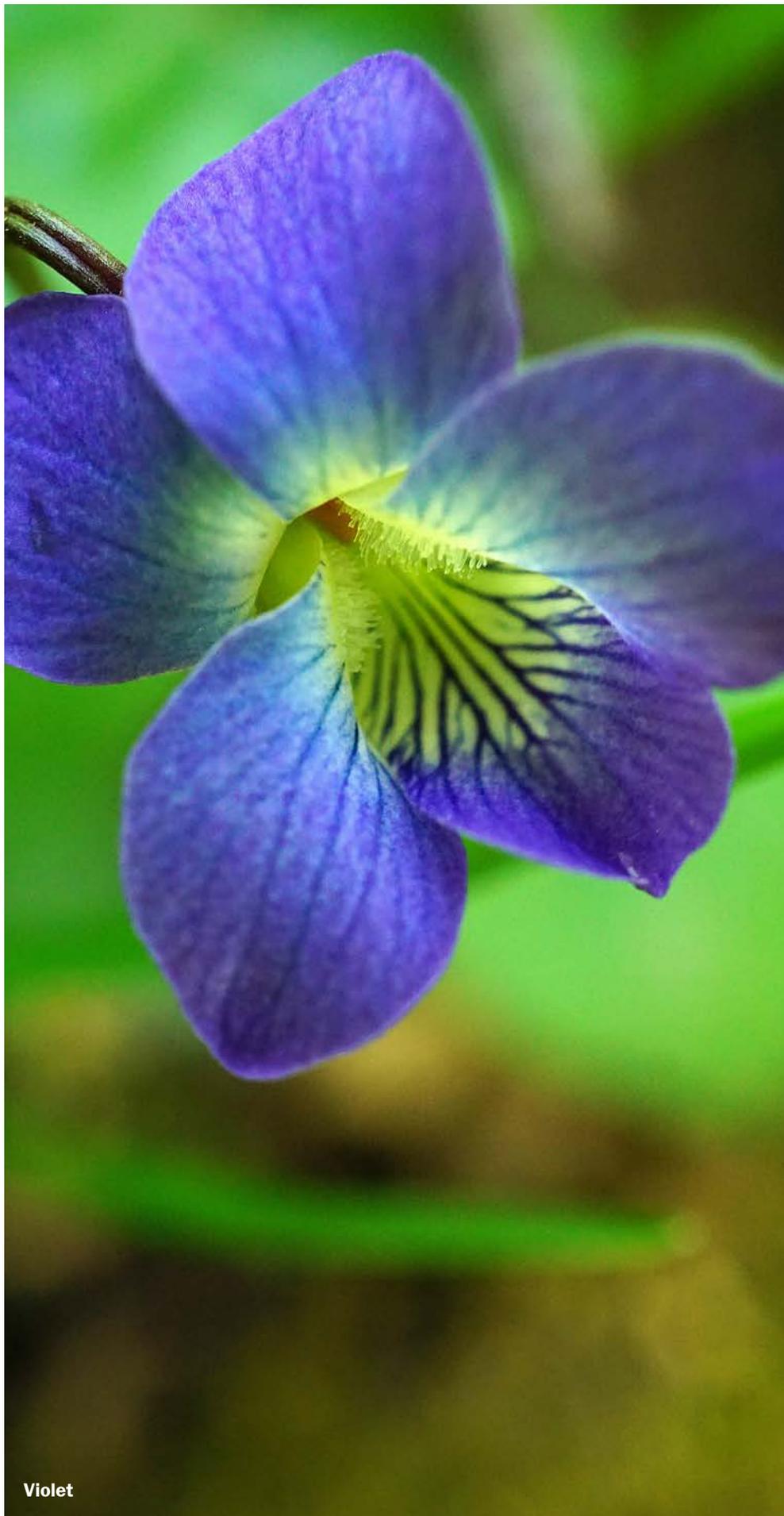
You'll spot other early wildflowers at this time as well. Catty-corner from the bloodroot at the parking lot, there's a rocky hump with soil and stone. There you'll find spring

beauty. It's a small flower that sits close to the ground on a single stalk. It's a white flower with pink stripes and yellow center. Once you identify it, you'll find it throughout the gorge in spring.

Hepatica, both purple and white, also sprouts at this spot. The blossom has six petals and sits on an elongated hairy stem. Although you won't find trillium blooming along with the bloodroot, you probably will notice trillium plants budding. Both large-flowered and red or wake robin plants can be found.



Mayapple



Violet

Wake robin takes its common name by analogy with the European robin, which has a red breast and is a herald of spring.

**Ten Days Later:
Near the End of March**

About ten days after the peak of bloodroot, pay the Glade Creek Campground another visit. By then the trillium should be blooming. Large-flowered trillium and wake robin should be blooming in and around the parking lot. Another form of trillium, called toad trillium, can be found on the bank of the left side of the parking lot. Toad trillium has three mottled green leaves with a central red bud that doesn't open. Toad trillium is a favorite of mine because of the spectacularly varied-colored green leaves.

This time when you drive to the parking lot, keep a close eye on the banks of the access road leading in. Wake robin grows in patches along the road. If you're watching closely, trout lilies can also be spotted. On a blossom that bows its head, trout lily has cheery, bright yellow petals, some of which curl markedly. Wild blue phlox grows in abundance along the road as well.

**In Early to Mid April
Pay Another Visit**

One of the reasons why I enjoy the Glade Creek area is that there are a variety of wildflowers to see throughout early spring. Consequently, it's good to pay another visit to this area in early to mid April. At this time along roadside banks spring larkspur is in season. Spring larkspur grows as multiple dark-purple, hat-shaped blooms from a central stalk about a foot to a foot and a half high. In addition to growing on the roadside banks,

spring larkspur can also be spotted along the Glade Creek trail. I've also spotted mayapples and foam flower in bloom along the trail at this time, too.

Another wildflower growing on the roadside bank that you won't want to miss is large-flowered bellwort. It's a gorgeous wildflower plant with beautiful yellow petals on a gracefully hanging blossom. Also be on the lookout for violets of all kinds and colors, which are everywhere.

Large Stand of Virginia Bluebells

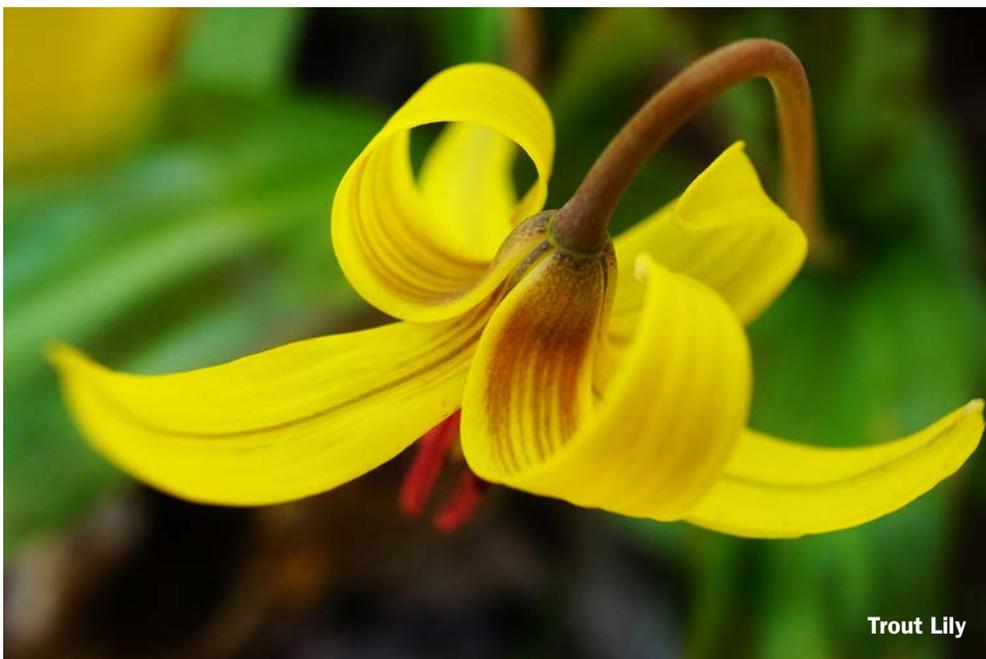
After checking out the roadside banks, drive to the Glade Creek Parking lot. Near the former site of the New River settlement called Hamlet lies the largest stand of Virginia bluebells in the New River Gorge that I am aware of.

To find this wildflower treasure cross the foot bridge over Glade Creek at the end of the parking lot. Go about 30 yards until you see a faint trail down and to the left. The trail is indistinct and unmarked, but follow the path toward the New River. You'll notice a wildflower named squirrel corn on a rocky outcrop along the way. With a little persistence, you'll find Virginia bluebells in abundance. It's a great photo op.

For More Information on Spring Wildflowers

If you would like to know more about spring wildflowers in West Virginia, I recommend a book written by Earl Core called "Spring Wildflowers of West Virginia," published by West Virginia University Press. It's a great reference with full descriptions and pen and ink drawings of the plants. I bought my copy at Tamarack in Beckley.

Happy wildflower hunting!

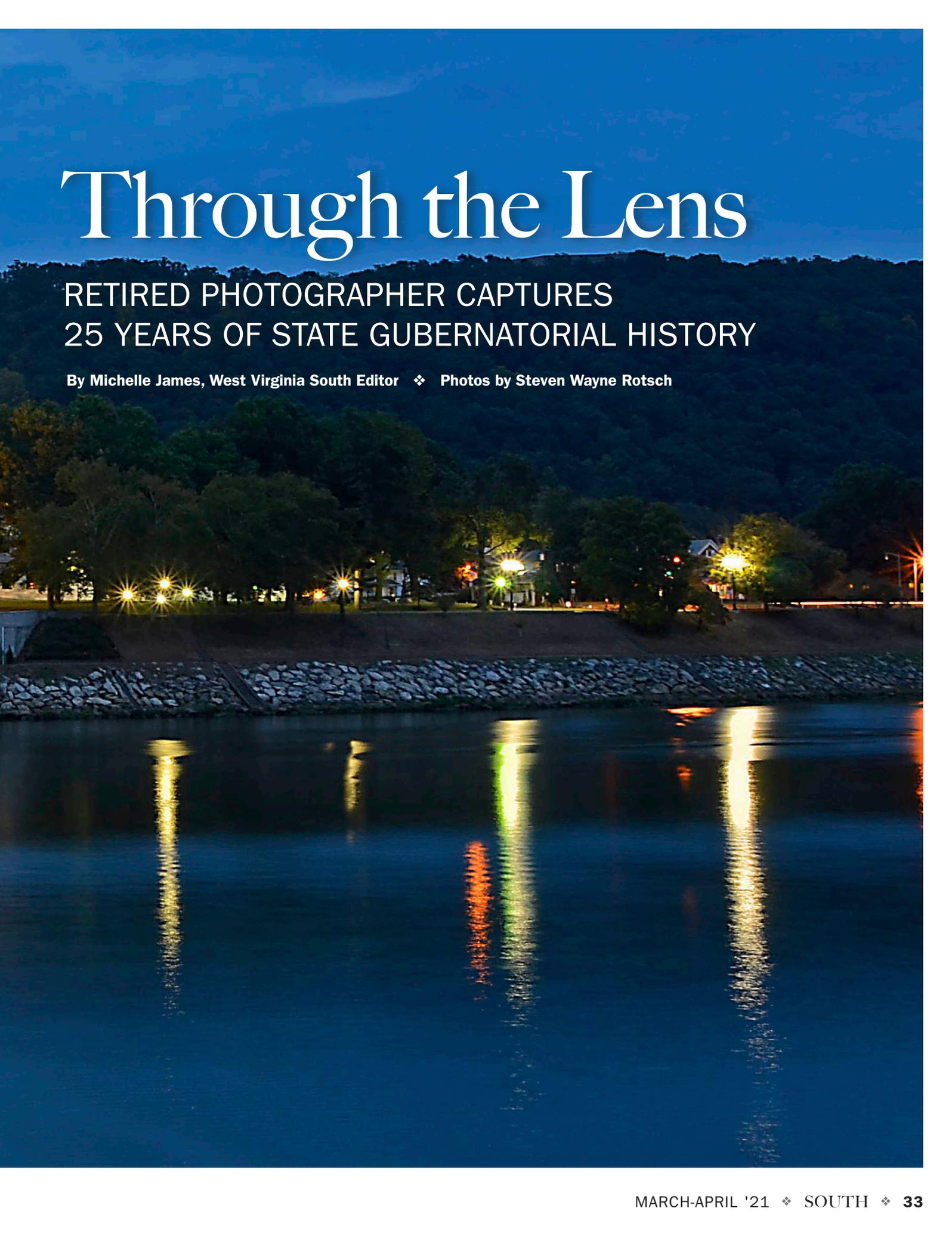


Trout Lily



Spring Larkspur



A night photograph of a riverbank. The foreground shows the dark water of a river, with several bright, vertical streaks of light reflecting off its surface. These reflections correspond to streetlights and building lights on the opposite bank. The middle ground features a rocky embankment leading up to a line of trees and buildings. The background consists of a dark, silhouetted mountain range under a deep blue twilight sky.

Through the Lens

RETIRED PHOTOGRAPHER CAPTURES
25 YEARS OF STATE GUBERNATORIAL HISTORY

By Michelle James, West Virginia South Editor ❖ Photos by Steven Wayne Rotsch



Photo by Perry Bennett

Above, Steve Rotsch takes photos of West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice's 2016 inauguration ceremony. During his 25 years as the West Virginia Governor's Photographer, Rotsch documented the day-to-day work activities of five governors. **Pictured at right,** clockwise from the top are former governors Gaston Caperton, Earl Ray Tomblin, Bob Wise and Joe Manchin, now a U.S. Senator.

To say Steve Rotsch enjoyed his first drive along West Virginia's country roads might be a bit of a stretch.

He wasn't driving deep into a holler or attempting to navigate a bumpy one-lane back road — not yet anyway.

That first trip was from Charleston to Flatwoods, down Interstate 77.

"And I was scared of the mountains," Rotsch said with a laugh. "On the Interstate. I've never had a feeling like that ever since, no matter where I've been."

In fairness, Rotsch was fresh out of Illinois where the flat terrain didn't do much to prepare him for his new home in the Mountain State.

That was 1985, and with that first trip now 36 years in the rearview, Rotsch has added a few more memorable drives to his resume.

"I've been places on one-lane and dirt roads I probably

shouldn't have been," he said. "Every county and probably every major and secondary road. All around the state."

And he's documented every country mile in photograph.

Rotsch has traveled for work and for pleasure, as his portfolio shows, and when the world rights itself — i.e., his wife receives her Covid vaccines — he'll travel again.

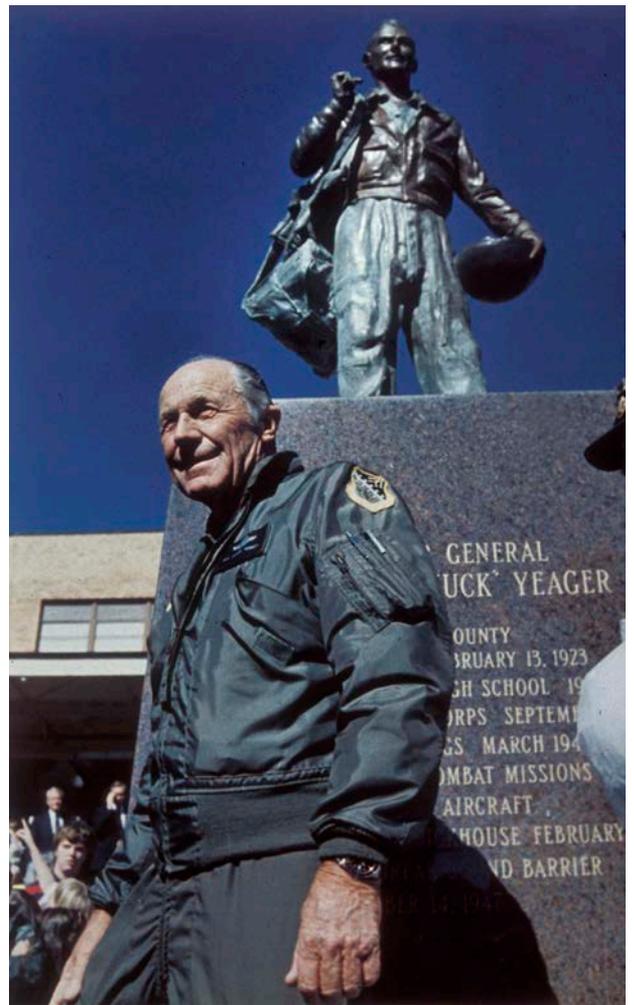
When that happens, however, it will be strictly for pleasure.

He's a man of leisure these days as he retired in December after serving as the West Virginia governor's photographer, a position he held under five different administrations.

• • •

Rotsch's journey into professional photography, much like the windy country roads over which he has traveled over the past three decades, wasn't quite a straight line.





Among the events Rotsch photographed during his time as a photographer for the Associated Press was the collapse of a radio telescope at the Green Bank Observatory, the recapture of President Gerald Ford's would-be assassin Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme, and an unveiling of a statue of the late Brig. Gen. Chuck Yeager.

Had he followed his original path at the University of Southern Illinois, he might have recently retired from a career as a sportswriter instead.

But at some point — he can't remember just when — in his journalism studies, he picked up his uncle's Yashica camera and fell in love.

"Then it was like I was hit in the head," he said.

In addition to school, Rotsch, who was in his late teens or early 20s, worked full-time as a Class A water operator for Staunton, Ill. He said he knew he couldn't really embrace his dream of becoming a photographer until he had his own equipment though, so until he could save enough money, he used his uncle's.

When he finally bought his own Nikon camera and lens — he couldn't afford a flash right away — he was ready to go.

His uncle, a welder by trade, taught him the basics and built him a dark room in his basement, and he took whatever photography classes the school had to offer.



The rest, he learned through one of the many photography jobs he held down during the nine years he attended college.

“I was 17 when I started college and went all the way through,” he said, adding it took him so long to graduate, the school dropped the photojournalism sequence and his advisor taught him one-on-one to enable him to receive the specialty.

He was busy during those years though, as, in addition to the water plant, he worked three other part-time jobs.

Among the most interesting of those jobs was his time as a coroner’s and forensics photographer.

“That was probably the first real photography job I ever had,” he said. “I didn’t really think that one through, but I’m glad I did it. It made me grow up a little bit.”

After he graduated in 1983, Rotsch worked as a reporter and photographer at the Springfield State Journal and then at the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.



Photo by Gov. Gaston Caperton

Rotsch, pictured with a smiling Sen. Robert C. Byrd, later photographed the funeral of the longtime senator. Among those who attended the memorial were former President Bill Clinton, then-President Barack Obama and his vice president, now President Joe Biden.



Former West Virginia Gov. Joe Manchin comforts the fiancé of one of the miners killed in the Sago mine disaster.

It was a connection formed in St. Louis that led him to the Mountain State.

“Someone I knew who worked at the St. Louis Associated Press became bureau chief in Charleston and asked me to come work for the AP as a photographer,” he said.

It was Rotsch’s first offer to leave writing completely behind and focus on photos.

“I took the leap,” he said.

His main job, at least at first, was covering the legislature, and whatever

other news and standalone photos he found. That’s how, he said, he ended up on I-77 headed to a pelt auction in Flatwoods when he first arrived.

“My area was basically the state of West Virginia,” he said.

Rotsch said he enjoyed his time with the AP, speaking of two stories specifically.

One assignment was when President Gerald Ford’s would-be assassin Lynnette “Squeaky” Fromme, who was imprisoned in Alderson, went on the lam for several days.

He said the prison ran out of cream and sugar while they waited for her recapture, forcing him to drink his coffee black.

“I haven’t had cream or sugar in my coffee since,” he said. “So that’s one thing Squeaky did for me.”

He also walked away with a good story while shooting the unveiling of a statue of late Brig. Gen. Chuck Yeager.

“He’s standing there looking at the statue and he wouldn’t turn around,” Rotsch said. “The photographers are all saying, ‘Chuck, Chuck, turn around,’ and he won’t. So I grab his arm and he turned around and called me a ‘Goddamn root weevil.’”

It worked out as everyone got the money shot, and, years later when now U.S. Sen. Joe Manchin was serving as governor, Rotsch was able to spend time with Yeager again.

“I told him the story and kind of apologized for grabbing his arm,” he said with a laugh. “I told him what he called me and he said, ‘Well, were ‘ya?’”

• • •

Rotsch described his job as the governor’s photographer as serving as a documentarian of sorts, but only during work events.

“I don’t know if you can explain it all,” he said. “I had a schedule of things that were happening during the day and night — all things that were associated with him as the governor, not private or family things.

“My job was to capture everything the governor does at work.”

But before he took the job as governor’s photographer, Rotsch left West Virginia behind, or at least thought he had, when he traveled to Michigan to freelance for The Associated Press in 1990.

Two years later, however, in 1992, he got a call from former governor



A group of miners honor their fallen co-workers during a memorial for the 29 men killed in the Upper Big Branch Mine explosion.

Gaston Caperton's press secretary and he headed back.

"I said, 'I'll be there Monday.'"

Rotsch served in the same position during Caperton's second term as well, but was not hired to serve under former Gov. Cecil Underwood when he took office in 1996.

"I applied but they hired someone else," he said, explaining he worked as a photojournalist in Clarksburg during Underwood's tenure.

But in 2001, one year into former Gov. Bob Wise's only term, Rotsch was again offered the position.

He said he kind of presumed he would be back on the hunt when Manchin took office, but Manchin's

first day on the job he said, "You're going to stay on, right?"

After that, Rotsch never applied for the job again, working under Earl Ray Tomblin and, most recently Jim Justice.

And it was one he enjoyed, too.

He said he almost needs to look at photos to remember everything that happened over 25 years, but some things stick out.

"There were a lot of good things," he said. "Some bad."

The deadly 2016 flooding is something burned in his memory.

As are the mining tragedies at Sago and Upper Big Branch.

"The mine disasters probably stand

out more than anything because I got to see both sides," he said. "I got to see the people side and the mine side. I had access to almost everything because wherever the governor went, I got to go."

He mentioned the jubilant announcement that 12 miners were alive at Sago followed by the the announcement that only one miner survived.

"So I get in my car and I leave and I get almost to the Interstate and I hear, '12 dead' and I made a U-turn and went back," he said. "There's a church not very far from the mine and that's where everybody (miners' families) was. When I got there, oh Lord, it was horrible."



Rotsch enjoys taking photos of wildlife in his free time and volunteers at Three Rivers Avian Center where he conducts photography workshops twice each year.

“They had hope and it was taken away.”

• • •

Rotsch, 66, said he’s been thinking about retirement for several years and decided early in 2020 to go ahead and make the move.

“I’m old,” he said, laughing before adding he had 60 days of leave banked and would have lost 20 at the end of 2020 if he hadn’t retired. “You can only carry over 40 (days).”

Retirement doesn’t mean he’ll put down his camera though.

Along with former state tourism photographer Steve Shaluta, he presents twice-yearly weekend photogra-

phy workshops at Twin Falls Resort State Park.

That’s where he met his wife Carla, who works as the business manager for the West Virginia Division of Highways.

“She paid to meet me at a workshop,” he joked, adding, “And she’s outshot me the last two or three times now.”

Pre-Covid-19, the couple traveled on photography adventures and both remain active with Three Rivers Avian Center in Summers County, where he also gives workshops twice a year as fundraisers for non-profit rescue and rehabilitation center.

“I’m really lucky she likes to photograph,” he said of his wife. “And she’s good.”

Rotsch has already received his Covid vaccine and said they plan to start traveling as soon as Carla receives hers.

“My mom died (of Covid) in November and I hadn’t been able to see her for almost a year at that time, so our first trip is probably going to be out to Illinois for some kind of memorial service,” he said.

“Until then we’re just laying low. It’s hard to plan right now.”

And though the end of 2020 marked Rotsch’s official retirement, he nearly



Rotsch's wife Carla, a Beckley native, is also a photographer.

retired during Manchin's term.

"I'm legally blind," he said, explaining he has a condition that causes his eyes to lock shut at random times.

"I guess it happened gradually, but it was when Manchin was governor it became really noticeable," he said, adding he told the former governor's chief of staff he planned to quit because he couldn't see.

"The next day, the governor said, 'I want you to see my guy,'" Rotsch continued. "I had been to four or five ophthalmologists at that point. This guy was 2 ½ blocks from the Capitol."

Within the first five minutes of his visit, Rotsch said he had a diagnosis

and plan.

"I have blepharospasms," he said of the condition, which is treated with multiple Botox injections four times a year.

"...Without Manchin, I don't know how long it would have taken," he said. "I'd probably be on disability."

But that doesn't mean Manchin is his favorite governor. Or if he is, Rotsch isn't saying.

"One of the reasons I stayed in this job is I have a bad memory," he said. "I rode in the cars with everybody. In airplanes. I heard all their conversations but I don't remember them.

"So I'm not going there," he contin-

ued, refusing to play favorites. "But I'll tell you this. They all wanted to do well for this state and for the people."

And that was part of Rotsch's goal as well.

In addition to capturing West Virginia gubernatorial history, he said he did his best to ensure every person who encountered a governor left with a good memory.

"I took a lot of pictures of people with governors and my one thought through it all was, 'This is probably the only time they're going to meet this governor or any governor and I want to make it special to them,' and hopefully I did for a lot of people."

A Reason to Smile

PHOTOGRAPHER FINDS SUCCESS AS BAKERY OWNER

By Michelle James, West Virginia South Editor
Photos by Rick Barbero

During the first few weeks and months of Covid-19 when much of the United States population was on some form of lock-down, in addition to disinfectant wipes and toilet paper, simple kitchen items like yeast and flour were also in high demand.

The world, it seemed, was nesting.

But Brittany Bailey-Cline has never been a fan of downtime.

“It started with sports, multiple sports, at a young age,” the 25-year-old Mount Hope native said. “And then in high school, I started working two or three jobs, so I always had something to do every evening.”

When she discovered photography – and realized she could make a career of it – during her senior year at Woodrow Wilson High School, her free time became nonexistent.

“That was a totally different ballgame of busy,” she said.

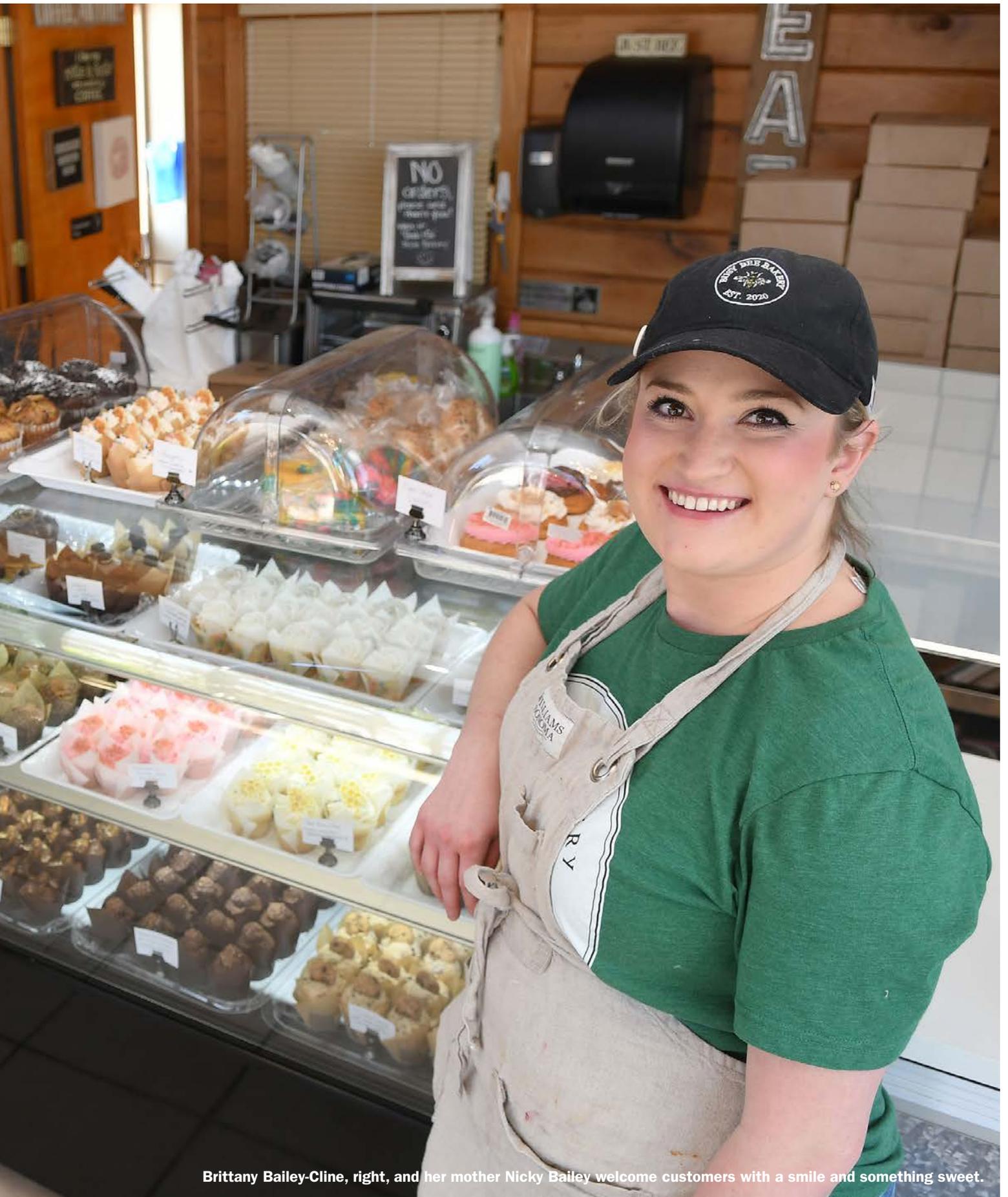
But in late March of 2020, when Covid brought Cline’s flourishing photography business to a screeching, albeit temporary, halt, Cline found herself at a loss.

“I had nothing to do and it was driving me crazy,” she said.

That’s when she, too, turned to the kitchen.

Unlike the salt rising bread that took over social media feeds throughout stages of the pandemic, however, Cline began making cupcakes.





Brittany Bailey-Cline, right, and her mother Nicky Bailey welcome customers with a smile and something sweet.



And before she knew it, her pandemic hobby morphed into a business, outgrew two spaces and moved into its own storefront with lines wrapped around the building.

• • •

Although photography has been her bread and butter for the past six years, Cline said baking was her first business plan.

"I was really interested in baking shows and shows like 'Cake Boss,'" she said, "And as far back as middle school, I had plans for a bakery or a café/coffee shop of some sort."

She said she remembers drawing photos of cakes and sketching out what her storefront would one day look like.

"I made cakes and cupcakes, maybe brownies," she said, of the early cre-

ations she made from boxes and online recipes. "I never had a lot of time growing up to make anything from scratch because of sports and work."

And though she loved baking, when a friend asked her to take her senior photos, she found a new love.

"I thought photography was fun and I wanted to do that for other people," she said.

That was the beginning of Brittany Bailey Photography.

More than six years later, the self-taught photographer, whose Facebook page has more than 50,000 followers, still takes senior portraits, but specializes in wedding photography.

Pre-pandemic, she said her schedule was so steady that she rarely had a day off, with multiple sessions scheduled each weekday and a wedding

every weekend.

Then Covid forced the postponement of two months' worth of events.

"So, I started baking a lot and sticking cupcakes in my mom and dad's and other people's mailboxes, mainly because I had nothing to do," she said.

As she toiled around in the kitchen, she began to revisit her childhood dream of opening a bakery.

"And I thought, 'Man, this would be the time to go ahead and try this,'" she recalled.

First, she dropped the idea on social media, got what she said was some good feedback, and began work on a logo for a business that did not yet exist.

It needed a name.

"When I first started, I tried to call



Cline, left, and her mother, Nicky Bailey, spend six to seven hours each day, baking cupcakes, cheesecake, cookies, pies and other items.

it Kitchen Bee,” she said. “But my mom said, ‘Why don’t you call it Busy Bee?’”

Cline said it became the immediate obvious choice.

“I’ve had a bee tattoo on my arm for years because I’m really busy,” she said. “So, it’s the perfect name.”

With a name decided, she completed the logo and then pulled out her photography equipment and began baking in order to get the perfect promotional photos.

Then in May, when things began to open back up a little bit, she and her mother Nicky Bailey, who lives next-door and serves as her partner in the bakery and as her second shooter in her photography business, began to offer cupcakes on Facebook.

“We had menu boards for what (fla-

vors) was available that day,” she said, explaining she and her mom would bake between 300 and 350 cupcakes each day and meet customers in parking lots to make deliveries.

But she said they quickly discovered they couldn’t continue to operate at that level in a home kitchen.

“That’s an insane amount to do at your house,” Cline said. “Honestly, I didn’t expect the feedback we got.”

They had already moved from Cline’s kitchen into her parents’ bigger space, but they began looking for commercial property where they could install a commercial kitchen and open a storefront.

• • •

Busy Bee Bakery quietly opened its doors at 3559 Robert C. Byrd Drive in Beckley in late November.





Photos by Brittany Bailey-Cline

Cupcake flavors such as the popular honeybee lavender, featuring an edible handmade honeycomb, and chocolate chip cookie dough with whipped cream and a cookie on top, are among the favorites of customers who frequently line the parking lot waiting their turn.

“We started with ‘practice days,’” Cline said, of the first days in business. “We quickly realized we shouldn’t do a grand opening because we wouldn’t be able to keep up.”

The bigger space — the two-story building is the former home of Raleigh Insurance — did not come with more employees.

“I want to keep it family only as long as possible,” Cline said, explaining she and her mom hold down the fort Wednesday through Friday and are joined by her dad and brother on Saturdays.

And her entire family, including her husband Jacob, a lineman for AEP, worked to get the building move-in ready.

“It’s definitely a family job for sure,” she added.

Though the expansion did not bring more employees, it did, however, come with an expanded menu,

as customers can also order cannoli, cake doughnuts, cookies, hand pies, bagels, a variety of fun coffee flavors and cheesecake.

“The cheesecake is usually gone within the first hour we’re open,” Cline said, adding the cheesecake is offered in a variety of flavors including honey lavender and white chocolate raspberry.

But the showpieces, of course, are Busy Bee’s cupcakes.

“We have a little bit of everything,” she said, explaining the cupcakes range from vanilla to exotic and fun gourmet flavors.

“We’re very creative people in the family and I like to think very quickly,” she said. “Like, I think, ‘That’s a cute candle scent. I bet that would be a cute cupcake.’ The other day, my husband brought grape soda home and I was like, ‘That could be a cupcake.’

“There’s way too many (flavors) to

count,” Cline added.

Of course, not every flavor — she makes ice cream-flavored cupcakes and seasonal cupcakes as well — is offered every day.

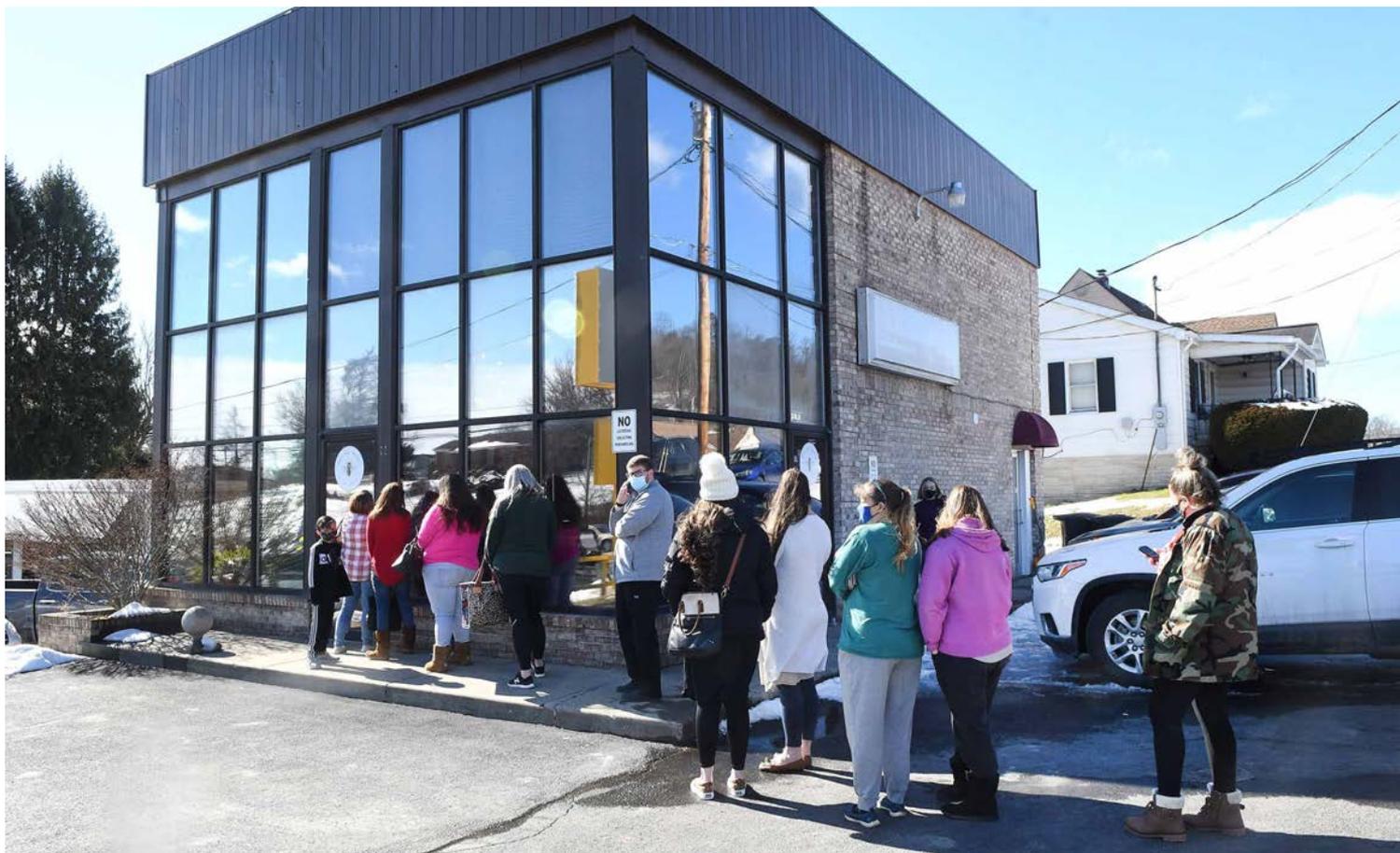
“We switch them around, so you have something different every time you come in,” she said. “But we do have our set ones that we always have, like some kind of vanilla or Death by Chocolate.”

She said she enjoys baking them all, mentioning a honeybee cupcake that tastes like honey lavender with an edible handmade honeycomb on top. And she said a cotton candy cupcake is probably the most popular flavor with both adults and kids so far.

But Cline doesn’t have a favorite cupcake or even a favorite dessert item.

“This is hilarious,” she said laughing, “but I don’t really like sweets.”

She knows how they’re supposed



to taste though, so they're thoroughly vetted. And she said her mom is also on the case.

"When we first started this, I lost 16 pounds and my mom gained eight," she added, with a laugh. "She wanted to eat or try everything, so we're good."

• • •

It was a cold, drizzly afternoon as Beckley native Angie Harding and her husband Brice waited in line to try Busy Bee's cupcakes for the first time.

Neither had consumed anything sweet since Christmas, and Angie, who had seen Bailey's cupcake photos online, decided they would visit the bakery for their post-holiday cheat day.

"I'm a foodie so I stalk any new business in town," Angie said. "I enjoy food pictures."

Angie said she learned a bit about what to expect from the visit from

the bakery's social media page. So, she and Brice weren't bothered when they waited in line, outside, for nearly an hour.

"The food is worth the wait," she said. "We never mind waiting on something good."

That wait has become commonplace for Busy Bee customers, though it's not something Cline said she expected.

"It doesn't matter what the weather, before we open for the day, we have a line around the building," she said. "People have been standing outside in the snow.

"It's the craziest thing I've ever seen."

Crazy in a good way, she said, as long lines mean people like what she's doing.

But the demand is one of the reasons she said Busy Bee doesn't offer cakes and doesn't accept orders.

"We're kind of a walk-in, grab-and-

go convenience bakery," she said, explaining she and her mom bake each item fresh every morning.

Down the road, she said she might add grab-and-go breakfast or lunch items to the list and possibly expand Busy Bee's schedule.

But she still operates Brittany Bailey Photography and doesn't plan to leave that.

"I'm learning to balance the two businesses," she said.

And she said she's grateful for the success she's had so far and looks forward to seeing her businesses continue to grow.

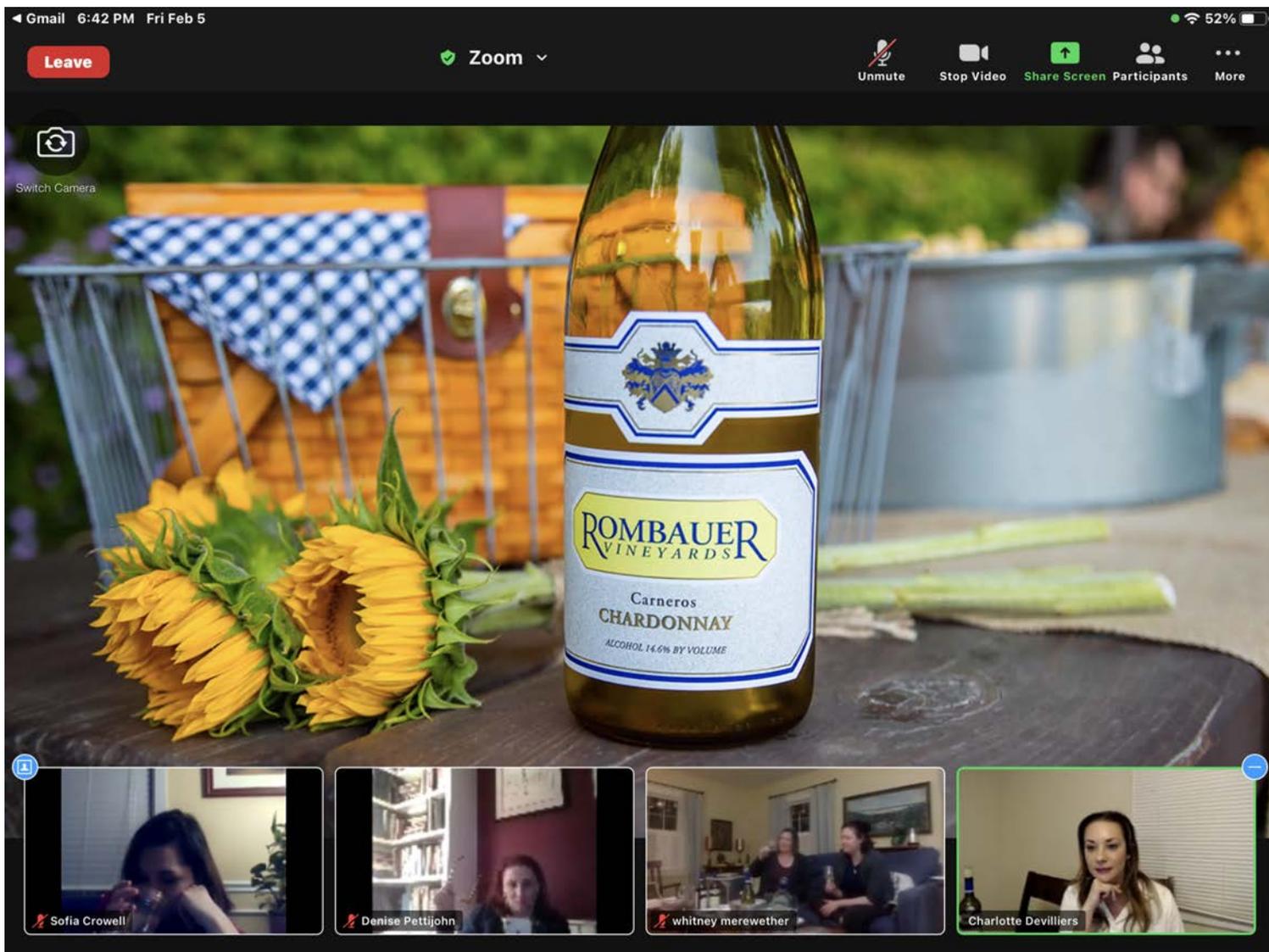
"I make people smile for a living," she said of her photography career. "I'm glad I still have a job that I can make people smile because they had something sweet or had a good cup of coffee. Or because they have someone to talk to.

"I'm glad I can make people feel good."

Discovering the Perfect Pour

WINE SHOP FILLS NICHE IN WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS





Clay Elkins helps guide customers to their perfect wine both in the store, on the phone and, since Covid-19, through virtual tasting events.

By Audrey Stanton-Smith, West Virginia South Contributor

It's a Friday evening, and a dozen or so people have gathered for an evening of wine tasting and chatting. On Zoom.

"It's happy hour without leaving the comfort of home," explained Clay Elkins, a.k.a. "Your Favorite Wine Fairy" and certified sommelier for this virtual tasting event hosted by The Village Wine Shop, one of several new businesses that have popped up recently in White Sulphur Springs. "And people don't have to worry about driving."

They're not just sitting in front of screens, sipping wine. They're learning, on this particular evening, about Rombauer, one of the more than 120 different labels customers will find at The Village Wine Shop.

Participants have stopped by the shop in advance to purchase tonight's featured wines — Rombauer's Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Merlot, and Zinfandel. As they taste, Rombauer representative Charlotte Devilliers guides the group along a virtual tour of the company: its history — "Yes, these are the same Rombauers known for the famous cookbook, 'The Joy of Cooking'" — its Napa vineyards, a closeup look at the very "less oaky, neutral barrels" from which their Sauvignon Blanc came, and a discussion about the high-tech, environmentally conscious decisions the company makes to conserve water and reduce waste.



Photos courtesy of the Village Wine Shop





Annie Slonaker stands ready to offer customers a sample of wine or one of the other food items offered at the Village Wine Shop.

In a chat window, participants ask questions and comment on everything from their opinions of the flavors to White Sulphur's own new barrel business. As the evening progresses, there are jokes and light-hearted banter. Some are typed. Some are spoken from comfortable-looking couches. Even if it isn't happening in person, it's exactly the kind of camaraderie Elkins says the ownership had in mind when they decided on the name, The Village Wine Shop.

"2020 was a challenging year for everybody, and we came out on top because of folks like you," Elkins says, raising a glass for a virtual toast.

Virtual wine tastings like this are

a part of business that developed because of the pandemic, but they're here to stay, he said.

"During the pandemic and even before, people started to realize what a small town really means to them," Elkins said, pointing out that until The Village located in White Sulphur Springs last fall, the town did not have "a true wine shop."

"We're that wine shop," he said, adding that the new storefront is just one of many good things happening in White Sulphur Springs.

"Since the beginning of 2020, or even backing up to 2019, ... there's been a barbecue restaurant open up, a toy store, a kick-ass bike shop, a gift

store, ACE Hardware, an international food store, a little school, a hotel in the works, and there's a brewery that's going to open here shortly, and a coffee and cafe, and a bakery just opened up, and we're getting a music venue," he said. "There's a lot going on here. .. If you haven't been through town lately, it's pretty awesome to see what's happening."

Something else that's happening in the area, he noted, is its recent designation as a partner in Mon Forest Towns, a new designation for 10 towns within the Monongahela National Forest geared toward marketing them as regional recreation destinations.



Photo by F. Brian Ferguson

Customers can shop from a variety of foods, jams, spreads and sauces, many of which are produced by local artisans.

“Right now, when you think of going somewhere to go be outside or to go do outdoor recreation and eat good food and sort of relax and get away from it all, a lot of people think of Fayetteville, or Asheville (N.C.), or Davis,” Elkins said. “White Sulphur is going to be a recreation destination. It’s going to be an even better tourist destination. ... People will be coming here, and not just for the resort.”

And, he believes, they’ll be buying wine. They already are, and what they’re finding, Elkins said, is that employees at The Village are much more than just salespeople, they’re helpful educators, able to answer questions and inform customers because they’ve tasted everything in the store themselves.

“Wine can be overwhelming,” Elkins said, likening it to shelves of various salsas at a grocery store. “... You might not know what you want, but we have tasted each of these,

and we can help. ... We’re trying to make wine easy and more approachable for everyone.”

That’s where his culinary background comes in. Locals may know Elkins from his work with food and beverage at the Greenbrier Sporting Club, or from The Local in Lewisburg (which he said is planning to re-open as a coffee shop in White Sulphur Springs). He spent time studying in Italy while a student at Appalachian State University, and, after college, he cooked and catered here and there, including at the Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City, Utah. He eventually studied in the culinary program at Johnson and Wales University in Charlotte, N.C., and he also became a Level II Sommelier, certified by the Wine Spirits Education Trust. Though he is not the owner of The Village Wine Shop, he is its go-to spokesperson. And he happens to be one who knows exactly how to pair wine and food.

“In Europe, wine is part of everyday life,” he explained.

“People will have a slice of pizza and a glass of wine, but here, it seems to be something some people have just with a fancy meal.”

That need not be the case, and wine shouldn't be intimidating, he said.

“It's about the whole dining experience. ... There are some rules that people think of when they think of wine,” he said, “red with meat, white with fish, but not everything can fit in a rule. .. What if your fish is in tomato sauce, or your salmon in a ginger bourbon sauce? ... When somebody comes in, we'll tell them to drink what they like, and we can help them find it.”

Soda drinkers, for instance, might be guided toward a sweeter wine. Hot tea drinkers toward another. And if they're not sure what they like, the experts at The Village can help based on what's for dinner.

“We know what goes well together, and we can help them branch out,” he said. “It can be a choose your own adventure. ... Take it for a test drive.”

And Thursdays will be a good time to do so. Once the weather warms up, Elkins said, Village Wine Shop and other businesses in White Sulphur Springs have plans for Thursdays, complete with local shopping events, a farmers' market, live music at Road Hogs, and tastings at The Village Wine Shop.

Most bottles in the shop range from \$15 to \$30, but there are some that are more expensive, and some that are less expensive. And there are other items, too.

“Our olive oils have gone over really well,” Elkins said, pointing out giant olive oil refill stations and noting that one customer preferred using an empty tequila bottle for his artisan olive oil refills. He also pointed out a spreadable feta made from sheep and goat cheese that many customers enjoy.

Local artisan foods, jams, spreads and sauces — including Moonstruck Maple Syrup from Summers County and Hidden Quarry Honey from Greenbrier County — join fine cheeses, other charcuterie items and craft beers to round out the selection.

For now, 120 different labels fill the shop shelves, but Elkins said that will soon double. Also coming soon: online purchasing and additional Zoom wine classes and tastings.

“Those are here to stay,” he said.

For upcoming dates, store hours and more information, visit The Village Wine Shop on Facebook, yourvillagewineshop.com, or call 304-536-0013. The shop is currently open Wednesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., at 713 Main Street East, White Sulphur Springs.



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WVU TECH BASKETBALL

Photos by F. Brian Ferguson and Jon C. Hancock

West Virginia high school sports were shut down through much of the winter months due to Covid-19 concerns, but local college programs, including WVU Tech men's and women's basketball, hit the hard court running, giving area fans something to cheer about.





VACCINATION CLINICS

Photos by Rick Barbero

After a bleak 2020, the world received hope in December with the approval of Covid-19 vaccines. Since then, area residents, by age, have rolled up their sleeves to receive what they hope will be their first steps toward freedom.







INAUGURATION DAY

Photos by Craig Cunningham and Perry Bennett

Raleigh County native and long-time Greenbrier County resident Jim Justice was sworn in for his second term as governor of West Virginia. The ceremony, which also included the swearing in of West Virginia Supreme Court Justices Tim Armstead and Beckley natives John Hutchison and Bill Wooton, was scaled back and socially distanced due to Covid-19 restrictions.





WV Legislative Photography, Photo by Perry Bennett



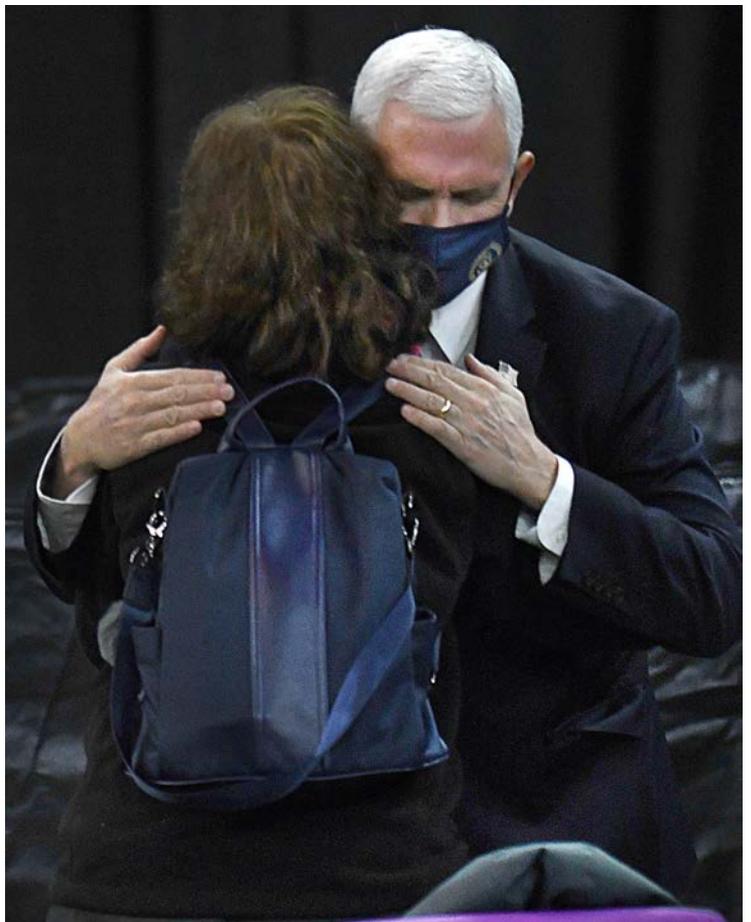


MEMORIAL SERVICE

Photos by Rick Barbero

Friends and family as well as military and political dignitaries gathered at the Charleston Coliseum & Convention Center to pay their respects to retired Air Force Brigadier General Charles "Chuck" Elmwood Yeager. The Hamlin native was well-known for his aviation feats which included breaking the sound barrier in 1947. Then United States Vice President Mike Pence eulogized Yeager as the "nation's greatest aviator." "The truth is, Chuck Yeager has been an inspiration to every American pilot and will be, throughout time," Pence said.







CHAMBER AWARDS

Photos by Rick Barbero

Among the many events canceled in 2020 due to Covid-19 concerns was the Beckley-Raleigh County Chamber of Commerce Dinner. The cancellation of the annual event meant the chamber was unable to properly honor the year's award recipients. But in conjunction with a chamber meeting in February, the recipients were formerly recognized. Those honored were Volunteer of the Year Jane Haga, Outstanding Young Business Leader Jeff Miller, and Community Leadership Award winner Shawn Ball.



Glimpsing the Future



Photo courtesy of Jeff Miller

By Michelle James, West Virginia South Editor

Worlds collide on Neville Street in downtown Beckley in 1912 as George Alvin Bolen/Bowling's cattle-led cart stops beside an early-model motorcycle. It wasn't long before motorcycles, cars and trucks replaced horse and cattle as the primary means of transportation, moving horses, mules and cattle onto the farm and into the country.

Submit your historic photos by emailing Michelle James at mjames@register-herald.com.



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