

# Friends of Blackwater Canyon

December 2004

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

## Blackwater Play Draws Overflow Crowd

On November 9, an audience of more than 500 people packed Charleston's State Capitol Cultural Center Theater to see an historic re-enactment of the Blackwater Canyon — based case, *Carrie Williams vs. the Board of Education*.\*

The hero in the "courtroom drama" re-enactment program was West Virginia's first African American lawyer, J. R.



Aaron Clark  
as young  
J. R. Clifford

Clifford. Clifford was born in 1848 near Greenland Gap, West Virginia. He fought in the Civil War as a teenager, then became an educator, publisher, crusading lawyer, and civil rights activist. The heroine of the story was Carrie Williams, a tenacious teacher at the one-room "colored school" in Coketon — at the head of the Blackwater Canyon. In 1898, Williams and Clifford fought and won the right to stop a school board bent on keeping African American children

from having the same school year as white children.

Actor Joseph Bundy played Clifford, and actress Ilene Evans played the Carrie Williams part in the Charleston production. Ilene Evans lives near the town of Thomas in Tucker County. Her work can be seen at [voicesfromtheearth.org](http://voicesfromtheearth.org).



Ilene Evans as  
Carrie Williams

In 2003, Friends of Blackwater brought the Williams/Clifford case — and the great ethnic history of the Coketon area — to the attention of West Virginia Supreme Court Justice Larry Starcher and his law clerk, Tom Rodd. They took the ball and ran with it!

Along with great drama, the Charleston show had great music by the Carpenter Ants and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Choir. Many leading members of West Virginia's black community honored the event with their presence. Friends of Blackwater provided refreshments. See more pictures of the show on our website!

## Museum in Economic Plan for Blackwater Area

By Edward Peeks

Excerpts from a November 18, 2004 article

A proposed museum figures into economic development in northern West Virginia, as part of the magnet to attract more tourist dollars and increase business in the Blackwater Canyon area, one of the state's most scenic and beautiful areas. The region reflects the character and heritage of the Mountain State and its impact on the nation, from the saving of the Union to industrial development to civil rights and social history. "Help preserve this fascinating history and support economic development. . . Support planning and development of the Coketon Industrial History Museum and Interpretative Center," says . . . Friends of Blackwater... Coketon is conspicuous in civil rights history with J.R. Clifford and other black lawyers like T.G. Nutter, Willard Brown and Hugo Payne Sr.

Columnist Edward Peeks, who attended the Williams/Clifford performance, wrote for the Charleston Gazette about Friends of Blackwater's Coketon Museum Project, which celebrates the industrial past and rich cultural heritage of the Blackwater Region.

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Today's efforts for tourism and economic development include a program to save Blackwater Canyon from the ravages of logging and the encroachment of private real estate developers. A public move is underway to increase wilderness areas for hiking, camping and other outdoor leasures. The dream is to make alive a body of West Virginia heritage in the Coketon Industrial History Museum and Interpretative Center.

**\*The re-enactment was sponsored by the West Virginia Supreme Court and the West Virginia Humanities Council.**

# Director's Update

*Dear Friends,*

We come to the end of another year. Soon the Blackwater Canyon will be blanketed in snow. The salamanders will be hibernating under logs, the bats in caves — and the flying squirrels will be digging down through the snow, sniffing out wild truffles buried under the forest floor.

The magical winter wonderland of the High Allegheny red spruce forest will glitter with ice crystals, as chickadees bounce from branch to branch. What a miracle!

**2004**

**A Year of Discovery  
for Friends of Blackwater**

We discovered that our favorite nature writer, J. Lawrence Smith is willing to write another book about Blackwater Country — to help save the Canyon. We discovered the dramatic power of the life and work of J.R. Clifford and Carrie Williams, who fought their case from a tiny “colored school” in the Blackwater Canyon to the West Virginia Supreme Court to forge equality in education in West Virginia, 60 years before Brown vs. Board of Education.

We discovered the excitement that the idea of a National Park can generate at our “Visioning Blackwater” Meeting in September. We discovered the generosity of West Virginia artists, who donated world-class artworks to support our effort. And we discovered how deeply we are moved by the generous donations made in honor and memory of people who have come before us — in their love of the land, and their dedication to protecting and celebrating West Virginia’s special places.

We discovered our (your) power to move politicians, with our Election Year Media Campaign. With help from the Conservation Alliance (and particularly Campmor, Dansco, and

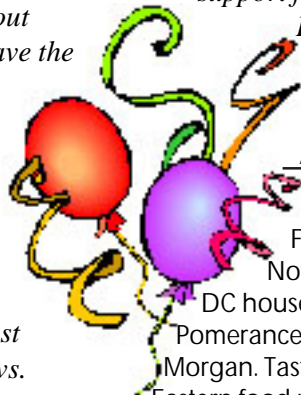
Gortex) we ran large newspaper ads across West Virginia asking people to urge statewide political candidates to support Blackwater protection. Over 1,000 people sent messages to the candidates through our (your) website alone! And the candidates responded — 15 positively in the primaries. To cap this effort, both major Gubernatorial candidates this Fall stated their support for protecting Blackwater Canyon.



**Judy Rodd and Susan Small**

A special note  
As the Bob Wise administration comes to a close, we want to thank the Governor — and particularly his staffer, Susan Small — for all the work they put in, trying to negotiate the purchase of the private land in Blackwater Canyon.

Thank you for being with Friends of Blackwater on this voyage of discovery so far. We look forward to continuing with you in the coming year. Have a wonderful Holiday Season and Happy New Year.



## Auction Adds Excitement to DC Party WV Artists Make it a Success

Fifty people attended our November 18 Washington, DC house party at Rafe and Lenore Pomerance's home in Adams Morgan. Tasty wines and Middle Eastern food put everyone in a good mood. As balmy weather let people mingle in the garden, we were serenaded by the Appalachian fiddle and hammered dulcimer — played by Sam and Joe Herrmann, of Critton Owl Hollow, WV. One highlight of the evening was an auction of West Virginia books, crafts, trips and artwork, including photographs by Paul Corbit Brown and “Tico” Frank Herrera, and sculptures by Mark Blumenstein and Sassi Harel.

a botanical drawing, and Ann's daughter Helen Payne, now working in Washington, donated an oil portrait. The celebrated photographer, Jim Clark, of War, West Virginia, donated two of his books to help with the Blackwater campaign. Numerous Tucker County businesses donated dinners, overnights, ski passes, and bike trips. Also



**The Kiss by Sassi Harel**



**Sculpture  
by Mark Blumenstein**



**Artist Helen Payne**

Blumenstein and Sassi Harel. Morgantowner Ann Cork Payne donated

thanks to Sally Davidson for her donation of dinners at Clyde's of Georgetown. All of the auction items sold like hotcakes, making the fundraiser a solid success!! Thanks to all of the folks who came and joined the fun!

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## Board Highlight Jason Halbert

Jason Halbert has worked on the Blackwater Campaign since 1998. Jason's pioneer great-great-grandparents were from Beverly, West Virginia, and he has a deep love of West Virginia's wild places. At college in Missoula, Montana, Jason worked with other young activists to reform the United States Forest Service. He ran the Appalachian Restoration Campaign in Ohio and Virginia. In 1999, Jason created the first map of Blackwater Canyon National Park. These days, Jason works for a foundation — and even wears a suit and tie — but his grass-roots understanding of the power of new ideas in protecting the environment is always with him. His advice and analysis as a Friends of Blackwater Advisory Board Member is invaluable. In September, Jason became engaged to Kristin Taverna. His future mother-in-law, Tina Taverna, sent us a note explaining how she first met Jason with Kristin at the 1999 Blackwater



*The Happy Couple,  
Jason Halbert and Kristin Taverna*

Canyon National Park presentation in Washington, DC.

"Through Jason, we have learned so much about the environment, which you are trying so desperately hard to protect. I feel so fortunate that he will soon be a part of our family and that together, both he and Kristin will continue to work for the

preservation of this incredible world of ours through their hard work and dedication." Tina said.

The magic of Blackwater Canyon causes true love to bloom!!

# Limerock, My Hometown

by Ron Eckard

No! Limerock was not my hometown, but it was the hometown of my great, great grandfather, John Eckard, and three generations of his descendants. John settled at Limerock with his three adult children in the middle 1870s, the first of several families that lived there for more than 60 years. Before John died in 1892, he saw the railroad construction crawl slowly down the Blackwater Canyon from Thomas in 1888. His children, Elizabeth Eckard Wratford, Martin Eckard and Jonathon Eckard saw the canyon walls denuded of trees by 1914. Afterwards they witnessed the further destruction of the wildlife habitat as the fires followed the clear cutting. Samuel Eckard, grandson of John rode to the bottom of the canyon in a steam-powered skidder



basket and assisted in harvesting the last of the trees from the bottom of the canyon in 1916. George Eckard, great grandson of John was born there in 1918, and was part of the fourth and last generation of Eckards to live at Limerock. Since then three additional Eckard generations have visited Limerock, the hometown of their ancestors. In all, seven generations of Eckards have left their footprints in the Blackwater Canyon since John and his children settled there around 1875.

At the height of the commercial activity in the Blackwater Canyon the Limerock village thrived and supported a general store and a hotel near the upper end of the settlement. Limerock also was the site of a small limestone quarry that provided foundation stones for the houses there as well as rock for the railroad. In addition, a church, a school and a cemetery served the Limerock community. By 1920, the commercial activity shifted to the upper end of the Blackwater River and there were only

seven families still living at Limerock. The 1920 Tucker County census reveals that the head of one Limerock household worked on the railroad, one in lumbering, two were teamsters and three were described as farmers. By the latter 1930s, Limerock village, two miles above the mouth of the Blackwater River was mostly deserted.

Today, the Limerock area provides little evidence of the people that lived there for over 60 years. You can find lilac bushes, patches of daffodils and piles of rock that are evidence of building foundations and terraces, but the people that first settled that area are gone forever. While this precious little is all that is left to show that Limerock once existed, I have faith that the Blackwater Canyon and the remnants of the Limerock area will be protected so that future generations of Eckards and others will be able to visit 'my hometown.'



*Ron Eckard at  
September Conference*

# Friends of Blackwater Take Action

## Cheat Canyon Threatened: Citizens Groups Ask Fish and Wildlife to Intervene

The Friends of Blackwater Canyon has joined with the Center for Biological Diversity, Sierra Club (West Virginia Chapter), the Cheat Lake Environment and Recreation Association, the West Virginia Rivers Coalition, and Coopers Rock Foundation in sending notice to Allegheny Wood Products (AWP) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ("Service") of AWP's violations of the Endangered Species Act in an attempt to save the critically imperiled Indiana bat and Cheat three-toothed snail from AWP's logging and roadbuilding in Cheat River Canyon.

The Cheat River Canyon encases a 16-mile stretch of the Cheat River, the largest undammed river east of the Mississippi, running northwest from Albright in Preston County to Cheat Lake at Cooper Rock State Forest near Morgantown. The portion of canyon impacted by AWP's logging provides crucial habitat for the Indiana bat and the Cheat three-toothed snail, both protected under the Endangered Species Act. AWP's property in Cheat River Canyon comprises approximately one-third of the three-toothed snail's habitat **in the entire world**. AWP acquired its Cheat River Canyon property in 2003 from Allegheny Power, despite the State of West Virginia's interest in purchasing the property as part

of an effort to get the remainder of the 16-mile-long Canyon into public ownership. In addition to endangered species, the



*Photo by John Bright*

***Kayakers, hikers and bikers fear destruction of Cheat Canyon's wild beauty and unique ecology***

Canyon contains the Allegheny Hiking Trail and is a recreational mecca for kayakers from all over the east.

AWP has initiated road building and logging activities in Cheat River Canyon without conducting adequate surveys for the species. Our flyovers of the Cheat Canyon reveal that a haul road has been created and logs are being carried out. We believe that AWP is violating the Endangered Species Act. Why isn't the Fish and Wildlife Service office taking action to stop this illegal logging?

Like the Blackwater Canyon, the Cheat Canyon is one of West Virginia's unique ecological treasures and also a recreation destination. Jim Kotcon of the West Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club said, "The Sierra Club believes that preservation of wildlife is of paramount importance, particularly the protection of endangered species. Allegheny Wood Products' activities are seriously threatening critical parts of West Virginia's unique natural heritage. It is an outrage and an insult to West Virginians that the highest levels of the Fish and Wildlife Service are intentionally turning a blind eye to this clearly illegal activity. This is just WRONG!"

With no response from Fish and Wildlife and AWP, the citizens groups are seriously considering a lawsuit.

## Campaign for Moratorium on Wind Project Construction

Friends of Blackwater joined Citizens for Responsible Wind Power (CRWP), a four-state not-for-profit citizens group incorporated in West Virginia, in calling for a moratorium on the construction of any industrial wind facilities until the General Accounting Office (GAO) does a study of their effects on the Allegheny Mountains. The GAO study was recently called for by WV Congressmen Allan Mollohan and Nick Joe Rahall. CRWP has issued a call to "citizens who love the beauty and the wildlife of the West Virginia Highlands" to

write to the West Virginia Public Service Commission (PSC) to ask for a moratorium. Go to CRWP's website, [www.responsiblewind.org](http://www.responsiblewind.org) for more information.

On October 5, President Bush signed a tax credit extension bill with wind power tax credits. This means that construction of two large industrial wind projects with 366 turbines near Blackwater Canyon, is imminent. Certificates for the projects were issued to US Wind Force and NedPower by the West Virginia PSC, which has yet to

develop uniform siting guidelines or environmental standards. "We cannot let the destruction of our precious highlands happen," says Linda Cooper, President of Citizens for Responsible Wind (CRWP). "We have seen the scenic vista degradation and the extraordinary bird and bat kills from the 44 turbines on Backbone Mountain. Can you imagine the result from eight times as many turbines on a major migration route on Allegheny Front?" An avian mortality study conducted at Backbone Mountain last

*continued next page*

# Keep Dolly Sods Wild Project Update

## Citizens Sue for Wind Project Mortality Information

Twenty-one citizen groups from around the country are supporting a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit filed against U.S. Department of the Interior Secretary, Gale Norton, by the Friends of Blackwater. The lawsuit charges that Norton has refused to turn over documents relating to wildlife deaths and injuries from wind turbines. "The Department of Interior has not justified withholding these important documents," said Judy Rodd, Executive Director of Friends of Blackwater.

Rodd said, "We deeply appreciate the support we are receiving from citizen groups around the country. There is growing national concern about the adverse environmental impacts of wind power, and once we get this information out on the table, it will help everyone understand the pros and cons of wind



power when it comes to the environment. We are filing this suit now because our patience has run out. We have been waiting for answers from the Department of Interior for over a year. If these giant wind turbines are killing thousands of migratory birds and other wildlife the public has a right to know."

Thousands of taxpayer subsidized wind turbines — some up to 450 feet high — are being planned for high ridges of the scenic Potomac Highlands and mountainous and coastal areas in other states.

"These projects may be a serious threat to migratory birds in the U.S. and there is no meaningful federal review process to examine their impacts on wildlife," said Rodd. "The Mountaineer project in West Virginia has been the site of the greatest migratory bird and bat kills east of the Mississippi River. If this is any indication of the problems associated with wind power, then Department of Interior needs to step forward and enforce our federal environmental laws."

A copy of the letter and the twenty-one supporting organizations follows:



November 16, 2004

Dear Secretary Norton:

The undersigned organizations are writing with regard to Friends of Blackwater v. Department of the Interior, a lawsuit filed today in federal district court against the Fish and Wildlife Service under the Freedom of Information Act. The lawsuit challenges the agency's withholding of documents requested by Friends of Blackwater concerning wildlife injuries and deaths caused by industrial wind power facilities, and the USFWS's practices and policies regarding enforcement of environmental laws against wind power facilities.

As you are aware, the wind power industry is undergoing a rapid expansion throughout the country. Although wind power has the capacity to be a clean source of energy, wind power projects that are not properly sited or evaluated before they are constructed pose serious risks to our nation's treasured wildlife. We believe the public has a right to information concerning these impacts, and a right to know what the Fish and Wildlife Service's policies are with regard to enforcing important environmental laws against the wind power industry. Accordingly, we urge the Fish and Wildlife Service to comply with the Freedom of Information Act, and release the records requested by Friends of Blackwater.

Sincerely,

Citizens for Responsible Windpower (WV)  
Friends of the Allegheny Front (WV)  
Stewards of the Potomac Highlands (WV)  
Potomac Valley Audubon Society (WV)  
Friends of Appalachian Highlands (PA)  
Friends of Backbone Mountain (MD)  
Maryland Alliance for Greenway Improvements (MD)  
Friends of Highland County (VA)  
Kingdom Commons Group (VT)  
Friends of the Smokey Hills (KS)  
Protect Flint Hills (KS)  
Tallgrass Ranchers (KS)  
Friends of the Western Mountains (ME)  
Chautauqua County Citizens for Responsible Windpower  
Sardinia Preservation Group (NY)  
Advocates for Cherry Valley (NY)  
Advocates for Prattsburg (NY)  
North Country Coalition Against Windfarms (NY)  
Green Berkshires, Inc. (MA)  
PROACT International (GER)  
Alliance to Protect Nantucket Sound (MA)

Go to [www.saveblackwater.org](http://www.saveblackwater.org) for news articles and background information on these actions.

*from page 4*

year estimated that 2,092 bats were killed there. Merlin Tuttle, director of Bat Conservation International, estimated the kill at closer to 4,000 and called it "by far the largest bat mortality event I know of worldwide and, as far as I know, the biggest mortality event of any animal." A recent report from Tuttle shows more bats were killed this year than last. Without proper siting criteria, construction of 450-foot wind turbines visible from Dolly Sods, North Fork Mountain and Spruce Knob will proceed

without adequate protections for migratory birds, and endangered species or protections for West Virginia's most striking scenic vistas. Other projects are being planned. US Windforce has a 121 turbine project south of Franklin. ( See photo of this Liberty Gap project on their website at [www.uswindforce.com](http://www.uswindforce.com).) A 49 turbine project is planned for Rich Mountain near Seneca Rocks, and another 28 turbines planned on Backbone Mountain, just over the border at Roth Rocks, Maryland's highest mountain peak.

# Visioning Blackwater



Keynote speaker Brock Evans inspired us with these words, "Blackwater is a magnificent place with tremendous economic benefits to the community, and would protect tremendous resources, too. Blackwater

Visit our website  
[www.saveblackwater.org](http://www.saveblackwater.org)  
for more details  
on the conference



Door Prizes are distributed by endangered species at Saturday Night Banquet



Green Business  
Owner Walt Ranalli



FOB's first Vista Volunteer  
Emily Samargo



FOB Board Member  
Sandy Fisher



Longtime Blackwater Friend  
Lori Haldeman



FOB Board Advisor  
J. Lawrence Smith

## First Annual Blackwater Member Awardees



# Canyon National Park

...ce. It ought to be a National Park. I've seen many National Parks and this is a treasure equal to any of them. It would provide tremendous ...r is your gift of love (to the American people) I know you can do it. Get out there! It's your turn, and we'll be right there with you!"



*Blackwater Canyon  
Photo by Francis Fisher*



*Michael Kellett and Brock Evans*



*Destry Jarvis*

## **Our First Friends Award Banquet and Conference**

Destry Jarvis, formerly of the National Park Service and Michael Kellett, Maine Woods National Park advocate explained National Park creation.

Chip Chase, Walt Ranalli, and Fred Herz spoke on tourism; Dr. Tom Pauley and Marty Martin on ecology; Mike Caplinger on History; J Lawrence Smith and John Hardman on spiritual values and Spencer Phillips on Economics.



*Marty Martin*



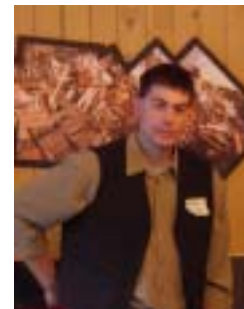
*Dr. Tom Pauley*



*Fred Herz and Dr. Fred Reichle  
of Timberline Resort*



*Mike Caplinger*



*Spencer Phillips*



*Tour Leader Bill Grafton*



*Morning Service at Blackwater Canyon Overlook*



*Chip Chase*



*Conference wrap-up session*

# In Memory

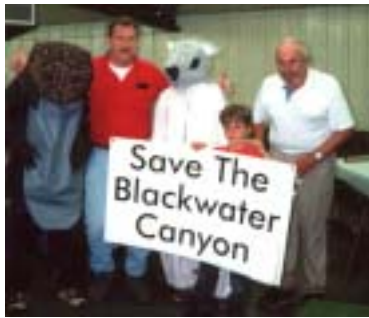
We celebrate the lives of those listed below who were memorialized by friends and family through a donation to Friends of Blackwater

*"The hills are a symbol of our eternity. There they stand, the evidence of things seen, as nearly everlasting and unchangeable as anything man may know. One who has dwelled within them senses that they are beyond the horizon, even when he is on level lands."*

- *The Appalachians*, by Maurice Brooks

## Friends of Blackwater Canyon Remembers Sayre Rodman

Sayre began rock climbing when he was 15. He was a member of the Alpine Club, and the more snow and ice there was on the rocks, the better he liked it. Sayre hiked in Alaska, British Columbia, Switzerland, Colorado, Montana, Nepal, Bhutan and India, to name a few. Although climbing was his first love, as the years passed, more sports were added to his list of favorite outdoor pastimes:



Sayre Rodman (far right)

caving, hiking, canoeing, photography, rafting and kayaking. Well before the term "Extreme" came about, Sayre and his friends were having fun anyway they could. In the 1950s, he and his wife, Jean, and their friends would head to West Virginia on a regular basis to run the rivers. His first boating trip came when a couple of his adventure friends from DC brought some military surplus rafts along on the trip. They ran the South Branch of the Potomac to Petersburg. On a historic note, you should know that Sayre and Jean Rodman were the first two people, ever, to run the Gauley. That was 1955. Sayre had a life-long love with the mountains, and he was quite the photographer. To snap better photos from the water, Sayre eventually moved from rafts and kayaks to canoes to make it easier to handle the camera equipment. Sayre became interested in West Virginia's waterways when the Army Corp of Engineers proposed a dam that would have flooded a large part of the valley below Seneca Rocks. "It was a terrible idea they called the Royal Glen Project," said Jean Rodman. It was in fighting this battle that the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy was born.

### In memory of Sayre Rodman by George Schnakenberg

"Sayre and I met through the Sylvan Canoe Club in Verona, Pennsylvania in 1986, and I got to know him and his wife, Jean, a couple of years later. The real connection started in 1991, when I learned of Sayre's great history with the Monongahela Forest, the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, and his introduction of the sport of rafting on the Cheat, New and Yough Rivers back in the 1950s. I was in my mid-forties when Sayre and Jean "adopted" me and presented me with a couple of "first time experiences." Many more interesting trips followed that strengthened my knowledge and appreciation of hiking and canoeing in the outdoors, and they built skills and confidence that allowed me to lead my own trips and share these experiences with others.

### In memory of Stanley Harris by Bill Jones

"Stanley Harris loved to walk in the woods and look for wildflowers. He and his wife Della led me to the only Yellow Ladyslipper I've ever seen. Mr. Harris was the Registrar at WVU at that time. He grew up in Braxton County and was previously the director of the School of Romney. Last March, Stanley's daughter Martha and son-in-law Larry Schwab and my wife and father and I went to Blackwater Canyon to hike. We were shocked to find signs posted by a timber company restricting access to trails we had hiked for years. Although disappointed that we were forced to change our plans, we were pleasantly surprised with an unexpected, but beautiful snowfall. "I made a donation to Friends of Blackwater to help make the trails public again, and because I wanted to honor Mr. Harris's life in a way that I knew he would appreciate."

### In memory of Ernestine Golden by Lillian Giese

### In memory of my sons, Bobby and Thad by Mary Douglas Krout

"Bobby was 25 and had just completed his iron worker training in May. He and a friend were out riding on the 4th of July, when they were forced off the road by another car. Both Bobby and his friend died instantly. Thad was 20. He was out of school and had a great job as a diesel mechanic when he took his own life. It was very hard to overcome these tragedies, but I did. To help move myself forward, I reached out to others. After going back to school and getting a degree in counseling, I formed the group, Healing After Suicide. I cannot change the past, but I can certainly help to protect someone's future. I am a supporter of Friends of Blackwater, because it was one of the things that both my sons dearly loved. We used to go to Davis every year, and they always looked forward to it. They were both wonderful people."

### In memory of Lu Schrader by Midge Schrader

Lu was an avid bird watcher who was always on the lookout for new hiking opportunities and protecting the ones he found. Lu was the cofounder of West Virginia Rails to Trails and a great inspiration to organizers of the West Virginia Scenic Trails Association. One of Lu's greatest gifts to the State was his accomplishment in expanding the West Virginia portion of the American Discovery Trail from twelve miles to 250 miles.

### In memory of James Blaine Jenkins Sr. by Tia Harris

"When my grandfather first started hunting with his friends in 1950, they always went to Parsons. In 1953, when Blackwater Falls became a state park, they started staying in Cabin 25 — the vacation place our family eventually made tradition. Grandfather called it his cabin. And although he is no longer with us in the physical sense and our family has grown to the point where we now stay at Timberline, we always go by and visit Cabin 25 and reflect on the wonderful memories we share." James Jenkins was a WWII Veteran who was a strong leader of his family and along with his wife of 50 plus years, Betty, they spanned four children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren — all very close, all very dear to his heart.

# In Memory of Mary Rodd Furbee

Mary Rodd Furbee was a pioneer in the movement to save the Blackwater Canyon. As a freelance writer, Mary's words were instrumental in raising public awareness in the Canyon's change of ownership from a public service utility company to a land restrictive timber baron. Mary shed light on plausible threats to a wilderness area now matured from a clear cutting more than a century ago. Mary also brought attention to the historic and spiritual values of any undefiled land.

It was a chilly, rainy Thursday, when acting on impulse, Mary skipped her regular job as a journalism professor at WVU to drive from Morgantown to Davis to take a walk through the laurel thicket of the Blackwater Canyon. It was only a few months after Allegheny Wood Products had bought the Canyon in February 1997. Mary was working on a couple of news stories: a *Charleston Gazette* article on David Hunter Strother, the man who wrote for *Harper's New Monthly* magazine in the 1850s under the pen name Porte Crayon, and another article for the *Washington Post* on the land sale to Allegheny Wood. The *Washington Post* article was reprinted — word-for-word — in the *Charleston Gazette* and the *Morgan Messenger's Appalachian Journal*.

Mary knew the articles were needed to bring regional attention to the tragic transfer of ownership. And she knew that it would also draw attention and support



to our group, Friends of Blackwater, Inc. She wanted readers to know that citizens and lovers of the Blackwater Canyon area should not accept the property transfer as a public defeat.

Mary's articles were effective both at the time of print and when Judy Rodd used them as handouts in meetings. Within one year of the articles being written, more than 300 people had joined Judy in her efforts to bring the Blackwater Canyon back for public use. Mary was like a daughter to Judy even though she was her

sister-in-law. Mary's sudden illness and death in April 2004 at the young age of 49 was traumatic to her family, her friends, and her students. Mary was loved and respected by many who knew her. The WVU School of Journalism established a scholarship in her name.

In addition to being a freelance writer and college professor, Mary was an artist. Soon after her death, Mary's husband, Mike, posted a gallery of Mary's paintings on her website. Looking at these paintings, you see more than technique and medium, you see the soul of a woman who loved life and all the beauty that surrounds it.

Mary was also an author. She wrote a series of books for young readers: *Outrageous Women of Colonial America*, *Outrageous Women of the American Frontier*, *Outrageous Women of the Civil*

*War*, *Nancy Ward and the Cherokee Nation*, *Anne Bailey: Frontier Scout*, *Shawnee Captive: The Story of Mary Draper Ingles*, and a travel book for adults called *The Complete Guide to West Virginia Inns*.

In honor of Mary Furbee, I take you back to that rainy Thursday in 1997 and share with you excerpts of her writings on the man who first made Blackwater Falls and the Land of Canaan famous, David Hunter Strother. Mary wrote:

*At Pendleton Point overlook in West Virginia's Blackwater Falls State Park, mist wafts in and out of the canyon below, obscuring then unveiling the shadowed peaks of Canaan and Backbone Mountains. A pair of hawks glide on the wind currents, above the sliver of river winding below.*

*Down in the Canyon, I am alone in the world...I've come here on an impulse, inspired by a new book from the WVU Press: "David Hunter Strother: One of the Best Draughtsmen the Country Possesses"... On a steep canyon trail away from the famous falls themselves, I try to follow in the author's 1853 path through this Eastern jungle... In the Blackwater Canyon, I sidestep slippery, veinlike roots that crisscross the floor of this abyss... Glistening, sapling roots encircle slate-gray boulders, like bony witch's fingers... It's a frigid, wet day, the kind of weather Strother and his cultivated companions encountered on their excursions into the canyon... I sit on hemlock carcasses blanketed with moss, listen to the rushing water, and imagine Strother here — drawing, writing, fishing.*

*By falling waters like this, I sometimes feel, inexplicably, like crying. But it's momentary, for the water washes away a sudden grief I didn't know I felt and cannot name. Into the void seeps something wonderful that I've sought many times, but never found, sitting in church pews... It helped me realize anew why it is so important that we protect the few wild places that remain undefiled by human endeavor.*

From the *Charleston Gazette* June 1, 1997

## *In memory of Charlie Carlson by Carolyn Welcker*

"Charlie worked for Kanawha State Forest for years, and he knew West Virginia like the back of his hand. He loved the Blackwater Canyon, and if he were living today, he would be on the front line fighting the logging and condo plans going on now. In the 1970s when they wanted to log Kanawha State Forest, Charlie went to the statehouse and lobbied to protect Kanawha State Forest from all logging, and to this day, all State and National Forests in West Virginia can be logged, except Kanawha State Forest." Thank you Charlie!

## In Honor



**In honor of Thomas Rodd by Deb McHenry**  
"Because Tom is the Original Flying Squirrel."



**Elizabeth Schoyer** has been honored by gifts to Friends of Blackwater by both Meg Cheever and Sue Franz. Being embarrassed by such attention, Mrs. Schoyer changed the subject by pointing out that her grandfather, Judge John Moffitt Kennedy, was the original environmentalist in her family. Here is a quote from his memorial service held in June of 1914.

*To his farm in Hampshire County...he hastened eagerly, going back to nature like a child flinging himself into the arms of its mother. There amidst its wild grand scenery he rested from the labors of the year. Often with a gun on his shoulder he wandered over the hills. Listening to the voice of Nature, and saw her paint around him her pictures of matchless beauty. The morning bird choir in the trees. The sunrise tinting hill and field and setting on fire the eastern sky. The threatening storm cloud, with tongue of flame, hanging low upon the valley. The golden drapery flung by the sun over the wide swung portals of evening. All these delighted him and helped him to banish the cares of court, and silence for a time, the noise and tumult of the crowd. Strength and vigor for future work, came to him in goodly measure, with the pure air and sparkling waters of the West Virginia hills.*



*John Kennedy with his children and their friends at the farm on the North River*

## Exhibit Reveals First Phase of Four-Part Education Project

The photography of Paul Corbett Brown and drawings of Anna Hess were on display at the Valley Ridge Theatre in Thomas during the Visioning Blackwater



Canyon Conference. They were also on display at our Washington, DC fundraiser. The exhibit is the first in a four-part series. The first is "Spring: An Intimate Portrait of Blackwater Canyon." If

you know of a gallery, country club, studio or own a big house that could accomodate at least 80 guests, call Friends of Blackwater about exhibiting the show and hosting a fundraising event.



## Blackwater Volunteer and Photographer exhibits prints

*From The Dominion Post*

Sam McCormick, an audio/visual technician with the WVU School of Medicine, is exhibiting some of his photographs at the West Virginia High Technology Consortium.



The show is in the Alan B. Mollohan Innovation Center Gallery, on the first floor and is open from 8 a.m.- 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. McCormick's works will be on display through Dec. 31.

McCormick's photos are of rare orchids, including the Snake Mouth Orchid family group.

"From what I have researched, they are the direct descendants of orchids that appeared after the last Ice Age 10,000 to 12,000 years ago," McCormick said.

"I travel all over the state taking photos of West Virginia wilderness. I have become interested in plants and animals and really like hunting rare, interesting West Virginia orchids."

McCormick's favorite places to search for orchids are Cranberry Glades, Dolly Sods and Gaudineer Knob above Huttonsville. He said the best time for most orchid hunting is late June and early July, depending on rain and sun at the area of growth.

Election Year E-Mail Campaign Drew Commitments on Blackwater Canyon Protection from Gubernatorial Candidates and Current Governor



**Monty Warner (R)** said, "I will fight to protect Blackwater Canyon."

**Joe Manchin (D)** Governor-Elect said, "As Senator Robert C. Byrd has remarked, Blackwater Canyon is West Virginia's "crown jewel." As Governor I would work with federal, private and non-profit sources in order to come to a fair and equitable agreement with the landowner in order to preserve this region for future generations. This unique view-shed is a vital piece of our history, heritage and environment."

## Governor Wise's letter in response to your e-mails

The initiatives of the Wise Administration have made a significant impact upon the preservation of Blackwater Falls Canyon and the Cheat River Gorge. The State acquired 492.49 acres in Blackwater Canyon from West Virginia Power & Transmission Company at a cost of \$1,113,000. That purchase protects the land, which is visible from entry into the Blackwater Falls State Park, from development incompatible with the natural state of the environment. State ownership has guaranteed uninterrupted public access to and protection of more than a mile of prime trout stream along the Blackwater River.

The State of West Virginia, with financial assistance from The Conservation Fund, Toyota and the Richard King Mellon Foundation, also acquired 1,117 acres of the Cheat River Canyon/Snake Hill Wildlife Management Area largely from Allegheny Energy, at a cost of \$1,859,668.

In total, these 1,609.49 acres of land were purchased for nearly 3 million dollars. Over the last four years, under my direction the Division of Natural Resources has purchased more than 7,330 acres of land at a cost of more than \$5,580,000. Such purchases have been important for the protection of habitat for various endangered species of animals and plants; access for hunters, anglers and other outdoor enthusiasts; and preservation and protection of historical and cultural properties.

As you can see, this Administration is committed to preserving our scenic places, such as Blackwater Canyon, to the greatest extent possible. **Negotiations for acquiring additional portions of Blackwater Canyon have been ongoing and will continue.**



You can send a Blackwater support letter to the Governor on our website until January 15.

### Great Gift Ideas Order Form

See page 12

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**from Friends of Blackwater**

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___	The Blackwater Chronicle ( <b>hardback</b> )	@ \$27.50	\$ _____
___	Country Cookbook - Bootstraps and Biscuits by Anna Lee Robe Terry (paperback)	@ \$12.00	\$ _____
___	Blackwater Falls State Park Adventure Guide by Emily Grafton (paperback)	@ \$10.00	\$ _____
___	Flying Squirrel T-Shirt - Circle Size(s) Child: L, Adult: S, M, L, XL, XXL, XXXL	@ \$15.00	\$ _____
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Order online or send order with payment and shipping info to Friends of Blackwater, 501 Elizabeth Street, Charleston, WV 25311

Please include \$2.50 shipping and handling fee for each location your gifts need to be shipped.

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