

Events... Continued from page 8

brewing.com or call 661-827-7290.

• **The Bruce Wayne Osborne VFW Post No. 7034** in Sparta holds a chicken BBQ on the second Saturday of the month, April-October, at the post, 1193 U.S. Hwy. 21 S. in Sparta, starting at 8:30 am. Prices are \$12 for a whole chicken or \$6 for a half.

• **The Blue Ridge Music Center**, milepost 213 on the Blue Ridge Parkway, is open daily, May through September, from 10 a.m.-5 p.m., including the visitors center, daily live music, museum, gift shop and trails. Midday Mountain Music performances take place from noon-3 p.m. every day the visitor center is open. Admission is free. For more information, visit blueridgemusiccenter.org or call 866-308-2773, ext. 212.

MAY

• **May 28:** The New River Bell Ensemble will perform at 7 p.m. at Sparta United Methodist Church, 190 N. Main St. Admission is by donation.

• **May 29:** Michael Cansler will perform at 6 p.m. at Laconia Ale Works, 433 N. Main St. in Sparta. For more information, call 336-372-4005 or visit laconiaaleworks.com.

• **May 29:** Looshless will perform at Muddy Creek Music Hall, 60 S. Main St. in Sparta, at 7 p.m. Admission is free. For more information, visit muddycreekcafeandmusichall.com.

• **May 30:** A Jeep Meet-Up will be held at Sparta Food Lion, 381 S. Main St., from 4-4:15 p.m. Drive will take dirt roads around Sparta, then to the Blue Ridge Parkway at N.C. Hwy. 18. Dinner will at the Air Bellows Gap Overlook at Milepost 236.9 on the Parkway at 6 p.m. Bring your grill and cook out, or bring take-out from a local restaurant. Sponsored by Off-Road Adventures 336.

• **May 30:** Deadman's Hand will perform from 9 p.m.-midnight at Leather & Lace Saloon, 566 Tayson Road in Sparta. \$5 cover charge. For information, call 336-745-1774.

• **May 30:** New Ballard's Branch Bog-trotters will perform at the Alleghany Jubilee, 562 N. Sparta Parkway in Sparta, from 7-9:30 p.m. Cost is \$10, or free for children ages 12 and younger. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Refreshments available (no alcohol). For more information, visit AlleghanyJubilee.com or follow "Alleghany Jubilee" on Facebook.

• **May 30:** Songs From the Road Band will celebrate the album "Music from the Land of the Sky" at the Blue Ridge Music Center's outdoor amphitheater, milepost 213 on the Blue Ridge Parkway near Galax. 7 p.m. Tickets at BlueRidgeMusicCenter.org or 866-308-2773, ext. 212.

• **May 31:** The Wild Hares will perform at 1 p.m. at Muddy Creek Music Hall, 60 S. Main St. in Sparta. Admission is Free. For more information, visit muddycreekcafeandmusichall.com.

• **May 31:** The New River Bell Ensemble will perform at 3 p.m. at the Historic 1908 Courthouse, 109 E. Main St. in Independence, Va. Admission is by donation.

JUNE

• **June 5-6:** Blue Ridge Fiber Fest, sponsored by Alleghany Arts & Crafts, will be held June 5-6 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. each day at the Alleghany County Fairgrounds, 1375 U.S. 21 in Sparta.

• **June 5:** Kelvin Cockerham will perform at 6 p.m. at Laconia Ale Works, 433 N. Main St. in Sparta. For more information, call 336-372-4005 or visit laconiaaleworks.com.

• **June 5:** Southern Fried Hippies will perform at Muddy Creek Music Hall, 60 S. Main St. in Sparta, at 7 p.m. Admission is free. For more information, visit muddycreekcafeandmusichall.com.

• **June 6:** Alleghany Sparta Trails Association (ASTA) will hold a First Saturday Summer Hike in Doughton Park from 9 a.m.-noon, from the Bluffs Restaurant & Visitor Center to the Brinegar Cabin. The 5.7-mile hike is considered moderate, with elevation gain around 675 feet. The Bluffs will be open for a meal or snack from 11 a.m.-4 p.m. For more information, call ASTA at 336-467-4688, visit the website spartatrails.org or follow them on Facebook.

• **June 6:** Music on Main will feature the band 8 Track Minds from 5-9 p.m. on Main Street in downtown Sparta. Sponsored by the Alleghany Arts Council.

• **June 6:** Catawba Bluegrass will perform at the Alleghany Jubilee, 562 N. Sparta Parkway in Sparta, from 7-9:30 p.m. Cost is \$10, or free for children ages 12 and younger. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Refreshments available (no alcohol). For more information, visit AlleghanyJubilee.com.

Continued on page 12



Fishing on the river will make memories

The strongest memories of life are those that contain the most sensory elements: blue skies, a chattering kingfisher diving for minnows, the sound of water rushing over rocks, the scream of a reel as a fish pulls against the drag, vertical rock cliffs rising from the water's edge, the slime of a nightcrawler as it is threaded onto a hook and a giddy child who asks, "When can we go fishing again?"

Fishing has all these elements.

Alleghany County is a great place for the creation of memories that last forever. Small trout streams and ponds have a certain allure. But it is the big water that truly makes an impression. Nowhere is that more apparent than on the New River.

The New meanders back and forth across the North Carolina and Virginia state line, offering anglers access to a variety of species and one of the Southeast's premier smallmouth bass rivers. The scenery is breathtaking, and its smallmouth fishing is legendary. The variety of fishing opportunities makes the New River a natural destination for all anglers.

The Target

While the New is home to large-mouth, spotted and smallmouth bass, it is the smallmouth that are most abundant. Known for their aggression, they strike suddenly and

display aerobatics when on the hook. Pound for pound, smallmouth bass are considered the hardest fighting freshwater fish in North Carolina.

Perhaps the most common catch along the river are rock bass. Known locally as redeyes, these 6-8 inch sunfish can be found in the slower pockets of water. They have a tendency to be receptive to a worm on a hook when more other fish have lockjaw.

The most elusive catch of the river is the muskellunge or muskie. Muskies can grow to the 50-inch range in the river. Often referred to as a fish of 10,000 casts, hooking onto a muskie is a rare but memorable experience.

The Method

As Forrest Gump might say, "Canoeing and fishing go together like peas and carrots." Floating allows an angler to cover large sections of water quickly to get to the hot spots. Then getting out of the boat and wading give the angler the opportunity to spend time in more productive areas.

Wading is another common means to access the river and is especially popular during the dog days of summer when the water levels are low, and air temperatures are higher. While the water levels make for safe

Continued on page 18