

TRI-COUNTY MYSTERY MEETS

presents



The Sweet Life

The Ruth Hunt Story

April 11
TICKETS \$15

Sweet Life Experience

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Ruth Hunt–Inspired Cookie Decorating Workshop
by LyndaLous Sweet Treats

12:00 PM – 1:00 PM

Live Candy Sucker-Making Demonstration
by Wyatt's Chapel Farm (Melissa Wyatt)

1:00 PM – 1:30 PM

Visit with Candy Makers
(Enjoy samples and meet the makers)

1:30 PM – 3:00 PM

Abridged Performance
The Sweet Life: Story of Ruth Hunt

3:00 PM – 3:30 PM

Final Candy Market
(Purchase your favorite sweets)

This event is part of

VOICES OF 250:



An Appalachian Civic Storytelling Project

This performance is the second installment in the Voices of 250 series celebrating America's 250th anniversary through Appalachian stories of heritage, entrepreneurship, and community.

This project is made possible through support from
Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky.

WHAT IS A RADIO PLAY?

Step into the golden age of storytelling



Before television, stories came to life through voices, music, and imagination. Tonight, you'll experience theatre the way audiences once did—through the magic of a radio play.

WHAT YOU'LL NOTICE:

- ✓ Actors perform with scripts at microphones
- ✓ Sound effects created live 🎵
- ✓ Music that helps tell the story 🎵
- ✓ Your imagination completes the picture ✨

You're not just watching—you're part of the experience.

LISTEN CLOSELY...

The rustle of candy wrappers, the crackle of a radio broadcast, the hum of a small Kentucky town—every sound helps bring Ruth Hunt's story to life.



Cast of The Sweet Life



Alexys
Acob



David
Abner



Cristy
Atienza



Teresa
Brooks



Jeff
Butcher



Willie
Carr

Story of Ruth Hunt

Cast of The Sweet Life



Mateo
Daza



Ellie
Doolin



Lisa
Mechelle
Honeycutt



Donna
Mills



Bradie
Parrett



Michael
Radford

Story of Ruth Hunt

Cast of The Sweet Life



Lora
Rose



Corri
Stephens



Uriah
Thomas



Luther Dean
Whitaker



Sara
Wolfe



Brandon
Chase Wood

Story of Ruth Hunt

Creative Team



Trevor Briscoe
Accompanist



Teresa Brooks
Director



Cat Rhoden Goguen · Jonathan Scott Wyatt
Playwright & Producer



Music Director



Foundation for
**Appalachian
Kentucky**

— ABOUT THE SWEET LIFE —

The *Sweet Life* tells the story of Ruth Tharp Hunt, a woman whose determination, resilience, and vision helped shape a legacy that continues today.

In the early 20th century, at a time when opportunities for women in business were limited, Ruth found herself facing uncertainty and responsibility. Through ingenuity and perseverance, she turned what began in her own kitchen into a thriving candy business—one built not only on recipes, but on relationships, community, and care.

From the creation of the now-famous Blue Monday candy bar to the challenges of loss, change, and leadership, her story is one of quiet strength and enduring impact.

But *The Sweet Life* is not only about Ruth.

It is about the people beside her—family, friends, and the generations, who carried her work forward. It is about a community that supported and sustained something meaningful. And it is about the ways in which ordinary moments can become lasting legacy.

This production brings together history and storytelling through a unique radio-style performance, blending live voices, sound, and memory to recreate a world that is both past and present.

What you will hear tonight is rooted in real places, real people, and a story that continues to live on in Mount Sterling, Kentucky—and beyond.

In Memory of
William T. Hunt
1879 - 1939

Mrs. A. J. Tharp
1859 - 1931

Memorial Placed by
Mrs. W. T. Hunt
1966 - 1993

Mrs. Edwin Peck
1839 - 1903

ABOUT RUTH THARP HUNT

Ruth Tharp Hunt was a Kentucky entrepreneur, innovator, and *community leader* whose legacy continues to shape Mount Sterling and beyond.

Born into a time when women rarely led businesses, Ruth's life changed following personal loss and *new responsibility*. Faced with uncertainty, she turned to what she knew—her kitchen, her recipes, and her determination.

From these beginnings, she built what would become *Ruth Hunt Candies*, a company rooted in quality, care, and connection.

Her work helped establish one of Kentucky's most beloved confection traditions, including the now-iconic Blue Monday candy bar.

But Ruth's influence extended far beyond candy.

She was a woman of faith, resilience, and quiet leadership—someone who created opportunity not only for herself, but for others. Her story reflects the strength of Appalachian women and the power of perseverance in the face of change.

Today, her legacy lives on through the continued work of Ruth Hunt Candies and through the stories, traditions, and community she helped build.

Ruth Tharp Hunt's life reminds us that even the smallest beginnings can grow into something lasting—and something meaningful.



A Note on the Legacy

For over a century, Ruth Hunt Candies has remained a treasured part of Kentucky's history and tradition.

What began in a home kitchen grew into a beloved confectionery known for its handcrafted quality, time-honored recipes, and commitment to excellence.

Generations have continued the work Ruth Tharp Hunt began, preserving both the craft and the care behind each piece of candy.

Today, Ruth Hunt Candies stands not only as a business, but as a living legacy—one that reflects the spirit of its founder and the community that continues to support it.

As you experience *The Sweet Life*, you are also experiencing a story that still exists beyond the stage—one that can be seen, tasted, and shared.



FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

By Cat Rhoden Goguen



When I first began working on *The Sweet Life*, I quickly realized this was not just a story to tell—it was a *responsibility* to carry.

Writing about real people, real families, and a legacy that still lives today requires care. Every detail matters. Every choice matters.

These are not just characters—they are lives that were lived, and in many ways, are still being lived through *memory*, tradition, and community.

What drew me in most was not just the history, but the pieces of it that still remain. *Standing in Ruth's church. Seeing the candy store. Knowing where William passed. Reading original recipes written by hand. These are not distant moments—they are tangible, present, and deeply human.*

One of the most meaningful parts of this journey was the generosity of the Ruth Hunt Candy Company. *To walk through the factory, to see the process firsthand, to hear the sounds of candy being made, and even to record those sounds—it brought the story to life in a way that words alone never could.*

That experience shaped this play. What you hear tonight is not imagined from a distance—it is built *from real places, real textures, and real echoes of the past.*

More than anything, I hope this story honors that legacy with the same care in which it was created—and that you *leave with a sense of connection* not just to Ruth Hunt, but to the *enduring spirit* of this community.

Thank you for being part of it.

— *Cat Rhoden Goguen*



CANDYMAKERS

Meet the artisans behind today's sweet experience



BRITTANY MILLS
Barbourville, Kentucky



Meet Brittany Mills, talented baker alongside her cain Robert Wyatt, in London, Kentucky, known for her handcraited candies and sample them at local eventis.

Sample homemade pumpkin rolls & gourmet chocolate truffles!

LYNDALOUS SWEET TREATS
= London, Kentucky —



Sample custom cakes, candies & wedding cake suckers! ★★

SHARON MILLS
Knox County, Kentucky



Sharon Mills
Knox County, Kentucky
Sample custom cakes, candies & confections!



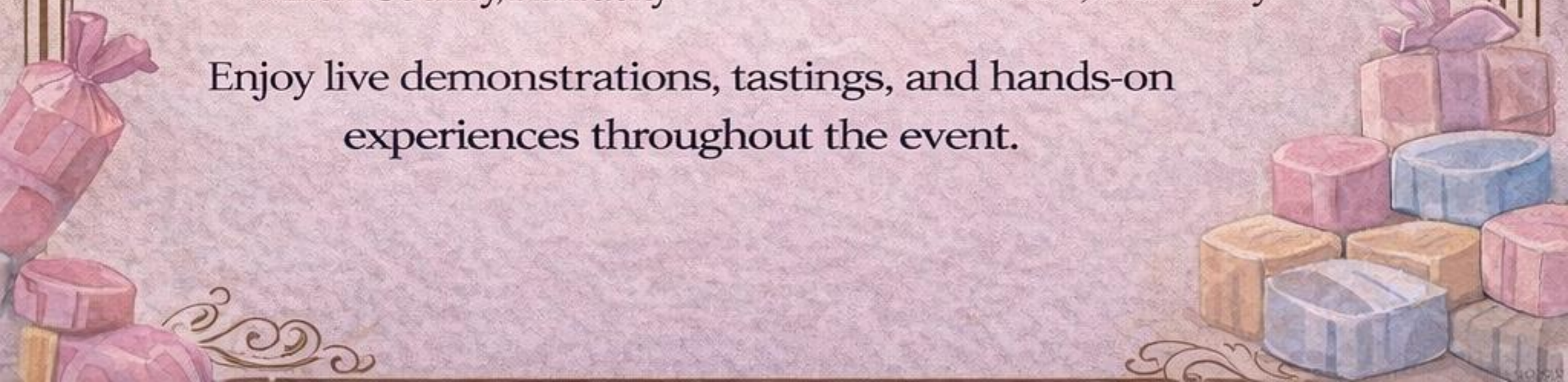
SHARON MILLS &
Knox County, Kentucky

Enjoy live demonstrations, tastings, and hands-on experiences throughout the event.

WYATT'S CHAPEL FARM
London, Kentucky —



WYATT'S CHAPEL FARM
London, Kentucky —



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

'The Sweet Life' was commissioned by the Gateway Regional Arts Center (GRAC), whose support made the development and premiere of this work possible. We are especially grateful for their continued encouragement in bringing this story to new audiences, including this performance in Barbourville.

This production is also made possible through the support of the Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky as part of the *Voices of 250: An Appalachian Civic Storytelling Project*—an initiative dedicated to preserving and sharing the stories of our region.

We extend our sincere thanks to the Knox County Extension Office for their generosity in providing a welcoming space for this event.

We are deeply grateful to Ruth Hunt Candies for their hospitality, historical insight, and stewardship of Ruth's legacy.

Nick Cole, Sound / MC

Ellie Doolin

performs *"The Sweet Life," "Stormy Weather"* and *"I'll Be Seeing You."*

This marks the first public performance of *"The Sweet Life"* theme song, with music and lyrics by *Cat Rhoden Goguen*.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

The Sweet Life premiered at the Gateway Regional Arts Center (GRAC) in Mount Sterling, Kentucky, in February 2026, in a sold-out world premiere performance.

The production was later presented at Actors Theatre of Louisville on April 4, as part of a special storytelling fringe showcase.

This performance in Barbourville continues the journey of *The Sweet Life*, bringing the story home to the communities that inspired it.

Thank you to our audience for sharing this journey with us.

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