



Karin FULLER

Country color adds flavor to conversation

Some old-timers might say I'm gettin' above my raisin' or speaking out of hat, but if that's their poison, I won't pay it no never-mind. In fact, I'll hang out the welcome mat and say hell yeah. It's sad so many of the once-common sayings from this part of the world are becoming scarcer than hen's teeth these days. Experts in linguistics blame technology — mostly television — and a chronically transient population for the standardization of modern language. I suspect there's a trace of the uppity, too, as speaking a mountain vernacular is viewed by some as a sign of low breeding.

That kind of thinking just kills my pickle. To some of us, the country way of talking is music to our ears.

These days, it's common for families to uproot repeatedly. We've become a culture of rolling stones, and not only do we gather no moss, we gather none of the unique cultural quirks that come from being rooted in a place with ancestors as colorful as those in West Virginia.

My own family's roots here are still stubby. My mother, a Pittsburgher, and my father — born in Germany, raised in India — moved to West Virginia's Chemical Valley in the 1960s when Dad was hired by Carbide. Since I was knee high to a grasshopper when we came here, I remember no other home.

I've always been a bit envious of those who have been burying their ancestors for generations in the same family cemetery.

That may sound like I have a few ancestors I'm longing to plant, but that isn't the case. It's the sense of belonging so much to a place and carrying forward its traces in ways that are uniquely Appalachian.

It seems colloquialisms — the phrases and descriptions exclusive to this part of the world — are being squeezed out by slang.

While some slang is easy for anyone anywhere to pick up and use, no matter how much we say it, it'll never be ours in the same colorful way as it was in the past. For instance, if you want to own up to a mistake, which one sounds better? Saying "My bad," or "This isn't the first time I've brought chicken to a fish fry"?

A few years back, I started collecting sayings every time I came across an especially good one. I'll share with you a few of my favorites.

- He's tighter than a tick with lockjaw.
- She could talk a dog off a meat wagon.
- He could cut himself with a picture of a razor.

Please see FULLER/2D

KIM BAKER



Kim Baker, River and Rail Bakery, displays her blueberry cobbler at her bakery on May 12 in Huntington.

The Magic of Baking



Photos by Lori Wolfe/The Herald-Dispatch

Kim Baker, River and Rail Bakery, uses a digital thermometer to check a loaf of bread at her bakery on May 12 in Huntington.

Local entrepreneur finds magic, hope in baking and community

By KATHERINE PYLES
For The Herald-Dispatch

To everyone else, it seemed providential when Kim Baker opened River and Rail Bakery in March 2011. There was her passion for baking that began as a young girl, making mud pies and dinner rolls in her hometown of Elk City, Oklahoma. There was her gregarious personality and eagerness to take on new challenges, evidenced by previous careers in activism, politics and technology. There was, of course, her last name.

But to Baker herself, it all seemed too good to be true. Diagnosed with bipolar disorder in 2002, Baker said opening the bakery was the first decision in a long time that felt "right."

"There were several years where I couldn't envision a future for myself at all," Baker said. "I was lethargic and sleepy. I became obese. I'd have manic episodes and obsess about things, and then I'd have very serious incidents where I didn't think I could go on.

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Baker shares her pro tips for must-have kitchen tools, plus the recipe for her blueberry cobbler.

I'd go from a violent rage to sewing and making jewelry in my studio to wanting to give up on everything."

Baker said years spent trying new bipolar medications, some that actually made her depression worse, were both frustrating and frightening. And although much remains unknown about mental illness — "I asked my doctor how one of my medications worked, and she said, 'I don't know, it just does,'" Baker recalled — she said that shouldn't stop people from talking about it.

"As a society, we need to become more open-minded about those who think differently or process things differently, whether it's because of bipolar disorder or depression

or anxiety or ADHD or something else," she said. "I think a lot of people are ashamed by their mental health struggles and feel like no one understands them. And in a way they're right — people don't understand them — but that's partially because we don't talk about mental health enough."

With her medication stabilized and a strong support system at her back, Baker hesitantly ventured out of her house and into her community. In 2010, she joined her neighborhood association in Highlawn, where she met Tyson Compton, executive director of the Cabell-Huntington Convention & Visitors Bureau, and Stacy and Thomas McChesney, who at the time were setting plans in motion for the revitalization of Heritage Station. She joined them for a Chat 'n' Chew, a weekly gathering where local residents brainstorm ideas for improving Huntington, and learned about the Heritage

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Benefits of running far-reaching for marathoner

The Boston Marathon showcased another endurance test in April with more than 27,000 participants at the starting line along Main Street in Hopkinton, Massachusetts. Runners came from all over the world for America's oldest marathon. Among that number were a dozen or so from our neck of the woods. One of those was 47-year-old Melissa Moore from Ashland.

For those of you not familiar with the distance of a marathon, it's just a few agonizing footsteps beyond 26 miles. Moore's time of 3 hours and 18 minutes automatically qualified her for next year's Boston Marathon. I thought an interview with this Kentucky speedster — who has completed seven marathons — would make interesting reading. All I had to do was catch her standing still long enough to get her



Clyde BEAL

story.

"I had absolutely no interest in running while in school," Moore said. "Even now my interest isn't totally about running itself; it's the benefits that accompany an exercise program that generates health and fitness. If you're not a runner, you'll find it difficult to understand why I run. All I can tell you is to start an exercise program of your own, and then you will have a better understanding of what it can do for you."

Moore talked about the vari-

ous training programs available online for everyone from the beginning level all the way up to training for a marathon. Moore's advice for these programs is that once you find one that matches your goals and ability, follow it to the letter. She also recommends a medical check-up before beginning.

"I never had a weight problem when I started running," Moore said. "So my goal was mostly driven by cardiovascular fitness. I'm 5'4" and weighed 115 when I started running around seven years ago. My weight now is 102 and — contrary to everyone's belief — I do eat regularly. Another thing about my running program — before I started I had trouble with cholesterol. Running has helped me tremendously with that problem."

The only difference between what Moore eats and a large

percentage of the rest of us is food selection and calorie intake. For breakfast she usually has a bagel with coffee and an oatmeal bar. When lunch rolls around she usually eats her homemade turkey wrap laced with spinach. Come time for dinner it's usually a pasta dish with mostly chicken. Does she break tradition on occasion? She does indeed but she doesn't stay on the greasy side of healthy for too long. Again she stresses her concern isn't about a strict count on calories, it's the healthy choices she is after. Once you adopt healthy choices, calories fall into place.

"When you begin a running program there's more to it than simply going out to run," Moore said. "You meet people who reinforce your goals because they have the same

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Ashland resident Melissa Moore completed this year's Boston Marathon in 3 hours and 18 minutes, automatically qualifies her for next year's event.

Clyde Beal/
For The Herald-Dispatch

Five must-have kitchen tools

By **KATHERINE PYLES**
For The Herald-Dispatch

You don't need expensive gadgets or swanky utensils to make beautiful, delicious baked goods. With a few practical kitchen tools, baking will soon become a piece of cake. Here are five of River and Rail Bakery owner Kim Baker's favorites:

1. A KitchenAid mixer

It may seem pricey, but a KitchenAid mixer is worth the investment. The River and Rail kitchen has a Hobart commercial mixer, Baker said, but it also has a KitchenAid. "Both operate the same way," she said, "and both are workhorses."

2. A kitchen scale

Baking, unlike cooking, is an exact science. Just ask anyone who's added too much flour to bread dough or too much baking powder to a batch of cookies. Baker said measuring ingredients by weight rather than volume is the best way to ensure accurate measurements, and an inexpensive kitchen scale can prevent many common baking mistakes.

3. A digital instant-read thermometer

A digital instant-read thermometer is a must-have for anything that requires an internal temperature reading, like bread that needs to be 200 degrees in the middle or meat that needs to reach 165 degrees for safety. Before you cut into a gorgeous loaf of bread or meat that isn't ready, take a few seconds to check the temperature.

4. A Microplane zester

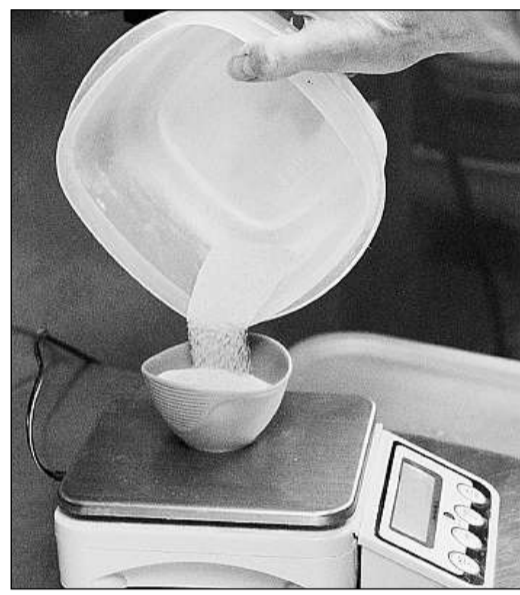
A \$15 Microplane zester is



worth every penny, Baker said. Use it on chocolate, ginger, hard cheeses and, of course, citrus fruits. "Citrus zest adds a little zip to your recipe," she said. "It's a great way to boost the flavor."

5. A French rolling pin

With tapered ends instead of awkward handles, a French rolling pin provides more control than other types of rolling pins. "Once you're used to it, it's so much easier to use," Baker said. Whether you're rolling out a perfectly round pizza crust, a delicate pie crust or smooth, even sugar cookie dough, a French rolling pin is equipped for the job.



Photos by **Lori Wolfe/The Herald-Dispatch**

ABOVE: Kim Baker, River and Rail Bakery, displays some of her baking tools, a mixer, French rolling pin and a microplane zester.

LEFT: Kim Baker, River and Rail Bakery, uses a digital scale to weigh ingredients on May 12 in Huntington.

Super-Easy Blueberry Cobbler

A five-ingredient favorite at home and for catering, Kim Baker's blueberry cobbler recipe comes from her mother-in-law and uses self-rising flour.

"Self-rising flour eliminates the need for small quantities of baking powder and salt, since they're already mixed into the flour," she said. "Country cooks in our area use self-rising flour for many things, and I always keep some on hand at my house."

Although the original recipe calls for fresh blueberries, Baker said thawed frozen blueberries also work, as do raspberries or blackberries. And if it seems a little much, the full stick of butter can be

reduced to 6 tablespoons.

"It's delicious served warm with ice cream," Baker said.

Ingredients:

- 1 stick butter
 - 1 cup milk
 - 1 cup sugar (3/4 cup if berries are very sweet already)
 - 1 cup self-rising flour
 - 4 cups fresh blueberries
- Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Place the butter in a 9x13" pan and melt it in the oven. Mix the milk, sugar and flour in a bowl and pour as evenly as possible over the melted butter. Evenly distribute the berries over the batter. Bake for 40-45 minutes or until the batter is set all the way through.



Lori Wolfe/The Herald-Dispatch

Kim Baker, River and Rail Bakery, displays her blueberry cobbler at her bakery on May 12 in Huntington.

Know someone we should feature?

Every week in The Herald-Dispatch, you'll find stories about the people in your community. From our weekly People section to our Faces in the Tri-State feature to our news coverage, we like to highlight folks across the Tri-State.

If you know someone you think we should feature, let us know by emailing us at news@herald-dispatch.com.

Baker

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Station project, a joint effort of the CVB, the Greater Huntington Park & Recreation District and the McChesneys' consulting firm Firefly.

Maybe a little providence was involved, after all.

"I went to a presentation, and at the end they asked, 'What kind of businesses do you envision here?'" Baker said. "I had a list. I mentioned a bead shop, a quilt shop, a bakery — and as soon as I said 'bakery' there was this little cheer throughout the room. I thought, 'Well, okay.'"

The next day, Baker walked around Heritage Station, at that point mostly vacant, and began to imagine the smell of fresh-baked bread wafting through the main building. Her husband Lew, normally the first to recognize a manic episode, said, "This is a great idea. This is workable." But Baker remained unsure.

"I had convinced myself that I wasn't capable of doing anything significant. The only thing I had ever stuck with was raising children," said Baker, a mother of three and grandmother of two. "I had never kept a job more than a couple of years, and I just didn't believe in myself. But other people believed in me."

When she opened River and Rail a few months later, Baker drew from a lifetime love of cooking and baking. As a child, her family praised her salads — "I never cut the lettuce with a knife, I always tore it with my hands" — and she gradually took on more and more of the family meal preparation.

"Sunday dinners were a big deal," she said. "My mom knew I liked a challenge, and as a teenager I was put in charge of the rolls. There's just something about working with the yeast and kneading the dough and this magical thing that happens. It's science, but it's also magic. Even during my lowest points, I baked. I don't remember it, but I did it."

Giving a TV interview before the bakery opened, Baker mentioned that she would offer croissants. "The only problem was that I'd never made a croissant in my life," she laughed. So, the week before she opened, Baker toiled over a croissant recipe. "Eighty-one layers of butter and dough, a week before you open a bakery — now that's a challenge," she said.

The bakery has since expanded both its menu and staff. Starting with bread and pastries, Baker soon added coffee, then soup. It wasn't long before she had a full lunch menu with several sandwiches, a salad of the day. Nine employees help operate the bakery, including four of Baker's family members. Her daughter Brooke Baker forms the bread, and her son Heath Baker is the bakery manager. Her nephew Todd O'Neil is the lunch chef, and her grandson Jumod Jones is a dishwasher-turned-pastry-chef who is learning the other aspects of the business.

"The entire process has been healing for me," Baker said. "I began to see progress in the things I was doing every day, and that helped. And I was

doing something I was passionate about. I think if you struggle with depression, following a passion can be incredibly healing. For me, the passion is the food but also the community."

Baker said she thrived in an environment where she felt in control. She quickly lost the weight she gained during long spells of depression and, perhaps out of necessity, felt a burst of renewed energy.

"I went from sitting at my computer all day to carrying 50-pound bags of flour," she said. "I was on my feet from 4 a.m. to 6 p.m., and I was having a blast. It changes everything just being able to get up in the morning and do something productive that you actually enjoy. This bakery saved my life."

In professional baking, some of the romance is inevitably lost, but Baker said magic is still happening in her kitchen.

"Customers have transformed into lifelong friends," she said. "They've been here since day one, when I burnt the cinnamon rolls and ran out of everything. And if one of my regulars doesn't come in for a few days, you can bet I'll be picking up the phone to make sure everything's okay. People will call me and offer to volunteer, which of course I'd never let them do, but that's how much support is here. It's unreal."

Always willing to share tips with beginning chefs, Baker said the best advice seems silly: "If you're going to make something, make something you want to eat."

"It sounds simple, but if you really want to develop a love for baking, you have to start with



Kim Baker, River and Rail Bakery, displays her blueberry cobbler at her bakery on Thursday, May 12, in Huntington.

Lori Wolfe/The Herald-Dispatch

something you love eating," she said. "If you don't really eat bread, don't make bread. Make cookies."

She also advised measuring out all ingredients beforehand and purchasing "the best ingredients you can afford," starting with unbleached flour and natural extracts and flavorings.

"Unbleached flour gives baked goods more flavor and a better consistency, but I also just don't like the idea of eating bleached food," she said. "Most of our flour at the bakery comes from King Arthur Flour, and we use unbleached, unbromated flour in most of our baked goods."

Still, she said, don't let perfectionism or fear take away from the simple joy, "the magic," of being in the kitchen.

"If you want to make a birth-

day cake and you don't want to start from scratch, there's nothing wrong with going out and buying a cake mix," she said. "You can make really good bread in a bread machine. If you want to bake, just get in there and do it."

Though passionate and confident when it comes to baking, Baker still has moments of self-doubt. She'll feel sad or frustrated and wonder if she's slipping into depression, or she'll dwell on unmet expectations, or she'll zone out during a conversation after a particularly long day. In those moments, she leans into the support of her family, staff and customers.

"Our bakery community keeps me in check," she said. "When we opened, I was adamant that we'd have no high-fructose corn syrup. My staff

kept telling me, 'People are leaving. You don't have Coke.' I realized I had to let some things go. I had to trust the people around me. But still, those cans are the only place you're going to find high-fructose corn syrup here."

As for the challenge-seeker who once learned to sew by making a pair of jeans, she's still around. But today's challenges are exploring vegan cooking, rearranging the bakery kitchen she's almost outgrown and chatting with customers.

"When I come into work now, I get to hold the babies," she said. "I get to see kids come in who've been coming since they were born, and now they're old enough for a cookie and a grilled cheese. I get to watch the little ones grow up right before my eyes."

BIRTHS

Cabell Huntington Hospital May 21

Hazlett — Douglas Glenn Hazlett and Felicia Ann Hazlett, a son, Parker Douglas Hazlett.

Murrell — Devin Bradley Murrell and Nikki Jo Speck, a son, Wyatt Matthew Murrell.

Ramey — Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Nathanael Ramey, a daughter, Madelynn Blaire. Mrs. Ramey is the former Breanna Lynn Johnson.

Stamper — Garrett James Stamper and Emily Nicole Crump, a daughter, Macee Lillian Stamper.

May 23

Bias — Mr. and Mrs. Kristopher Prince Bias, a son, Kamron Elijah. Mrs. Bias is the former Amanda Marie Patterson.

Enochs — Mr. and Mrs.

Shane Whitney Enoch, a son, Caleb Lee. Mrs. Enoch is the former Jessica Rae Bogner.

Laney — Mr. and Mrs. Bradford Allen Laney, a son, Sawyer Allen. Mrs. Laney is the former Kimberly Dawn Cyrus.

May 24

Braly — Christian James Braly II and Haley Hunter Blankenship, a daughter, Lillian Mae Braly.

Callihan — Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Dale Callihan, a son, Jaxson Sawyer. Mrs. Callihan is the former Ashlee Dawn Manuel.

Hall — Randy Lee Hall and Rebecca Lynn Cardwell, a son, LeeLynn Bryce Hall.

Miller — Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Ryan Miller, a son, Owen Charles. Mrs. Miller is the former Heather Ann Roe.

Nance — Michael Lamar Nance II and Kayla Dawn Ramey, a son, Caden Michael Nance.

Newcomb — Michael Benjamin Newcomb and Sharon

Lynn Mann Bond, a son, Braylin Elijah.

Pauley — Mr. and Mrs. Derek Nyle Pauley, a son, Braxton Nyle. Mrs. Pauley is the former Sarah Jo Haig.

May 25

Anderson — Mr. and Mrs. Christopher Lee Anderson, a daughter, Serenity Paige. Mrs. Anderson is the former Britany Nichole Griffin.

Chapman — Shelby Lea Chapman and Jimmi Lee Blake, a son, Billy Jo Chapman.

Clark — Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Gene Clark, a son, Cruz Ian. Mrs. Clark is the former Katherine Jorell Salmon.

Ellison — Mr. and Mrs. Micah Joe Ellison, a daughter, Emerson Sue. Mrs. Ellison is the former Telissa Sue Davis.

Farmer — Glendale Corena Maria Farmer, a daughter, Hazelynn Rose-Marie Farmer.

Gawthrop — Mr. and Mrs. Alex Scott Gawthrop, a son, Grayson Samuel. Mrs. Gawthrop is the former Jessica Danae Burton.

Hammond — Allen Michael Hammond and Katlyn Annmarie Lambert, a daughter, Paisley Faith Hammond.

Hay — John Carl Hay and Annette Elisa Stevens, a son, Brenton Carl Hay.

May 26

Bennett — Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Maxwell Bennett, a son, Evan Michael. Mrs. Bennett is the former Jamie Juanita Pelfrey.

Cole — Mr. and Mrs. Andrew William Cole, a daughter, Zaida Elizabeth. Mrs. Cole is the former Bronwen Christine Hankins.

Kelley — Patricia Danielle Briggs, a son, Danny Michael Paul Kelley.

McCormick — Mr. and Mrs. Michael Ashley McCormick, a daughter, Bailey Madison. Mrs. McCormick is the former Tiffany Alanna Bailey.

Stevens — Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Andrew Stevens, a son, Layne Andrew. Mrs. Stevens is the former Amber Dawn Chapman.

Taylor — Mr. and Mrs.

Benjamin Paul Taylor, a son, Finnegan Ezra. Mrs. Taylor is the former Megan Christine Fry.

Thompson — Rebecca Jane McLaughlin, a son, Easton Michael Thompson.

May 27

Foster — Dennis Lane Foster and Mary Amanda Parsons, a son, Evan Wyatt Foster.

Franklin — Jeffery Allen Franklin and Chasity Lynn Scarberry, a son, Conner Floyd Franklin.

Johnson — Mr. and Mrs. Emerson Ty Johnson, a son, Everson Cage. Mrs. Johnson is the former Catherine Elizabeth Absher.

Landers — Mr. and Mrs. Joshua John Landers, a daughter, Rebekah Joyce. Mrs. Landers is the former Kara Beth Edwards.

Parsons — Mr. and Mrs. Rodney Jay Parsons, a daughter, London Rose. Mrs. Parsons is the former Patricia Rosann Long.

Robinette — Mr. and Mrs.

Russell Keith Robinette, a daughter, Kylie Lorraine. Mrs. Robinette is the former Kayla Marie Hall.

May 28

Maynard — Mr. and Mrs. Eric Mathew Maynard, a son, Emmett Maverick. Mrs. Maynard is the former Kaila Danielle Blair.

Sanders — Charles Woodrow Sanders and Amanda Jo Myers, a son, Waylow Woodrow Sanders.

May 29

Armstrong — Mr. and Mrs. Robert Rusell Armstrong, a daughter, Kimberly Alexis. Mrs. Armstrong is the former Kelly Dawn Smoot.

Brown — George Lee Brown and Theresia Joy Dean, a son, Hunter Lee Brown.

Kishbaugh — Mr. and Mrs. Larry Jay Kishbaugh, a son, Draven Lawrence. Mrs. Kishbaugh is the former Michaela Renee Burns.

Ross — Joshua Paul and Shelli Rane Ross, a son, Noah Grayson Ross.