

The  
**WV INDEPENDENT**  
**Observer**

JEFFERSON COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA JANUARY 2021

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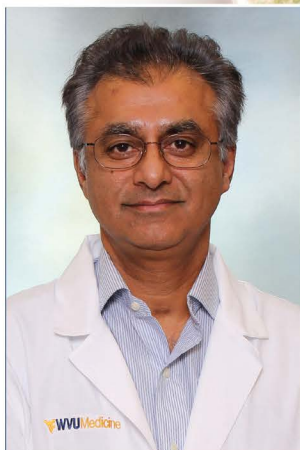


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THIS PAPER WANTS TO BE RECYCLED. 

## WV PERSPECTIVES



The "pink Christmas tree" started as a friendly prank between two Shepherdstown neighbors in 2013. The original tree and the expanding tradition of its roving from house to house in the neighborhood every few days came to an end a few years ago. In 2020, the neighborhood is resurrecting the tradition and offering some cheer to the community.

## TO OUR READERS

**WHEN I INTERVIEWED** professional storyteller Adam Booth for the Speak Stories article in this month's issue, one of the topics we touched on was the role of storytelling in the community and his experiences traveling the country to speak. He noted how during his visits, people often seek him out asking, "do you have time to hear a story"? He described it being as if a gate were opened to him — the many small stories people tell reveal not only a pride in their communities but also illustrate surprising diversity in many communities.

The story of the Stubblefield Institute at Shepherd University is still being crafted, but it shares a similar theme — of focusing on the common elements of our conversations to build communities together rather than apart. As Booth pointed out to me, the community building function of a story is as much in the listening as it is in the speaking. Even before the pandemic-imposed isolations, it's clear that many of our conversations have become disengaged from this essential dynamic. It will be interesting to see what sparks of connection arise from the institute's efforts.

In our own community, we see signs of optimism as individuals push back against the current struggles and persevere. The pink tree that has reappeared in Shepherdstown (above) is a whimsical example of spontaneous community engagement and undoubtedly will be the subject of a story passed along to future generations.

  
**Steve Pearson**  
EDITOR IN CHIEF



// POLITICS

# COMING TOGETHER TO TALK POLITICS

Stubblefield Institute at Shepherd University



Shepherd University President Dr. Mary J.C. Hendrix moderates a discussion between Donna Brazile and Mercedes Schlapp.

AFTER THE PAST YEAR of 24/7 political and pandemic coverage, it might seem odd to hear David Welch say “we need to talk more about politics, not less.” The director of the Stubblefield Institute for Civil Political Communications at Shepherd University is quick to point out that he means being able to have constructive conversations. Having spent decades in the field of political communications, Welch feels strongly that disagreement is a fundamental element of the process. “Politics will always be rough and tumble. We need to disagree. Politics is part of government and we need constructive debate to lead to better decisions.” Still, Welch noted that he’s been involved with politics long enough to remember that there wasn’t always the dividing line that we see today, where “you think about who you invite over for dinner based on their politics.”

This erosion of civility was on Welch’s mind when Shepherd University graduate David Avella approached him with the idea of a new political institute at the university. Welch describes Avella, a Berkeley County native who built his career working for Republican

“  
**We want [our students]  
 to have a greater sense  
 of how public policy will  
 influence the work  
 they want to do**  
 ”

campaigns, as having a reputation of being a strong partisan who still maintains friendships across the political divide. Welch took the idea to his friend Bill Stubblefield, a retired Admiral and former Berkeley County commissioner, and his wife Bonnie to discuss the concept and

brainstorm about how to turn it into a program.

Stubblefield remarked that, “I’ve always been taken aback by the increasing incivility in public discourse. I’m of a generation where that was not very common. I spoke with David a lot, so this started out as just another conversation, with me and Bonnie as a sounding board for the ideas.” Stubblefield noted that he and Bonnie had already been looking to support a program at an academic institution. The two of them decided jointly to provide a generous donation to launch the new institute, based in large part on the meaningful effect it could have at a University the size of Shepherd as well as the respect they both had for the University leaders.

Welch’s first recruit to the board was another Berkeley County native, Scott Widmeyer, a long time veteran of Democratic politics, to set the bipartisan balance of the institute’s board of directors. Stubblefield remarked that, “it’s easy to recruit friends to sit around the table, but David’s ability to reach out to diverse advisors has served us well.” As Welch says, “What we all share is a desire to have a different way to discuss politics.”



### A Role for Balance

Welch describes the role the institute can play to bring individuals back into the conversation. He notes that, “there is always heat in politics,” but also adds that “the fight is not the solution.” This sentiment is reflected in the institute’s mission statement — “to serve as an active center for the study and promotion of civil political discourse, inspire intelligent, authentic and constructive debate, and encourage positive civic engagement for both students and the public alike. We seek to demonstrate that when opposing viewpoints are respected and legitimized in ways that avoid negative labeling, alienation, and silencing, it can strengthen our nation’s ability to better challenges and solve problems.”

Officially organized in the spring of 2019 and publicly launched in October 2019 with an event featuring both of West Virginia’s US Senators (one Democrat and one Republican), the institute has quickly rolled out an impressive array of public programs, campus activities, and a new academic concentration in political communications over the past year.

### In the Public View

For the public, the American Conversations Series has been the most visible aspect of the institute. Welch noted that the intent of the series is to “demonstrate that people of divergent viewpoints can have healthy conversations.” The inaugural event in November 2019 featured a free-ranging discussion between former Democratic National Committee Chair Donna Brazile and Mercedes Schlapp, who had recently transitioned from the White House to the Trump re-election campaign. Subsequent events in 2019 and 2020 have focused on topics of modernizing Congress, public healthcare, the CARES Act, and COVID-19 with panelists representing a diversity of left-right political perspectives on these issues.

This fall, Welch began hosting a regular weekly program on WSHC (FM 89.7), the public radio station broadcasting from the Shepherd campus. The Upstream Downstream program airs on Saturdays at 11 am and Welch has been inviting a wide variety of guests to discuss American politics in the framework of the institute’s mission, focusing on highlighting examples of pragmatism over partisan politics.

### On the Campus

At its heart, the institute exists to serve Shepherd students. In addition to assisting with the development of a new academic concentration in the Political Science department, the institute has launched the Listen, Learn, Engage initiative to serve all students. Welch framed the objective of the initiative lightheartedly in a popular context — “I don’t ever want to see a Shepherd student be interviewed on the street by a late night TV host and not be able to say who the Vice President is.” He explained more seriously that, “we want to help our students to resist the urge to withdraw and stay quiet. Regardless of their major or field, we want our students to have the confidence to participate in the conversation, to understand that they can do their part, wherever there is a decision-making process. It’s about fostering the ideal of civic awareness and civic engagement.”

Welch describes a key theme of the initiative is to help students understand that “the red team (or the blue team) may not always be all right, but also not wrong, that there are elements of truth in both. With so much energy being devoted to pulling us apart, urging us to pick a team, memorize talking points, we want our students to be able to differentiate the arguments from the rhetoric.”

**BY: Steve Pearson**



David Welch,  
Director of the Stubblefield Institute.

*The schedule for upcoming events in the American Conversations Series will be available on the institute’s website (StubblefieldInstitute.org, under the “public engagement” tab) and Facebook page (@ICPCShepherd). You can hear live broadcasts of the Upstream Downstream radio show at FM 89.7 or WSHCradio.com on Saturdays at 11 am (prior shows can be found on Spotify, Google Podcasts, Breaker and Anchor).*



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## // EDUCATION

# CIVICS AND CIVILITY FOR STUDENTS

## Teaching Political Communication on Campus



BEYOND ITS conversation events and programming, the Stubblefield Institute's mission extends to being a catalyst for introducing the topic of civil political communication across the Shepherd University campus. While the ongoing pandemic has frustrated in-person interaction, the institute was able to connect with several academic departments and assist with the planning and launching of several new programs in its first year of operation, with the hope of more to come.

Dr. Stephanie Slocum-Schaffer recalls that the entire Political Science Department at Shepherd University was invited to the early conversations with the Stubblefield Institute for Civil Political Communications (see previous article on page 4) about how to engage with students on the topic of political communication. "I was designated as the liaison from my department and was pretty jazzed about the mission. We also realized we needed to bring in faculty from the Communications department to partner with on the curriculum development, which is how Dr. Matthew Kushin got involved." She explained that from that collaboration, the new Concentration in Political Communication was developed and added to the curriculum this year and the Minor in Political Communication is working its way through the process to be included next year.

Dr. Slocum-Schaffer estimates that typically half of the Political Science majors are

intending to continue to law school and another quarter will continue to graduate work in public policy or public affairs. For students interested in specific aspects of politics, she noted there is a lot of flexibility in the degree, including the ability to take electives in other departments. For the new Concentration (and Minor), "we've used a lot of existing courses, but organizing it helps give the students a specific focus."

“  
Marketing a policy idea  
is different from  
marketing a product  
”

### A Degree For Our Time

David Welch, director of the Stubblefield Institute, offered his perspective on the new Concentration: "Political Science is not typically considered an applied degree, and most of what is taught in the core curriculum is not career specific. What we saw is that political communication has become a well-defined career. Political communication has become a lot more sophisticated and a great deal of strategy goes into planning campaigns, not just for electing candidates, but for promoting causes and influencing legislation and policy. Being a media director for public affairs is about influencing and changing public opinion. Marketing a policy idea is different from marketing a product."

Welch noted that there are very few undergraduate programs specifically in political communication. Dr. Slocum-Schaffer confirmed that observation and noted that the "access to practicing professionals from the Washington DC area that we can bring into the classroom allows students to learn directly from people who are actually doing this work. We're also planning to connect our students with internship opportunities to expand the practical experience too."

### Around the Campus

Dr. Slocum-Schaffer noted that she sees a lot of students outside of the department in the introductory course on American Federal Government. She also noted her concern that many of these students have not had any civics education in high school and many will even say that "they hate politics, it turns me off." She noted that the students in her class often have a very different perspective and understanding after the semester. This observation that some basic familiarity with the political process can unlock engagement is the driver behind the Stubblefield Institute's Listen, Learn, Engage Initiative, aimed at students across the campus.

As a specific example of the initiative, Welch described a collaboration between the institute and faculty in the Nursing, Education and Social Work disciplines. Funded by a CARES Act grant, the institute worked with students to plan elements that can be introduced into the curriculum "to support leadership-oriented classes, to help these students understand civic engagement. Particularly in the world shaped by the pandemic, our students who will be teachers, nurses and social workers will need skills related to policy to do their jobs. We want them to have a greater sense of how public policy will influence the work they want to do." Welch noted that this type of program could benefit students in other majors as well, such as teachers "who will be asked to join a union, deal with ongoing public health issues, and might even be asked to strike."

Dr. Slocum-Schaffer has observed that "politics for many students is a dirty word. And yet, the current polarization in politics seems to have encouraged young people to become more engaged. Whether it's love or hate for a particular candidate or issue, they do seem more interested in the political process. I see students who want to bring about change, but don't know how to make it happen." With the Stubblefield Institute and the new programs in the Political Science Department, Shepherd University is providing students with the tools to support that desire to engage.

BY: Observer Staff





REACHING A NEW GENERATION



Seizing on the energy of the moment, the Stubblefield Institute held a Student Leadership Academy in March of 2020, inviting dozens of high school students from the surrounding region for a day-long program on politics and leadership. Led by Shepherd University Professor, Dr. Samuel Greene and sponsored by CNB Bank, the students competed in a simulated leadership exercise. The institute plans to repeat this program and is also planning for a four-week, 3-credit 2021 summer leadership class for high school seniors and college students.



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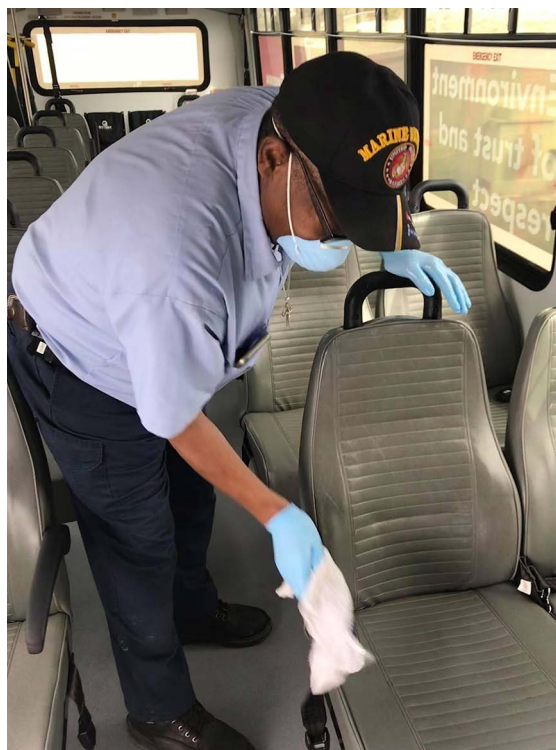
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// COMMUNITY

# PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IN THE EASTERN PANHANDLE

## The Eastern Panhandle Transit Authority Rides Out The Pandemic



The headlines we have been seeing this fall have been describing a crisis in public transportation — proposals for service cutbacks, fare hikes, and layoffs in systems across the country. In DC, the proposals have included ending weekend service and turning off the Metro system at 9 pm. *The Observer* spoke with Elaine Bartoldson, the Director of the Eastern Panhandle Transit Authority, to get a sense of how the pandemic has affected the system that serves Berkeley and Jefferson Counties.

**ELAINE BARTOLDSON**, Director of the Eastern Panhandle Transit Authority (EPTA), describes EPTA's mission as "providing service for the workforce, individuals who have no other way to get around." She summarized her perspective on the value of EPTA, saying, "without public transportation, things will stop for the people who use it. If we were not here, our riders really could not get around and it has an effect on others too, especially businesses who rely on workers who use us. One of the programs we launched in January this year was Get a Job, Get a Ride. Basically, if you are a first time rider with a new job, we'll give you 20 round trips. That's a month's worth of travel to get you started. We

have routes that are specifically designed to get people to the factory and warehouse facilities in Berkeley County and we time the buses to align with the shifts."

Bartoldson described how EPTA works to attract riders. "We work with the human resources departments and businesses to promote ridership. We also go to job fairs and use social media to promote EPTA as an option for getting to work. We also visit the high schools, for example with the work exploration program at Berkeley County schools, and we show students how to use the bus, how to plan a trip, how to get a monthly pass. It's about making it easy to do." She also noted that technology has been a big help, making it easier for riders to navigate the system. "The Where's My Bus app didn't cost us anything and it makes it much easier for people to use the system. Riders can use Google Transit too, and all of our signs now have a QR code so riders can connect to a map and find out where they can go from a specific bus stop."

“

**We'll live within the budget, figuring out what we need to do for the riders and what expenses can wait**

”

"We find that our riders do come from all walks of life," says Bartoldson. "We take nurses to work. We take people to the MARC train. We have people who move to the area because they can take a bus to shop and work. Since 2013 we've expanded from four routes to a dozen. We added a route to Inwood and Saturday service on several routes. It's led by rider growth. In 2013 we provided 157,000 trips. In 2019 we provided 231,000 trips, and were projecting to hit 250,000 trips in 2020."

As 2020 draws to a close after nine months of operating with pandemic restrictions, Bartoldson expects the trip

number for the year to be closer to 150,000, a steep drop. "When the pandemic hit in the spring we did reduce our routes, with businesses shut down and our contract routes suspended," Bartoldson recalled. "We knew we had to adjust, but in the beginning it was so uncertain how we might be operating. For many routes we were able to adjust to hit peak times and still serve the factory and hospital facilities. We also worked out an on-demand service and brought back some drivers for that. It was all about getting people to work."

Bartoldson expects slow growth into 2022. "The elder population is not going out, but they will want to get back to being independent. But the businesses and hospitals are still running and people still need medical transport. For the finances, we'll live within the budget, figuring out what we need to do for the riders and what expenses can wait."

Bartoldson estimates that only 6 percent of EPTA's revenue comes from the fareboxes, so the drop in ridership is not as much of a financial concern as it is with larger agencies. "We rely on federal transit dollars for most of our budget," she noted. EPTA has been considered a small urban transit agency since the 2010 Census numbers reflected the local population growth that took place between 2000 and 2008 (prior to then it was considered a rural agency) and Bartoldson described the federal funding as a fixed formula, based on ridership. "It's a one for one match so we need to come up with a local dollar for each federal dollar, up to a \$1 million cap [on the federal money]. Our elected officials at the local and state levels have been very supportive, and we do get some funding from the local municipalities





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Without public  
transportation, things  
will stop for the people  
who use it  
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in Berkeley and Jefferson Counties that can count towards the match, but unlike some other transit agencies in WV we have no operating tax levy. Most of our match is driven by the contract service revenue that we can generate.”

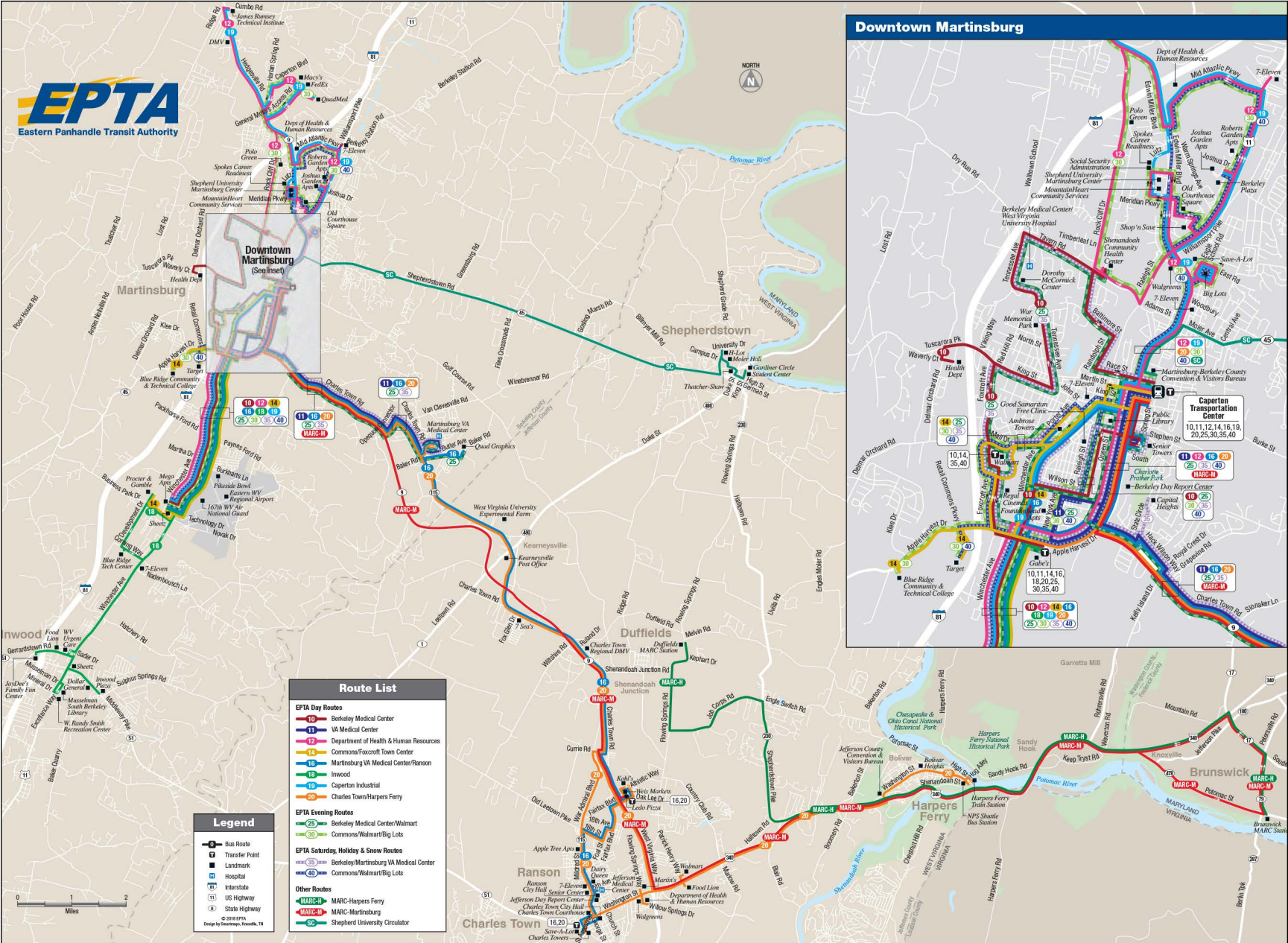
Bartoldson walked through the various funding streams from the contract services. “We operate the shuttle on the Shepherd University campus, and run routes for MARC. We have a contract to provide non-emergency medical transport that is reimbursed by Medicare. For the past thirty years we operated the buses at the Harpers Ferry National Park, providing both drivers and mechanics. This year that contract went out to bid with a small business set-aside and a company from Staten Island [New York City] won the bid. It was devastating to lose that contract.” Bartoldson continued, remarking

that, “we were looking at having to lay off those workers” until we were able to work out an arrangement with the new company to continue staffing the route as a subcontractor.

Bartoldson says she is optimistic for the future. “Right now it looks as if we can continue.” She added: “I’m so proud of our drivers, our dispatchers, our mechanics and all of our staff, coming to work every day. They are committed to getting our riders to where they need to get to. They are an amazing team.”

Visit the EPTA’s website (EPTAwv.com) for announcements, route information, and ticket purchases. EPTA also posts announcements on Facebook (@EPtransit) and Twitter (@EPTAwv).

BY: Observer Staff



EPTA provides connections across Berkeley and Jefferson Counties. A downloadable map and route information is available at EPTAwv.com.



# THE PANDEMIC IS HERE & NOW

## A Conversation with Dr. Terrence Reidy



“WE DO KNOW it’s a dangerous disease,” Dr. Terrence Reidy emphasized. “There are many bad outcomes with COVID-19 and we can’t expect the vaccine to end it quickly.” Reidy, the Health Officer for the Health Departments of the three counties in West

Virginia’s Eastern Panhandle, is following the numbers more closely than most. He says he monitors the seven day rolling average of the infection rate. At mid-December, the infection rate in all three counties was high, well above the range where the color-coding system

adopted a few months ago provides a useful tool for guiding activity (see maps below). At this point, Dr. Reidy says he “asks emergency practitioners how many patients they have with COVID-19 symptoms, how many in the ICU, how many on ventilators?” He also noted that at the current levels of new cases reported each week, “the Health Department is not able to contact and trace all positive tests.” Dr. Reidy hoped he might be seeing a plateau in the new cases reported when we spoke, but the numbers continued upward on the days following our interview.

In this situation, the advice is simple, he says, and most people seem to recognize the need to cover their faces and social distance. Dr. Reidy also stressed, “If you are infected [or think you might be] keep away from others. We

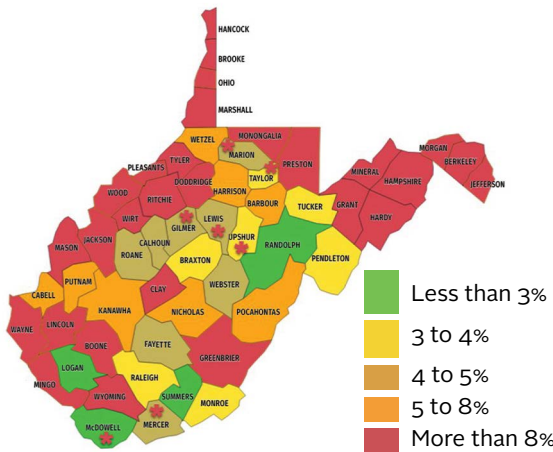
know how this spreads, it’s primarily respiratory and it takes interaction of a certain kind. Large gatherings are not appropriate. Places where we see spreading are birthday parties, weddings, large dinners, bowling, bingo, places where people are talking loudly. We see it in government agencies where people have lunch together. All you need is one person actively shedding.” Dr. Reidy gave the example of glitter — “if you have seven people at a table working on a holiday project and one is using glitter, how many projects have glitter? All of them.”

Dr. Reidy said that he does see cases in clusters, particularly in nursing homes. In the Eastern Panhandle, he indicated half of the reported COVID-19 deaths were of nursing home residents. He also noted that while he sees small clusters (of 2 or 3) in school settings, he has not seen evidence of in-school transmission. “We see employees who get it outside of school, and children who get it outside of the school, but for the most part they are not passing it on inside the school.” Looking at the numbers, Dr.

## UNDERSTANDING COVID-19 METRICS

### PERCENT POSITIVITY RATE (Data updated through Dec. 18, 2020)

Source: WV Department of Health and Human Resources



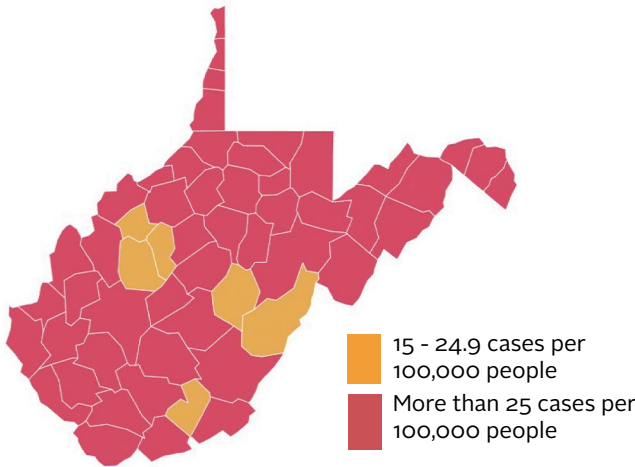
Positivity Rate = 
$$\frac{\text{Number of positive COVID-19 tests (daily average of last 7-14 days)}}{\text{Total number of COVID-19 tests given}}$$

- Can be used to **determine if enough COVID-19 tests** are being done to ensure that mild cases are not missed by testing programs
- Changes in positivity can be used to determine if an increase in cases is a result of more testing or actual increases in transmission
- Low percent positivity values **don’t always equal low infection rate**. For example, the number of new cases may just be low compared to the number of COVID-19 tests being done.

### VERSUS

### INFECTION (INCIDENCE) RATE (Data updated through Dec 18, 2020)

Source: GlobalPandemics.org (Harvard Global Health Institute et al.)



Infection Rate = 
$$\frac{\text{Number of new COVID-19 cases (daily average of last 7-14 days)}}{100,000}$$

- Used to **measure how widespread** COVID-19 is in an area
- Infection rate **goes up** as COVID-19 transmission increases
- Infection rate accounts for differences in population which allows rates to be compared across counties, states, etc.
- Lower infection rate is better — less than 3 cases/100,000 people
- 25+ cases/100,000 people indicates unchecked community spread



Reidy also noted that given the current high infection rate outside of the schools and lower transmission incidence inside, that attending school is “no more dangerous than being in the community and at least they could be getting an education.” Looking at the experience of the fall, he continued, “there are many students who don’t participate as well outside of the classroom, and certainly they are missing out on the socialization aspects of school. We’ll struggle with finding a different solution, but there is nothing wrong with changing our approach and getting more kids back if we can maintain a controlled environment.”

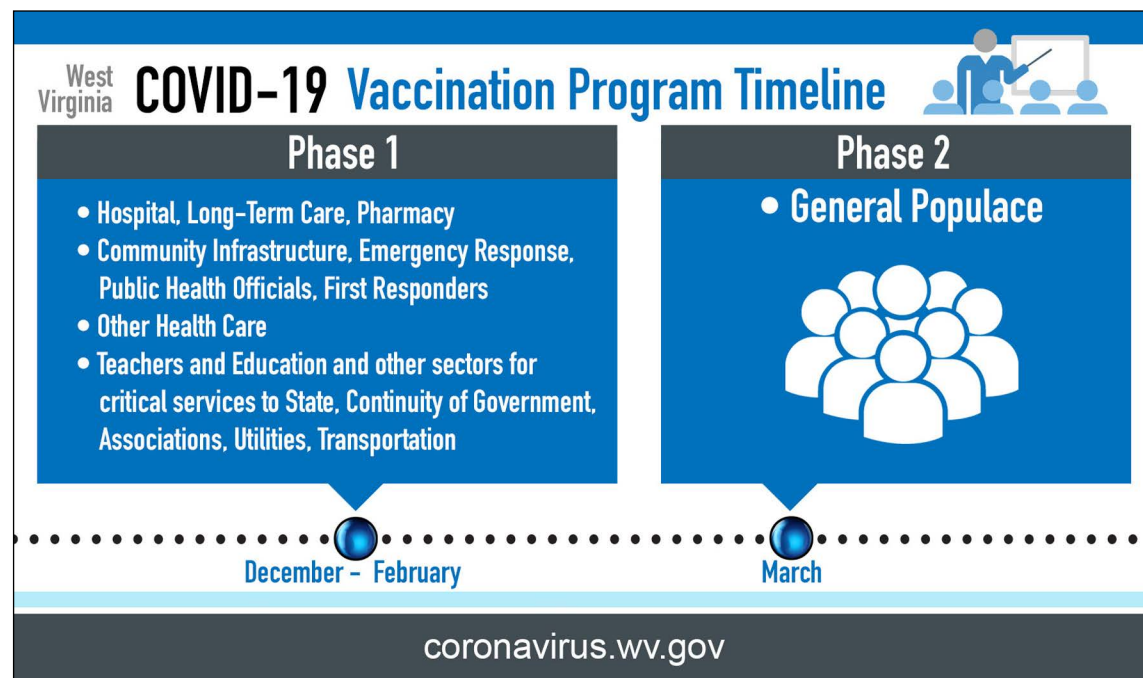
“One thing that complicates the school environment is the activities” Dr. Reidy observed. “It’s an important part of development [for many kids], but it’s the spectators that create the risk. If ten basketball players and their families are exposed, that can be contained. But 2,000 people watching a game is not a cohort. That’s a community risk. It’s our nature and these are social and community

events and people will crowd together.”

What comes next? “Most of us are in between the extremes and want to hear the evidence. We can expect at least another six months of restrictions.” Even with the vaccinations starting now, “it will be the end of January or early February before we’ll have specific guidance on how the vaccine will be available for the high risk groups in the general population (see the accompanying graphics). 2021 will be closer to normal, but the vaccine will not provide complete protection for everyone, so we’ll need to continue the habits of wearing masks, maintaining distance, and avoiding crowds — it’s about lowering risk and making it less likely to transmit the virus.”

*For information about COVID-19 testing and guidance on helping to reduce the spread of the virus, visit your county health department website (jchdww.org for Jefferson County; bchealthdept.org in Berkeley County; morgancountyhealthdept.com in Morgan County).*

The roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccine is expected to extend over many months, focusing first on first responders and other individuals whose essential jobs require frequent contact with others. The Health Department expects that we’ll hear more specific schedules for when (and how) the vaccine will be available to the general public beginning in the spring, but cautions that all of us will need to continue our individual efforts to lower the risk in the community through the entire year at least.



## West Virginia COVID-19 Vaccination Program

There will be limited supplies of COVID-19 vaccine at first, so the vaccine will be distributed in phases based on risk. Supply will increase over time.

### Vaccine Distribution Priorities

- Reduce the rate of hospitalizations
- Reduce the rate of deaths
- Protect our most vulnerable
- Maintain acute critical care services

### Phase 2-A (Prioritized by age)

#### General Populace

- Prioritized by age:  
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60 and older

- Pre-existing health problems with physician order



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STAY ACTIVE THIS WINTER

>>> PAGE 24 <<<



// COMMUNITY

# TALKING ACROSS TIME & SPACE

## Speak Story Series Continues to Bring Tales to Life



**ADAM BOOTH CREDITS A COURSE** he took with Rachael Meads in the Appalachian Studies department at Shepherd University for starting him on the path to becoming a professional storyteller, a passion he has pursued as a career for the past fifteen years. While researching folklife in West Virginia, he found the Liars Contest, an annual event held in Vandalia, West Virginia since the 1980s. On a lark he entered the contest and placed 3rd. Hooked, he went back again and in 2004 was named West Virginia's Biggest Liar for the year. It was Bil Lepp, one of the judges, that encouraged him to keep telling and Booth went on to the National Storytelling Festival in

2006. "To see how people were interpreting and preserving tales that make up the story culture, it encouraged me to commit my life to it."

“  
... each person who hears  
the story changes it to  
reflect their own life...  
”

Booth describes how his storytelling has developed over the past fifteen years: "It divides into three parts. There are the traditional Appalachian stories that I retell in my own voice and style. These stories are what we tend to associate with central Appalachia — West Virginia and Kentucky. There are personal stories that I model off traditional stories in their structure, motifs and story arc, overlaying new material on the skeleton that has worked for storytelling for centuries. I also tell non-traditional stories. I think of these as 'new fiction' — stories that fill in the gaps of tradition and the stories that are not being told."

"In the Appalachian story tradition, there is a surprisingly rich breadth," Booth continued. "The dominant voices are from the British Isles, but think about all the people who

have passed through the region. All of their stories are still here if you listen. The Cherokee, the eastern European immigrants, the Italian and Germanic traditions, the Pennsylvania Dutch, the African-Americans. Today we hear voices of Latino, Hispanic and East Asian culture reflected in the stories of recent immigrants."

Telling and listening to these stories helps to reveal the diversity that has always been here in Appalachia, but you don't always see, Booth explained. For example, "a lot of traditional stories feature characters who change genders or cross dress to further the narrative. Typically they change back, but there are stories where that doesn't always happen. I found the story from Kentucky of Billy Beg and His Bull, a variant of a story that appears to have originated in nineteenth-century Ireland, where the male protagonist marries the prince."

Booth explains that "fundamentally, the art of storytelling involves gathering a group of people into a shared space and using the energy that comes from both the teller and the listeners. When I tell a story that way, I can sense the energy. And each person who hears the story changes it to reflect their own life, by what they remember, by what they forget." Looking at the past year, he noted what's been missing. "When you are in front of an audience, you are shaping the story based on the verbal and visual cues you get from the listeners. You miss those cues when you tell a story online, it does change it. It's still storytelling, but it's different."

"It has had upsides," Booth continued. "With an online audience, storytellers are able to reach a broader audience, and venues that might not have had a budget to fly a storyteller across the country can introduce new tellers to their audiences. It could create a shift for many storytellers, but I do see the need to gather people together, for the watching, the spiritual connection, the act of experiencing something

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(Collected Works, Volume 14, par 125)

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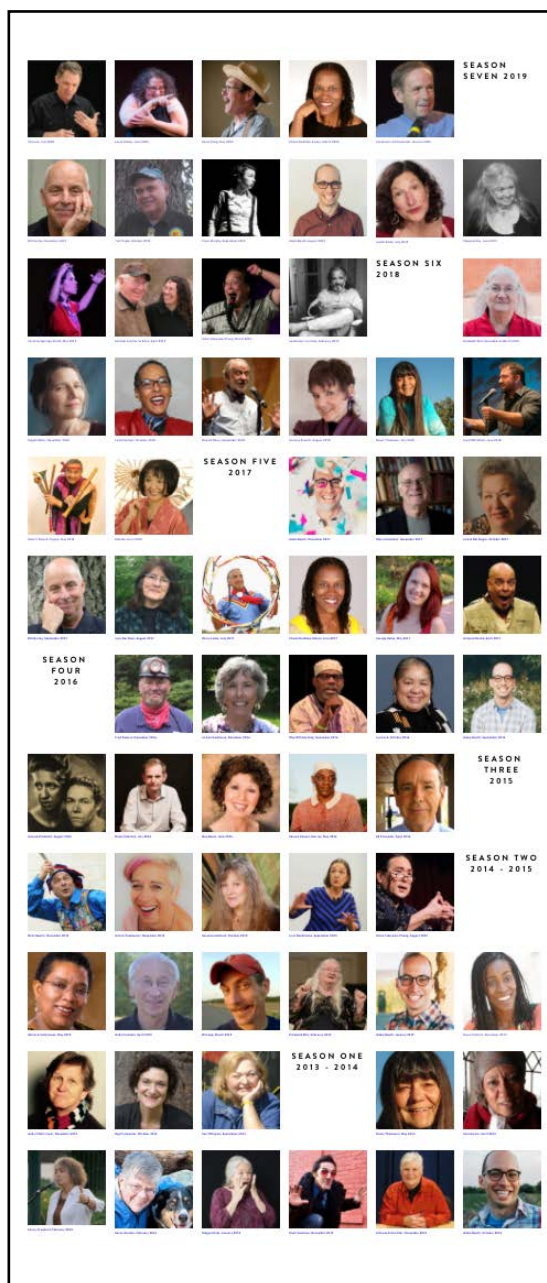
with others. When you are in front of a good storyteller, your mind can let go of what's around you and focus on the story. When you are staring at a screen, it's hard to break that connection to fully experience the story."

Booth feels fortunate to have received enthusiastic support for the Speak Story

“  
“We need to sit and  
experience this together  
”

Series, both at Shepherd University and in the surrounding area. “The community obviously cares about what we do, it supports us, it shows up to the events. They tell others about us.” As the organization heads into its ninth season, it has set itself up as an independent non-profit with the goal of being self-sustaining. “We envision serving the community beyond just presenting a concert series. We have our tellers do outreach when they visit, to schools and organizations. It’s also a means to engage in dialog, to help the community experience different feelings and identities more clearly.” For 2021, Speak plans to schedule monthly storytelling events — “now is the time we need more art” Booth exclaimed. “We will be online for as long as we need to be to be safe for the community, but we are committed to get back in person. We need to sit and experience this together.”

BY: Steve Pearson



The Speak Story Series has been bringing storytellers to Shepherdstown since 2013.

## SPEAK STORY SERIES FOR 2021

# Speak Story Series

The planned lineup for 2021 will feature a storyteller each month. Details will be posted on the website (SpeakStorySeries.com) as they are finalized. All events will be presented online through June. Depending on health department guidelines, Speak plans to transition back to the live venue in Reynolds Hall on the Shepherd University campus during the summer (109 North King Street). Tickets for each event are \$15 and a season pass for all 12 events is available for \$150 (order by mail or via the website). Confirmed tellers include Daniel Morden, Chetter Galloway, Laura Simms, Jennifer Munro (right), Whis.stem.men.knee (Johnny Moses, who is a Tulalip storyteller from Vancouver Island), and Adam Booth.



### DANIEL MORDEN - JANUARY 12

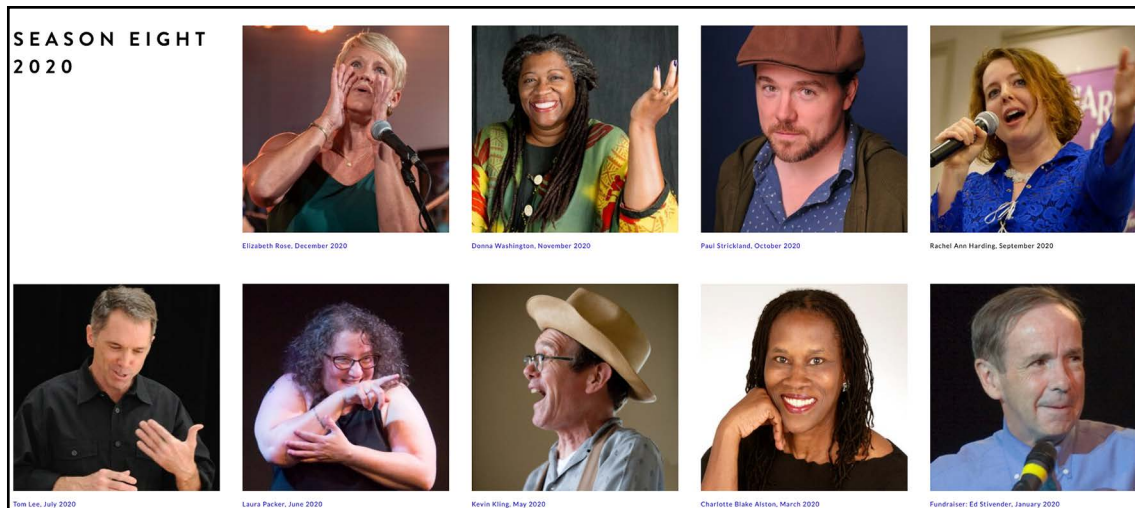


Daniel Morden has been a professional storyteller since 1989. He has traveled the world, collecting and telling traditional stories. He has a huge repertoire, from Greek myths and thrilling adventures to awful jokes. He has given the Opening Address at Sydney Writers Festival, won awards for his books and was recently awarded The Hay Festival Medal. Daniel's January program, News of the Strange!, will focus on lesser-known stories from the Arab world, some moving, some shocking, some hilarious. Suitable for adults

### CHETTER GALLOWAY - MARCH 9



Storyteller Chetter Galloway is a raconteur of African and African-American stories. He is a native of Suffolk, VA, the youngest of ten children and remembers his father telling stories on road trips. He first experienced the power of storytelling at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation in Williamsburg, VA. He honed his craft at East Tennessee State University in their Masters of Storytelling Program.





// NATURE

# NATURE CALLS FOR US TO CARRY ON

## Seeing & Hearing The Signs of New Beginnings

**By Doug Pifer**

Doug Pifer is an artist, naturalist, and writer. He has a Master's Degree in Journalism from Penn State and has been an editor and art educator. His illustrations have appeared in various books and magazines and he has been a contributor to *The Observer* for several years. He lives with his wife and assorted animals on 5.7 acres in a historic farmhouse near Shepherdstown.

AS A DIFFICULT AND CHALLENGING YEAR winds down and the pandemic shows new surges, I find much comfort observing nature. The transition from late fall into winter to me represents more of a beginning than an end. Small daily and nightly events take on major significance for me this year. Trees in our woods create their own slow adagio in autumnal symphony, as brown and gray trunks harmonize with the gray-green lichens on their bark. Freshly fallen oak leaves permeate the air with their tannic acid smell even as acorns sprout in the dark soil underneath them. Witch hazel has lost its leaves too. And now its nut-like capsules pop open and shoot out their black seeds, while its bright yellow blossoms light up the woods like miniature fireworks.

A late-flying, solitary bat flies in circles over the paddock, its wings lit by the sinking sun. This might be its last meal of flying insects until it awakens from hibernation next spring. Many folks might envy a bat, wishing they could



Witch hazel blooms October through December, long after its leaves have fallen. Photo by Doug Pifer.

sleep through the winter to avoid the resurgent pandemic and feelings of isolation and despair. Instead, this bat represents a victory to me. Our bats have suffered through their own epidemic, a fungal disease. This bat made it through.

A white-tailed buck with bone-colored antlers slips cautiously through the brown woods along our stream buffer. His frantic days of doe-chasing and avoiding hunters are coming to an end. He's likely to bed down in a nearby thicket and come out to feed tonight, regaining his weight and composure. Around him, groups of robins fly through the woods. Attracted to the nearby spring, they call excitedly. I even hear brief bits of their spring song.

At night we hear a male fox's double bark from the front yard. Foxes become vocal this time of year, as they stake out territories and pair off. Next day I arrive home to see him standing in the paddock next to the barn door. He lifts his head to give the same bark. As he turns around to leave, his magnificent, white-tipped tail follows him though the woven wire fence and into the woods beyond.

At dusk, a pair of great horned owls call to each other from along the creek. His hoots are pitched lower, even though she is bigger than he is. They are courting each other now and will likely lay their first egg in late January.

The live nest camera at the National Conservation Training Center reveals the eagles have started repairing their old nest for the new season. Fresh straw has been brought to the nest and a few new sticks line the edges. No eagle appears but a pair of ravens pass overhead, flying close together with synchronized wing beats. They perform a barrel roll as if in tandem, matching wingbeats stroke by stroke. Like the bald eagles, ravens will soon begin their nesting season.

As the sand in the hourglass of 2020 runs out, I see and hear promises of new beginnings. Nature's message is "carry on!"

### POTOMAC VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY OUTDOOR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR SPRING 2021

*The Potomac Valley Audubon Society continues to offer fun and engaging nature programs through Spring 2021.*

To see the full schedule, enroll, or find out more information, contact Amy Moore (email: [amy@potomacaudubon.org](mailto:amy@potomacaudubon.org), phone: 681-252-1387 or visit [PotomacAudubon.org/education/youth](http://PotomacAudubon.org/education/youth)).



#### Homeschool Adventures (Ages 5-14)

These classes are designed to introduce homeschool students to specific nature-based themes, with the goal of helping students better understand the natural world and their connection to it. January, February, and March classes suitable for children ages 8-14. April and May classes suitable for children ages 5-10. Pre-registration required. 2-hour programs available by request for groups of 6 or more homeschoolers. Contact for details.

#### Wee Naturalists (Ages 3-5)



A program designed for younger children that offers short, guided hikes and sensory nature exploration. Held monthly at Cool Springs Nature Preserve. Pre-registration required.

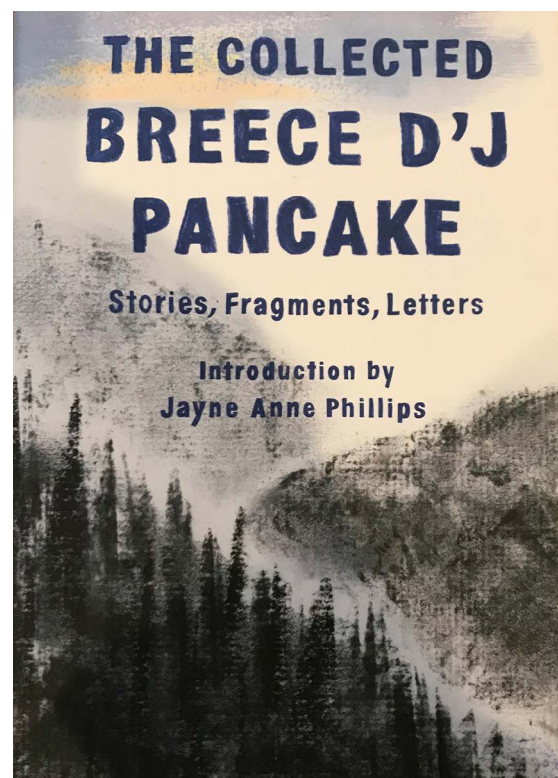


#### Outdoor School (Ages 6-12)

For families with school-aged children participating in virtual learning at home, first time homeschool families, and homeschooling veterans. Sessions held either at Cool Spring or Yankauer Nature Preserves once a week for a month. Sessions will be kept small. Pre-registration required.



## // BOOK REVIEW



### **The Collected Breece D'J Pancake Stories, Fragments, Letters**

**Introduction By:** Jayne Anne Phillips

**Publisher:** Haywire Books (2020)

**Review by:** Gonzalo Baeza — Born in Texas, raised in Chile, and currently living in Shepherdstown WV, Gonzalo is a writer with books published in Spain and Chile. His fiction has appeared in *Boulevard*, *Goliad*, and *The Texas Review*.

A FEW YEARS AGO, I took a day off from work, packed some clothes, and drove from my former home in the DC area to Milton, West Virginia. I had not visited Milton (pop. 2400) before nor its surrounding areas, but I felt that some of the sights during my six-hour road trip were familiar. I had already taken a peek into that world by reading the stories of Breece D'J Pancake, a Milton native who in a dozen short stories — six published in his lifetime and six published posthumously — helped jumpstart, in the words of Pancake biographer Thomas E. Douglass, an Appalachian literary renaissance.

The Milton Public Library was hosting an event in memory of Pancake and his legacy that gathered writers, people who had known the author in his lifetime, and readers like me. Hearing talks about the themes in Pancake's fiction — the shadow of place that looms over people's lives, the conflicting impulses of longing to leave and wanting to stay in West Virginia, the stark, yet poetic and finely-honed language — helped me understand at a deeper level the fascination his stories have exerted over so many.

Pancake committed suicide in 1979. He was 26 years old. Four years later, *The Stories of Breece D'J Pancake* came out, a book that collected most of his fiction and which has stayed in print ever since. Now, the Library of America, the foremost publisher of classic American literature, has released a more comprehensive volume that adds some of Pancake's juvenilia and letters to the mix. While this latter material is a worthwhile read in its own right, the prime value to the reader continues to be the dozen finished stories, including some that were originally published in *The Atlantic* — quite the feat for a then young and obscure writer — such as the book's opener, "Trilobites."

The story's title alludes to the small marine invertebrate creatures whose fossils can be found throughout the Appalachians, but it also roots the characters in the land and puts their lives in an ample perspective. Set in Rock Camp, Pancake's fictionalized Milton, "Trilobites" tells the story of Colly, a young man who just found his father, a war veteran, dead in the grass "after a sliver of metal from his old wound passed to his brain." Colly is now faced with the daunting prospect of selling the family farm while his former girlfriend, Ginny, who left for Florida after high school, is back in town visiting her family.

Pancake weaves the emotional and geographical landscapes from Colly's perspective: "I lean back, try to forget these fields and flanking hills. A long time before me or these tools, the Teays flowed here. I can almost feel the cold waters and the tickling the trilobites make when they crawl. All the water from the old mountains flowed west. But the land lifted. I have only the bottoms and stone animals I collect. I blink and breathe. My father is a khaki cloud in the canebrakes, and Ginny is no more to me than the bitter smell in the blackberry briars up on the ridge."

Like "Trilobites," other stories in the volume focus on apparently small lives that nevertheless resonate far and wide through their melancholy and evocative language. In "In the Dry," a truck driver visits his foster family after many years of separation and has to face the truth about a car accident in which he was involved. In "A Room Forever," a nameless tugboat mate spends a brutal New Year's Eve in a small river town.

Jayne Anne Phillips writes in the volume's introduction that Breece Pancake's work "include some of the best short stories written anywhere, at any time." As bombastic as the claim may sound, and whether the reader is discovering Pancake or revisiting his fiction, it is easy to see how the best of his stories are as enduring as the best written by other American masters of the form such as John Cheever, Lucia Berlin, and Richard Yates.

## THE FRONT SHELF



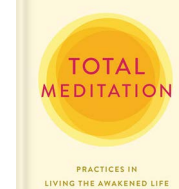
**Wintering**, by Katherine May  
Riverhead Books (2020)

\$24.00

Unforeseen circumstances can derail a life and these periods of dislocation are often lonely and unexpected. For May, her husband fell ill, her son stopped attending school, and her own medical issues led her to leave a demanding job. *Wintering* explores how she not only endured this painful time, but embraced the singular opportunities it offered. A moving personal narrative shot through with lessons from literature, mythology, and the natural world, May's story offers instruction on the transformative power of rest and retreat.

**Total Meditation**, by Deepak Chopra  
Harmony (2020)

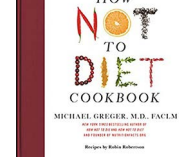
\$24.00



For the past thirty years, Deepak Chopra has been at the forefront of the meditation revolution in the West. *Total Meditation* offers a complete exploration and reinterpretation of the physical, mental, emotional, relational, and spiritual benefits that this practice can bring. Deepak guides readers on how to wake up to new levels of awareness that will ultimately cultivate a clear vision, heal suffering in your mind and body, and help recover who you really are. Readers undergo a transformative process, which results in an awakening of the body, mind, and spirit that will allow you to live in a state of open, creative, and blissful awareness twenty-four hours a day.

**The How Not to Diet Cookbook**, by Michael Greger  
Flatiron Books, (2020)

\$29.99



From Michael Greger, M.D., FACLM, the author of the New York Times bestseller *How Not to Die*, comes a four-color, fully illustrated cookbook that shares the science of long-term weight-loss success. Greger offers readers delicious yet healthy options that allow them to ditch the idea of "dieting" altogether. *How Not to Diet Cookbook* is primed to be a revolutionary new addition to the cookbook industry: incredibly effective and designed for everyone looking to make changes to their dietary habits to improve their quality of life, weight loss notwithstanding.





EXPLORE // AROUND JEFFERSON COUNTY

## LILAH RESTAURANT OPENS WITH WARM VIBES & DOG TREATS



**THERE IS AN ENERGY** when you walk in the door at Lilah, even when there are no customers inside. Perhaps it's the wood-fired oven blazing through the open window into the kitchen. Perhaps it's Connie Heyer working to put together the dining room or Kevin Longmire and the staff hustling in the kitchen. Perhaps it's the smiling image capturing the memory of the Heyers' dog Lilah overlooking the bar. Whatever the source, it's clear that you'll be welcomed into Shepherdstown's newest restaurant.

Longmire and Heyer have been working on the menu since July and the staff have been tasting since October. At 47 items, the launch menu is ambitious, but Longmire has many years of experience and loves to experiment. He comes to Lilah after eight years at the Final Cut in Charles Town and with a degree from the Culinary Institute of America. Connie's husband

“  
**It's a single-minded focus  
 on the experience we  
 want to create**  
 ”

Joe described Kevin as a master at flavor profiles, as he recalled the still-vivid memory of the steak accompanied with a bourbon-infused sauce that Kevin served him several weeks ago.

Kevin plans to build on his already-established relationships with local farmers to guide the evolution of the menu. It's not just about selecting the ingredients but also how to make the dishes work consistently, which for Kevin means that he'll be making a lot of the complex sauces and dressings himself. Adjusting for seasonal availability is a given, but Kevin also noted plans for pickling and preserving to provide off-season options.

In addition to collaborating with Kevin on the menu, particularly to make the culinary concepts work within the budget, Connie has spent the last few months focusing on the opening experience with an attention to detail that she attributes to her prior career as a project manager responsible for opening medical facilities around the country. She described it as “thousands of decisions, asking what's the best



EXPLORE // AROUND JEFFERSON COUNTY



Dogs (and people) of all stripes are welcome at Lilah.

salad, what’s the best fish option, what’s the best steak knife? It’s a single-minded focus on the experience we want to create.”

Listening to Connie and Kevin talk, it would be easy to guess that they have been working together for years, but the partnership came together just this summer — it was an instant click on the vision that they both shared for the restaurant. One fortunate aspect of the pandemic is that Kevin was able to bring along many of his colleagues at the Final Cut to staff the kitchen giving Lilah an experienced team from day one.

Connie and her husband Joe have been together for a while, long enough to raise four children. They had been thinking about a restaurant for many years, as avid — and critical — diners themselves. As Joe noted, “we both love to cook and enjoy eating. At a successful restaurant, it’s a combination of the good food and the good service that makes the experience. We realized often that we could do this better.” For Connie, she was tiring of the frequent cross-country travel of her prior job, a routine made

even more fraught by the pandemic. It was the chance conversation with friends that alerted Connie to the availability of the space and it was the willingness of the building owners, Mary and Ken Lowe, to work with her to update the kitchen that sealed the deal and turned her into a full-time restaurateur.

Since opening in early December for take-out, Connie and Kevin have continued to tweak the menu and get down into the nitty gritty of making it work. Connie admits to asking herself “am I a bit nuts?” for opening now, but the reaction she’s seen from the community is energizing. It’s something that she hopes to feed back, to build a place that “feels good for everyone.” For now, she feels comfortable with the space and has designed the operation to succeed at 50 percent capacity to allow for life during the pandemic. In the springtime, she’ll have outdoor seating in front and along the side. Eventually she plans for music too. “If we’re here in a year with regular customers, I’ll feel really blessed.”



The wood-fired oven is repaired and roaring.

*Lilah Restaurant is located at 115 East German Street in Shepherdstown (the former Domestic location). Phone: 304-870-4038. Web: Lilah-Restaurant.com. Open for takeout in December, dining room opens January 5.*



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## EXPLORE // SHEPHERDSTOWN

### COMMUNITY EVENT

#### 8X8 CREATE! A VIRTUAL ART SHOW & AUCTION

The Friends of Shepherdstown Library (FOSL) invites artists and crafters of all ages and skill levels to create an original 8"x8" (or larger) work of art to donate for an online auction. Art may be of any medium and should be based on one of the following themes: books, libraries, or nature. All proceeds of the auction will benefit the Shepherdstown Public Library. Artwork may be submitted at the library until February 6th.

The auction will be held from February 19th-27th. Details and entry form are available at the FOSL website ([foslwv.org](http://foslwv.org)) and at the Shepherdstown Public Library (100 E German Street).



### THEATER ONLINE

#### CATF SHARES HIGHLIGHTS OF NEW THEATER ONLINE

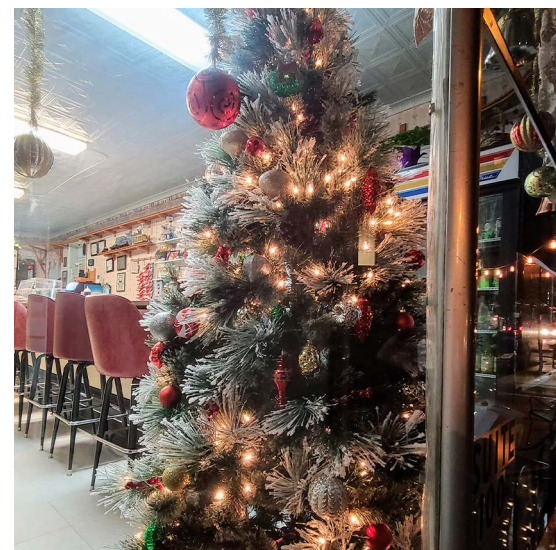
The discussion and development of new theater goes on, even if the stages are dark. With the continued presence of COVID-19, the theater community continues to create and explore new avenues for sharing and collaborating online — offering the public glimpses into the process that would normally not be so visible.

The Contemporary American Theater Festival (CATF) has been highlighting playwrights, directors, actors and others who have participated in its programs over the years as well as other organizations such as Prologue Theater that focus on new theater. Recent events have included virtual readings, panel discussions, book discussions & signings, and online conversations. Visit @CATFatSU on Facebook to follow and enjoy.

PROLOGUE  
THEATRE

### HOLIDAY SPIRIT CONTINUES

#### STOREFRONT DECORATIONS LIGHT UP BETTY'S RESTAURANT IN SHEPHERDSTOWN



### LOCAL FOOD



#### SHEPHERDSTOWN FARMERS MARKET OPEN FOR THE WINTER

You can still shop close to home on alternate Sunday mornings for local produce, apples, plants, flowers, breads & baked goods, cheeses, yogurt, grass-fed beef, eggs, chicken, pork, local honey, mushrooms, salsas & dips, maple syrups, vinegars, spices, teas, candles, body care, and other locally-produced items.

COVID-19 guidelines continue — please wear a mask, follow the directional arrows for one-way flow, and please no pets. Most of the vendors will also take pre-orders also (see contact information on the website under the "vendor" tab).

**Winter Hours:** 11:00 am to 1:00 pm

**Dates:** Starting Jan 3, every other Sunday

**Place:** Behind the Shepherdstown Public Library (100 E German Street)

**Web:** [shepherdstownfarmersmarketwv.com](http://shepherdstownfarmersmarketwv.com)

**Facebook:** @ShepherdstownFarmersMarket

### LOCAL HONEY



#### SHADE'S FARM OFFERS LOCAL HONEY PRODUCTS & MORE

Need a last-minute gift or a sweet way to start the New Year? Local honey, beeswax candles, and more are available from Shade's Farm! "Curt's products are great, and his attention to quality service is excellent and appreciated," said a satisfied holiday customer. See the local retailer listings on the Facebook page or order online at the website (shipping available year-round).

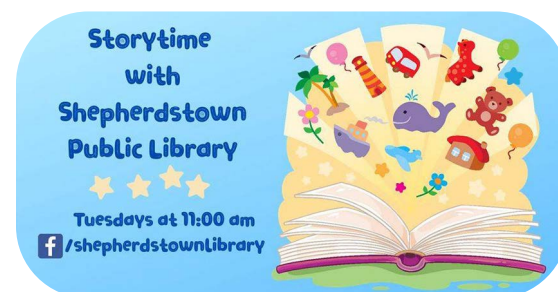
**Web:** [ShadesFarm.square.site](http://ShadesFarm.square.site)

**Facebook:** @ShadesFarm

**Email:** [shadesfarmCSA@gmail.com](mailto:shadesfarmCSA@gmail.com)

**Phone:** 304-707-114

### TURNING THE PAGES



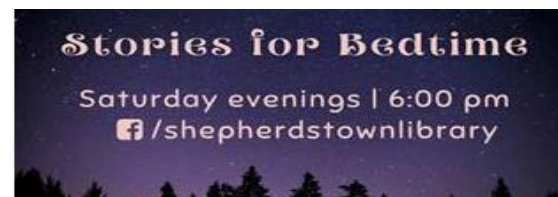
#### READING PROGRAMS FOR ALL AGES

The Shepherdstown Public Library continues its regular weekly reading programs for all ages and adds a new program for teens this month. Visit the "events" tab on the Library's Facebook page at 11 am on Tuesdays and 6 pm on Saturdays for live storytime presentations. You can view past storytime presentations under the "video" tab on the Facebook page. The Tuesday program on January 26 will be presented in Spanish. For teens, the Library is kicking off the "20 over 21" reading program on January 2. For more details on this program, call the library and ask for the Youth Services Department.

**Web:** [www.lib.shepherdstown.wv.us](http://www.lib.shepherdstown.wv.us)

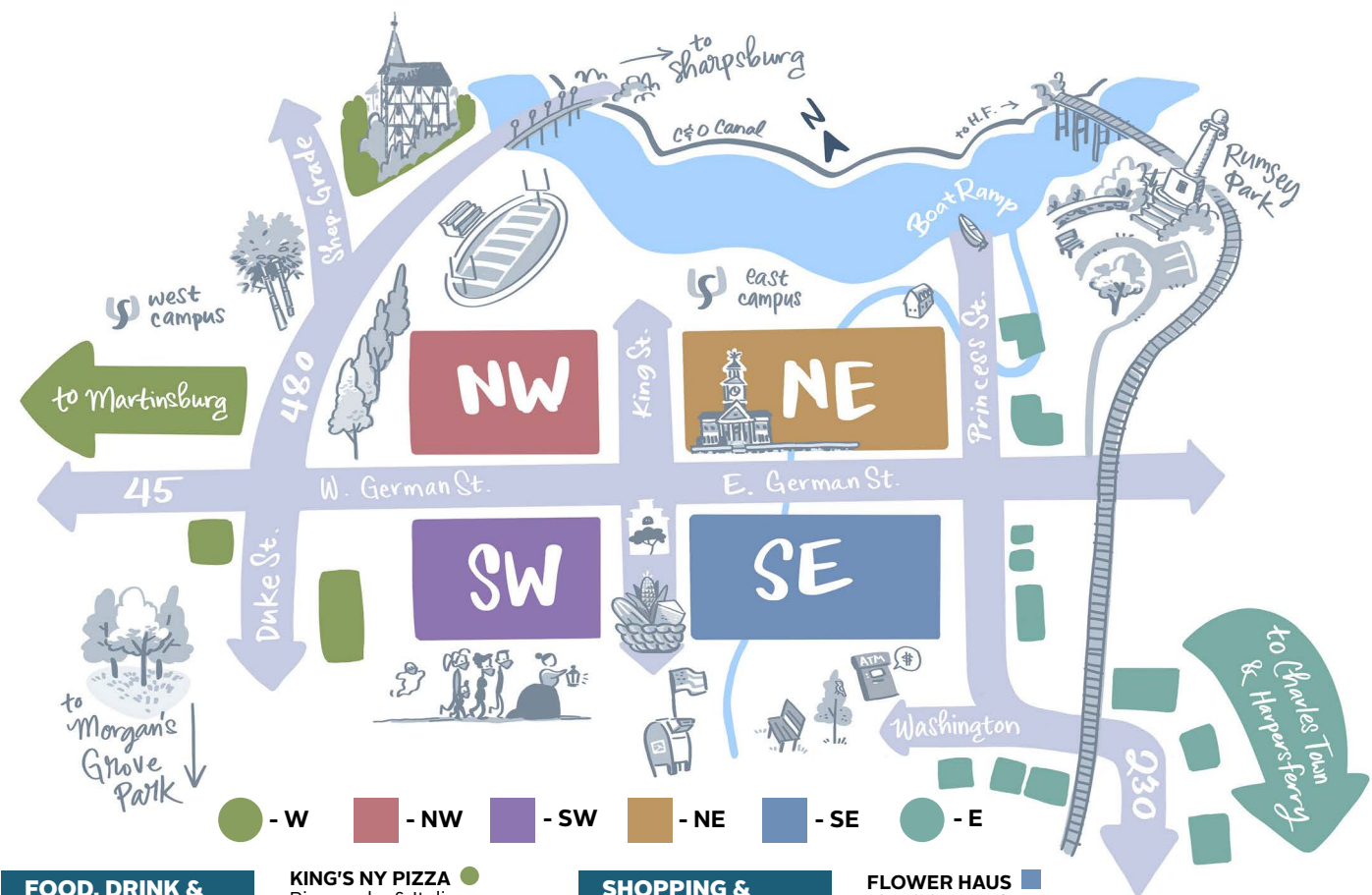
**Facebook:** @shepherdstownlibrary

**Phone:** 304-876-2783





EXPLORE // SHEPHERDSTOWN



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Vegetarian & vegan fare  
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- LILAH RESTAURANT** ■  
New American & International  
304-870-4038
- LOST DOG COFFEE** ■  
Coffee, tea & beans  
304-876-0871
- MARIA'S TAQUERIA** ■  
Mex/SoCal cuisine  
304-876-3333
- MECKLENBURG INN** ■  
English-style pub & garden  
304-876-2126
- PRESS ROOM** ■  
Regional cuisine, fine dining  
304-876-8777
- SHEPHERDSTOWN LIQUORS** ●  
304-876-2100
- SHEPHERDSTOWN SWEET SHOP** ■  
Baked goods & sandwiches  
304-876-2432
- TOMMY'S PIZZA** ●  
Pizzas & subs to go  
304-876-2577

SHOPPING & GALLERIES

- ADMIRAL ANALOG** ■  
Vintage & new vinyl  
301-491-6050
- AZAD'S ORIENTAL RUG EMPORIUM** ■  
Handmade rugs  
240-707-8987
- BADGERHOUND STUDIO & GALLERY** ■  
304-261-6028
- BRIDGE GALLERY** ●  
Showcase of local artists  
304-876-2300
- COOPER CAPTURES** ■  
(Currently online only)  
304-263-3100
- CREATIVE PROCRASTINATIONS** ■  
Whimsical art emporium  
410-917-7262
- DICKINSON & WAIT CRAFT GALLERY** ■  
American craft products  
304-876-0657
- ENTLER HISTORIC MUSEUM** ■  
(By appointment only)  
304-876-0910
- EVOLVE GALLERY** ■  
Pop-up art gallery  
540-604-6703

- FLOWER HAUS** ■  
Floral designs for events  
304-283-0588
- FOUR SEASONS BOOKS** ■  
New & resale books  
304-876-3486
- GALLERY AT 105** ●  
(Currently online only)  
304-876-8080
- GERMAN STREET MARKET** ■  
Gifts & delicacies  
304-876-1106
- GERMAN STREET TATTOO** ■  
(By appointment only)  
304-249-8332
- THE GOOD SHOP** ■  
Women's clothing  
123 E German St
- THE HIVE HOUSE** ●  
Beekeeping supply  
304-261-8548
- HONOR D FINE SHOES & HATS** ■  
Stylish shoes, hats for all  
304-539-3236
- KIMOPICS GALLERY** ■  
Local photographer  
304-582-1487
- MEDITATIVE MEDICINALS** ■  
CBD, health & beauty  
719-221-1543

- MOUNTAINEER POPCORN** ■  
Sweet & savory treats  
410-937-4612
- O'HURLEY'S GENERAL STORE** ●  
Novelties & gifts  
304-876-6907
- ON THE WINGS OF DREAMS** ■  
Gifts for spiritual journeyers  
304-876-0244

**REVERSA ROSE** ■  
Natural skin-care products

**RICCO GALLERY** ■  
Artistic Jewelry  
304-870-4175

**THREADS** ■  
Fun t-shirts & gifts

**TONIC HERB SHOP** ■  
Holistic health products  
304-870-4527

**THE VILLAGE FLORIST** ■  
Flower arrangements  
304-876-3344

SERVICES & ADVENTURE

**DOWNSTREAM TO WELLNESS** ●  
(By appointment only)  
540-336-4737

**EVERGREEN DRIVING RANGE** ●  
Driving range & putting green  
681-260-2116

**JALA YOGA FLOW** ■  
(Check online for schedule)  
401-440-0279

**LUCKY'S BARBER SHOP** ■  
Traditional men's barber  
304-870-4788

**NOVA ALTERNATIVE WELLNESS** ■  
(By appointment only)  
304-885-0093

**SHEPHERDSTOWN MYSTERY WALKS** ■  
Meet at the Library  
301-639-0651

**SHEPHERDSTOWN PEDAL & PADDLE** ■  
Bike shop, kayak rental  
304-870-4527





EXPLORE // CHARLES TOWN & RANSON

A FOOD HUB TO SUSTAIN CHARLES TOWN

Bushel & Peck Receives Grant to Expand Operations



Whether you choose to measure by the bushel or peck, there’s no denying that a recent \$125,000 grant awarded to local grocer Bushel & Peck will soon allow the organization to offer a lot more local, healthy food to the community.

“Bushel & Peck was launched in 2017 to provide better access to healthy foods for all people in Jefferson County, to boost

our farm and food economy, and to drive downtown revitalization in historic Charles Town,” explained Todd Coyle, Chief Operating Officer of Bushel & Peck and Charles Town City Councilmember. “With this grant award, Bushel & Peck will expand its healthy food offerings to the community, conduct outreach to new customers and families who are struggling with hunger and poor nutrition, and explore the creation of a more robust Food Hub that can make farm-fresh foods a bigger part of our local lives in Jefferson County.”

The grant was awarded as part of America’s Healthy Food Financing Initiative’s (HFFI) Targeted Small Grants Program, funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The HFFI program is administered by Reinvestment Fund, as a public-private partnership aiming to provide capacity building and financing resources to stimulate food business development at scale and build a more equitable food system that supports the health and economic vibrancy of all Americans. “The pandemic has underscored the necessity of having a robust and just food system, where all Americans, regardless of where they live or how much they earn, can easily get nutritious, affordable food,” said Don Hinkle-Brown, President & CEO of Reinvestment Fund. “HFFI resources are a critical part of the solution set to strengthen local economies, grow entrepreneurship and quality jobs, and further develop essential and sustainable infrastructure, particularly in underinvested rural and urban communities.”

Bushel & Peck opened in 2017 and

quickly attracted a base of regular customers who would stop in to browse the small shop throughout the week. The COVID-19 pandemic was a significant challenge, and the grocery adapted by adding online and phone ordering options as well as curbside pickup. Seeing the community needs up close and amplified by the pandemic, Coyle sees this grant as an opportunity to upgrade operations inside the store by adding new coolers and other equipment to expand the food offerings and also updating the computer system to better handle inventory management and online sales.

The grant also creates an opportunity to expand the reach of the “Food Hub” operation throughout Jefferson County. Coyle envisions that part of this expansion will take the form of a community marketing campaign to attract more customers to this healthy, farm-to-market center – with a focus on SNAP recipients, minority families, the elderly, and other vulnerable local citizens and families who need better access to healthy foods. He also has plans to expand the physical footprint of Bushel & Peck into vacant and under-utilized downtown buildings and lots to create a true “Food Hub” with indoor food outlets, outdoor food markets, connections to community gardens, and a bulk food distribution center that can serve local school and health centers.

*Todd Coyle, who is also a member of the City Council, and Charles Town City Manager Daryl Hennessy worked together on the grant application, and both noted the many individuals and organizations who supported this effort (details in the online edition at WeAreTheObserver.com). Bushel & Peck is located at 100 W Washington St in Charlestown; @BushelAndPeckWV on Facebook).*

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EXPLORE // CHARLES TOWN & RANSON



Inkwell's Tavern plans to close its doors at 205 West Washington after last call on Christmas Eve and reopen across the street at 200 West Washington (the old Bars and Booths location).

FOOD, DRINK & ENTERTAINMENT

**A LA MODE CAFE  
ICE CREAM & DESSERTS**  
113 Potomac St  
540-514-6255

**ALMOST HEAVEN PUB & GRILL**  
Pub food & drinks  
177 Potomac St  
304-535-8710

**ABOLITIONIST ALE  
WORKS**  
Craft beer & pub dining  
129 W Washington St  
681-252-1548

**ALFREDO'S  
MEDITERRANEAN GRILL**  
Quaint & homey bistro  
735 E Washington St  
304-724-9992

**GINZA**  
Hibachi & sushi  
91 Saratoga Dr  
304-728-9888

**GRANDMA'S DINER**  
American & Spanish  
227 W Washington St  
304-724-9960

**HOLLYWOOD CASINO**  
Slots, tables, & horse racing  
750 Hollywood Dr  
800-795-7001

**INKWELL'S TAVERN**  
Cocktails, craft beer, food  
200 W Washington St  
304-930-1742

**MAD MONKS BAKERY**  
Coffee and baked goods  
109 W Washington St

**MOUNTAIN VIEW DINER**  
Classic family restaurant  
903 E Washington St  
304-728-8522

**NEEDFUL THINGS**  
Cafe & vintage furnishings  
218 W Washington St  
304-725-6315

**OLD OPERA HOUSE**  
Community theater  
204 N George St  
304-725-4420

**ORTEGA'S TACO SHOP**  
Homemade Mexican cuisine  
100 W Washington St  
304-728-4321

**PADDY'S IRISH PUB**  
Irish-theme sports bar  
210 W Liberty St  
304-725-4999

**ROSSY'S PLACE**  
American Restaurant  
1446 Flowing Springs Rd  
861-252-4125

**SIBLING COFFEE  
ROASTERS**  
(new location)  
109 W Washington St  
540-450-7908

**SUMITTRA**  
Innovative Thai & Asian  
211 W Washington St  
304-885-8747

**TEE DAWGS BBQ**  
TX style smoked meats  
307 S Washington St  
304-725-2271

SHOPPING & GALLERIES

**ART DECO DEKOR**  
20th Century vintage  
114 E Liberty St  
304-724-6004

**B.VINTAGE**  
Modern farmhouse vintage  
114 W Washington St  
304-885-8920

**BUSHEL & PECK**  
Specialty grocery store  
100 W Washington St  
304-885-8133

**FAST CASH PAWN**  
Jewelry, electronics, etc.  
237 W Washington St  
304-885-0066

**FEAGANS JEWELERS**  
Custom jewelry & repair  
226 W Washington St  
304-725-7411

**FUZZY DOG BOOKS & MUSIC**  
Used books & vinyl  
111 N Charles St  
304-867-9321

**THE HOBBIES SHOP**  
Models, RC, kites, etc.  
226 W Washington St  
681-252-0861

**JEFFERSON COUNTY MUSEUM**  
(Open by appointment)  
200 E Washington St  
304-725-8628

**LITTLE POTTERY HOUSE**  
Make & paint pottery  
117 N Charles St  
304-820-6485

**MITIELDA LATINA**  
Convenience store  
124 W Washington St  
304-885-4544

**NEEDFUL THINGS**  
Vintage & new items  
218 W Washington St  
304-725-6315

**OP-SHOP**  
Curated resale clothing  
115 N Charles St  
304-725-6605

**TRADEWINDS FLOORS**  
Carpet & flooring  
204 W Washington St  
304-728-9980

**TWO CROWS ANTIQUE MALL**  
50+ antique dealers  
1212 N Mildred St  
681-252-1343

**TWO RIVERS TREADS**  
Active & outdoor footwear  
400 S Mildred St  
304-728-8843

**WEANT TO PLAY**  
Sporting equipment  
306 W Washington St  
540-514-3909

**WEAR IT AGAIN KID**  
Consignment boutique  
311 W Washington St  
304-725-7549

**THE WILLIAMS STORE**  
Convenience store  
131 W Washington St  
202-674-0300

**THE WOODEN SHOE**  
Vintage lighting, glass, china  
222 W Washington St  
304-725-1673

**WASHINGTON STREET ARTISTS COOP**  
Gallery & exhibits  
108 N George St  
304-724-2090

**YARNABILITY**  
Arts & crafts  
130 W Washington St  
304-876-8081

SERVICES

**COLIN'S BARBER SHOP**  
103 W Washington St  
304-725-0123

**DOUBLE IRIS YOGA**  
201 W Washington St  
240-625-8358

**EFFLEURAGE SPA & BOUTIQUE**  
303 W Washington St  
304-240-8012

**GARRISON'S BARBER SHOP**  
109 N Charles St

**SOKEL MAKEUP & SKIN CARE**  
123 N Charles St  
304-728-8801

**STUDIO M**  
Yoga  
231 W Washington St  
304-728-9988

**TAILORING BY TERESA**  
115 W Washington St  
304-724-6408

**THE UPPERCUT**  
Beauty Salon  
305 W Washington St  
304-725-1950





EXPLORE // HARPERS FERRY & BOLIVAR

50 YEARS OF SUPPORT FOR THE NATIONAL PARK

Harpers Ferry Park Association Celebrates with Hikes in 2021



A 1970s snapshot of park staff and association volunteers in front of the bookstore on Shenandoah Street.

In 2021, the Harpers Ferry Park Association (HFPA) will commemorate 50 years of providing aid and support to Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. While its plans have been altered by the ongoing pandemic, the HFPA will be organizing special programs and events throughout the year to honor its members and leadership, celebrate its accomplishments, recruit new members, generate funds, and set a vision for the future of the organization.

Taking advantage of the natural beauty of the park, the association will offer monthly hikes, inviting the public to join experienced guides to walk, explore and learn about the history of the park. The event details below are still being finalized — Current information and reservations links will be available by mid-January on the HFPA website ([HarpersFerryHistory.org](http://HarpersFerryHistory.org)) and Facebook page (@HFPAAssociation).

ARMORY WORKER HOUSES ON CAMP HILL

Saturday, Feb. 27, 10:00 - 12:30 pm

This hike will provide history of 19th century homes built to house Federal Armory workers. Details are still being planned. Visit the HFPA website ([HarpersFerryHistory.org](http://HarpersFerryHistory.org)) to check for updates and information about this hike.

MARY MISH TOUR OF FORT DUNCAN

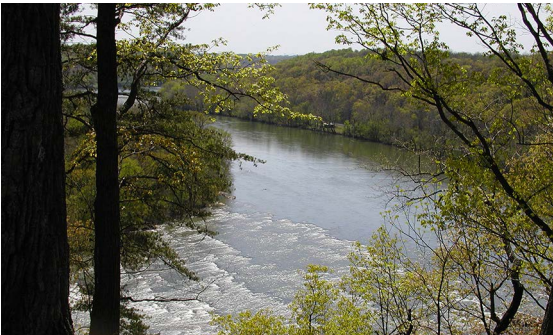
Saturday, Mar. 20, 10:00 am -2:00 pm

The trip length is still being mapped out, but the path will be rated moderate, on unpaved roads, rolling farm fields, and brushy areas. This hike provides an unusual opportunity to explore a rarely seen area of Civil War history. Fort Duncan is a well-preserved earthen

fort built in 1863 by the Union Army as part of a defensive perimeter of Harpers Ferry. Because there is no established trail to the fort, participants must be prepared for brush and debris, and wear appropriate footwear. The hike is dedicated to Mary Vernon Mish, a resident of Washington County, Maryland, who helped preserve and incorporate Maryland Heights as part of Harpers Ferry NHP. The leader for this program, Catherine Magi, is an avid hiker, author and “recovering” attorney now pursuing her graduate degree in history. Co-leader Irene Glasse is an essayist, minister and yoga instructor from Western Maryland. After the hike, those interested may join the leaders for lunch at a local winery.

THE MURPHY FARM

Saturday, Jan. 30, 10:00 am - 12:30 pm



A warm weather view from the overlook at Murphy Farm (credit: NPS Photo/M. Wassel)

A 1.5 to 3 mile hike, depending on weather and trail conditions, rated moderately easy, with half the hike on dirt farm path and up to 1.5 miles on trails in wooded ravines. Meet on the plaza in front of the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park Visitor Center, 171 Shoreline Drive. The Murphy Farm has been farmed since before the Civil War. The relatively flat farm loop contains the former site of John Brown’s Fort, a pilgrimage point for early Civil Rights activists; a dazzling view of the Shenandoah Valley; and markers and cannons commemorating General A.P. Hill’s staging during the Sept. 15, 1862 Battle of Harpers Ferry. A trail detour, which is more rolling and rocky, will take us to earthworks that are part of Philip Sheridan’s extensive fortifications around Bolivar Heights. The hike leader will be Jim Silvia, a Certified Tour Guide in Harpers Ferry who has led the Civil War to Civil Rights tours on the Murphy Farm for several years. He owns an 1840-era home in Bolivar built to house an armory worker.

Happy Holidays!  
from  
The Observer

Thank you  
for sharing your  
stories with us.

We hope  
you have a  
happy and  
healthy  
New Year!



EXPLORE // HARPERS FERRY & BOLIVAR

FOOD, DRINK & ENTERTAINMENT

**A LA MODE CAFE  
ICE CREAM & DESSERTS**  
113 Potomac St  
540-514-6255

**ALMOST HEAVEN PUB &  
GRILL**  
Pub food & drinks  
177 Potomac St  
304-535-8710

**THE ANVIL RESTAURANT**  
Casual dining, rustic space  
1290 W Washington St  
304-535-2582

**THE BARN OF HARPERS  
FERRY**  
Bar & events venue  
1062 W Washington St  
855-935-2276

**BATTLE GROUNDS  
BAKERY & COFFEE**  
Pastries & sandwiches  
180 High St  
304-535-8583

**THE CANAL HOUSE CAFÉ**  
Local ingredients  
1226 W Washington St  
304-535-8551

**CANNONBALL DELI**  
Sandwiches, Snacks, Drinks  
125 W Potomac St  
304-535-1762

**COACH HOUSE GRILL N'  
BAR**  
Full service dining  
173 Potomac St  
540-514-6255

**THE COFFEE MILL**  
Coffee shop (takeout-only)  
140 Potomac St  
540-514-6255

**COUNTRY CAFÉ**  
Breakfast & lunch, casual  
1715 Washington St  
304-535-2327

**CREAMY CREATIONS**  
Ice cream shop  
173 Potomac St  
304-535-3045

**HAMILTON'S TAVERN  
1840**  
Inventive craft menu  
914 Washington St  
304-535-8728

**HARPERS FERRY  
BREWING**  
Craft brews  
37412 Adventure Center Ln  
571-420-2160

**Harpers Ferry Ice Cream Shop**  
Ice cream & milkshakes  
4330 Wilson Freeway  
304-535-6305

**KELLEY FARM KITCHEN**  
Vegetarian & Vegan  
(Takeout only)  
1112 Washington St  
304-535-9976

**LES & ALI'S SEAFOOD**  
Fresh catch fish market  
(Weekends only)  
Wilson Freeway & Blair Rd  
540-931-8050

**MOUNTAIN HOUSE CAFE**  
Cozy family inn, takeout  
175 High St  
304-932-0677

**THE RABBIT HOLE**  
Casual American & drinks  
186 High St  
304-535-8818

**SWEET ALISHA'S PIZZA**  
Family-owned pizzeria  
180 High St  
304-535-8769

**WHITE HORSE TAVERN**  
Burgers, brews & Bourbons  
4328 Wilson Fwy  
304-535-6314

SHOPPING & GALLERIES

**THE GILDED 0202••••  
FLEA ANTIQUES**  
Antique & vintage wares  
930 Washington St  
304-268-0763

**HARPERS FERRY PARK  
ASSOCIATION BOOKSHOP**  
(Currently under the tent)  
723 Shenandoah St  
304-535-6881

**THE HODGE PODGE**  
Gifts, souvenirs & antiques  
156 High St  
304-535-6917

**MAGPIE POTTERY**  
Ceramics by local artisans  
163 Public Way  
757-376-1748

**MARY ADAMS  
ACCESSORIES**  
Eclectic jewelry  
170 High St  
304-535-2411

**NATURE'S HEALTH AND  
BODY**  
Health & wellness products  
180 High St  
772-228-4367

**HARPERS FERRY  
OUTFITTERS**  
Outdoor gear & bike shop  
106 Potomac St  
304-535-2087



The official light tour is done, but Bolivar & Harpers Ferry are still festive into the new year.  
Photo: Experience Harpers Ferry.

**RIVERS STUDIO &  
GALLERY**  
Functional & sculptural  
art  
1346 W Washington St  
703-727-2532

**HB SNALLYGASTER  
GENERAL STORE**  
Whimsical goods & cafe  
1102 Washington St  
304-535-8728

**TENFOLD FAIR TRADE  
COLLECTION**  
Hand-crafted wares  
180 High St  
304-579-8525

**TESSOTERICA**  
Hand-crafted bath items  
170B High St  
304-535-8248

**TRUE TREATS HISTORIC  
CANDY**  
Retro candy & fun treats  
144 High St  
304-461-4714

**THE VILLAGE SHOP**  
Souvenirs & novelties  
144 High St  
304-535-8333

**THE VINTAGE LADY**  
Jewelry & local WV  
goods  
180 High St  
304-535-1313

**WASHINGTON STREET  
STUDIOS**  
Ceramic studio and classes  
1441 Washington St  
240-586-3030

SERVICES & ADVENTURE

**APPALACHIAN TRAIL  
VISITOR CENTER**  
(Currently closed)  
799 Washington St  
304-535-6331

**GHOST TOURS OF  
HARPERS FERRY**  
History, legend & lore  
(8pm daily)  
100 Church St  
304-725-8019

**HARPERS FERRY  
ADVENTURE CENTER**  
Rafting, tubing, cabins  
37410 Adventure Center Ln  
540-668-9007

**TOY TRAIN MUSEUM**  
Family fun (open May-Oct)  
937 Bakerton Rd  
304-535-2521

**JOHN BROWN WAX  
MUSEUM**  
(Currently closed)  
168 High St  
304-535-6342

**RATIONS SPACEPORT**  
Laser tag & escape room  
1635 W Washington St  
FB Msg @RationsSpaceport

**RIVER & TRAIL  
OUTFITTERS**  
Rafting, tubing, kayaking  
604 Valley Rd  
301-834-9950

**RIVER RIDERS FAMILY  
ADVENTURE**  
Rafting, tubing, kayak, SUP  
403 Alstadts Hill Rd  
800-326-7238

**WHITE FLY OUTFITTERS**  
Fly fishing & light tackle  
4332 Wilson Fwy  
304-876-8030

IN THE PARK

HARPERS FERRY NATIONAL PARK  
OPEN FOR VISITORS

Visitor center parking remains open and shuttle buses are running. Park Ranger tours are not being offered at this time, but the Park Association is still offering guided tours (reservations required; visit HarpersFerryHistory.org or call 304-535-6881).

There will be 6 “Fee-Free” Dates in 2021:

- Jan 18 (Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr.)
- April 17 (First day of National Park Week)
- Aug 4 (Great American Outdoors Act anniversary)
- Aug 25 (National Park Service’s 105th Birthday)
- Sept 25 (National Public Lands Day)
- Nov 11 (Veterans Day)



## EXPLORE // STAYING ACTIVE

*The Observer invited Jordyn Truax & Chris Price of Climbing New Heights to share their thoughts on staying healthy this winter.*

As we transition into what looks to be a long and tough winter with COVID-19 continuing to dominate our news feeds and occupy too much space in our brains, all of us need to focus on our mental health. The strong correlation between regular physical activity and mental well-being is not new news, but medical research done this year in the specific context of the pandemic highlights the concerns: COVID-19 and its associated quarantining can lead to a cyclical path of destruction that actually increases vulnerability in the event of exposure. Isolation breaks up routines (including group-based fitness classes), and often results in replacing healthy activities with more sedentary ones (Netflix binge, anyone?). With this lifestyle comes a greater consumption of comfort foods, less motivation to resume exercising, and ultimately a greater risk of developing a cardiovascular disease (see the online version of this article at [WeAreTheObserver.com](http://WeAreTheObserver.com) for links to several research papers).

The warmer months of summer and fall gave us the opportunity to break from that cycle of isolation and inactivity, as we noted in our previous column [*Outdoor Fun Around the Eastern Panhandle*, October 2020. Read online at [WeAreTheObserver.com](http://WeAreTheObserver.com)] about the many options for hiking, biking, and trail running in our region. However, as winter rolls in and these activities become more difficult with the colder weather and shorter days, the risk is that we begin to feel trapped or isolated inside our homes. So how do we keep ourselves active?

### Kick Your Cans

Most brick and mortar fitness centers closed in March, which led to a trend towards at home workouts. Even without fancy equipment, you can create dynamic routines ranging from gentle yoga to high intensity training using ordinary household objects — instead of curling up in front of the TV, grab a couple of those large cans on your kitchen shelf and curl your biceps. For a more social connection, many local yoga studios are offering online workouts. Jala Yoga in Shepherdstown is offering Zoom-based classes throughout the week, with both membership and drop-in options (visit [JalaYogaFlow.com](http://JalaYogaFlow.com) for details).



### Climb The Walls



For those looking to get out in a small-group setting and shake up their routine, Climbing New Heights in Martinsburg offers two great classes for adults. Monday Night ClimbFit, taught by Phil Mastrangelo, incorporates strength and conditioning with climbing technique. Wednesday Womens' Group, taught by Jordyn Truax, caters to unique strengths that women possess, with a focus on building each other up while enhancing technique and strength. Both of these classes feature workouts that can be adapted so both newer climbers and those with years of experience can grow and have fun (Visit [ClimbingNewHeightsWV.com](http://ClimbingNewHeightsWV.com) for class schedules, kids programming, and membership options).

### Fight the Cold

If you do choose to hike, bike, or run outside, remember it's not just about staying warm. Wear clothes that wick away moisture. Cotton tends to hold sweat close to your body, so opt for synthetic materials instead. Hats and gloves go a long way. Dry, cracked skin is no fun, especially during a time when we are washing our hands more than ever. Gloves help keep in moisture and act as a barrier to harsh wind. Stay well hydrated — it's easier to recognize and prevent dehydration when it is warm outside, but your body still produces sweat when it is cold out.

If you need some competition or group motivation, Two Rivers Treads is hosting the Frozen 5 virtual run series — participants will be running individually on a course they choose anytime during the race window each day (6am to 8 pm) and logging their times using the RaceJoy app. The first event is December 6 and the series runs into February (visit [@TwoRiversTreads](https://www.facebook.com/TwoRiversTreads) on Facebook for event details).

### Eating Healthy

We live in an era of convenience foods. When stress levels are high, and motivation is low, it is often easier to heat up a frozen meal in the microwave after a long day. Everyone loves a good TV dinner, but often these options provide minimal vegetables and are high in processed fats and additives. Diets that lack vitamins leave people more susceptible to viruses like the flu

and COVID-19. We are all guilty of indulging in a handful of chips or a bowl of mac 'n' cheese once in a while, but sustained poor dietary choices put us at greater risk.

If we could make a suggestion, it would be to search the web for "healthy snacks" and try something different — you might like it. Some easy examples: Kale chips are a great alternative snack food. Preheat your oven to 350°, cut kale into bite sized pieces, toss in olive oil and salt, and bake for 10-15 minutes. You can add your own twist with garlic salt, vinegar, or cayenne pepper! Other easy snack options include hard boiled eggs, veggies and dip, or trail mix. Many grocery stores have a bulk foods section, which makes crafting the perfect trail mix both interesting and affordable.

### Resolve For Yourself

The resolutions we set for ourselves in January 2020 seem far away and almost irrelevant given the current circumstances. Somehow goals like "drink more water" or "lose X number of pounds" seem a bit small right now. This year has been vastly different for everyone, and what motivates each person to keep moving forward varies greatly. Our message to all of you out there, with whatever goals you set, is to take time to assess what you need. Free yourself from expectations and take a minute to breathe at the end of this hectic year. We've provided some suggestions to improve physical health in hopes that they will in turn improve emotional and mental well-being. It's been a long year, but 2021 brings the promise of a new beginning and an opportunity to make changes in your life, find new support systems, and become healthier, happier, and more balanced.



BY: Jordyn Truax & Chris Price

Photos (from left to right): Cody Combs goes through a yoga routine. Photo by Jordyn Truax; Jordyn Truax climbing at the New Heights Gym. Photo by Katie Thompson; A winter run. Photo by Two Rivers Treads.

**SPRING ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS**  
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