

The WV INDEPENDENT Observer

JEFFERSON COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

JANUARY 2022

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clothing assistance for adults and children.

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THIS PAPER WANTS TO BE RECYCLED. 



After many years of absence, the Cheer Booth returned for the 2021 Christmas celebrations in Charles Town. The spirit of the crowd lining the downtown streets at this year's parade was lifted both by unseasonably warm weather and the welcome return of a sorely missed tradition.

TO OUR READERS — Having a place to call home can make a big difference, as many of stories in this month's issue suggest. The community of St. Paul Church in Kearneysville has called their church home for almost 130 years and is still going strong with new generations. For the staff and volunteers at the Jefferson County Community Ministries, they see the big differences that fixing small, but important, issues can make in keeping their clients in a home — and how keeping individuals in their homes makes a big difference for the entire community.

In Harpers Ferry, Bolivar Bread Bakery has been around for a while, but has repurposed an old space into a new home, with plans for inviting the community to share recipes and learn from each other. The artists who have been filling up the walls and shelves of the newly-opened Artist's Confluence & Mercantile in Shepherdstown echo this desire for a place to gather in the company of others, both to learn and to share.

Learning, even for school students, can take many forms in many places. It's certainly not a static exercise, as Jefferson County Schools' evolving experience with virtual learning suggests. What we'll see soon enough is whether proposals for other learning options for local students come to fruition and what effect they have on our sense of "community."

 Steve Pearson
EDITOR IN CHIEF

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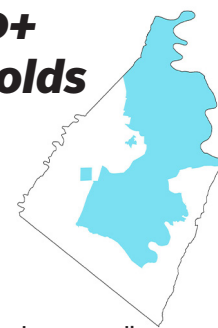
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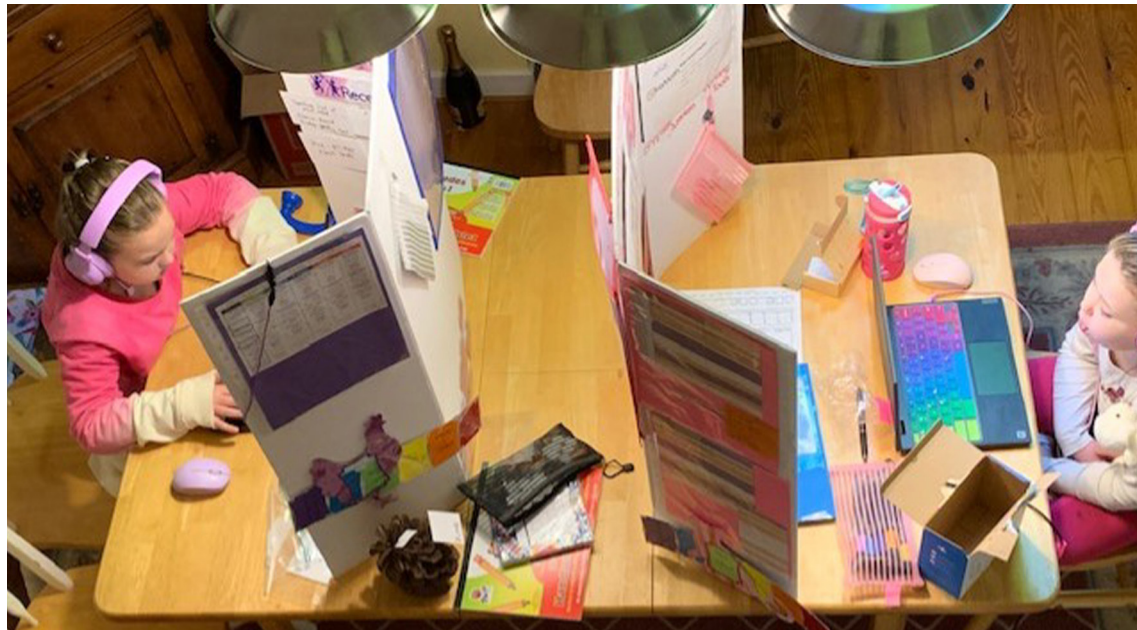


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// SCHOOLS

LEARNING OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM

Jefferson Virtual Academy Extends Online Options



Two sisters, at home in their kitchen classroom.

THE JEFFERSON VIRTUAL ACADEMY is part of Jefferson County Schools' commitment to offer education options to meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of a diverse student population. Sherry FitzGerald, Director of Responsive Education for the school district, explained that the program has evolved over the past several years. "The district initially used WVLeads, operated by the West Virginia Department of Education. Our original vision was to have a one-stop shop. The reality is that the platform didn't have all of the course options our students needed. Four years ago, the state legislature approved changes in the law to allow counties to have their own [online learning platforms]. Jefferson decided to work with Odysseyware."

"The pilot program started with 6th grade," continued FitzGerald. "Several years later most of the initial participants have continued, and the program has expanded to include K through 12 classes. The pandemic has really expanded interest in the program and this year we have about 400 students, pretty evenly distributed across the elementary, middle, and high school levels. We added a new platform this year, Canvas, so students have more options for classes."

"The program is not a one-size-fits-all approach, but it does require structure," FitzGerald emphasizes. Especially for the upper grades, "asynchronous learning requires students who are intrinsically motivated to

learn. Without the 5 or 12 adults [that an in-school student will see each day] to cheerlead their progress, the team of reminders is much smaller for these students." Technology issues are important to consider too: "The family, not just the student, needs to be comfortable with the technology, at least a willingness to learn and try."

Beyond the home and family, the school system helps provide structure as well. FitzGerald describes that, "Each middle and high school student has a faculty mentor who monitors the student's progress and is their point of contact. The mentor is a certified teacher; they also teach classes and are available for tutoring. Even though it's virtual, we still have to follow the state's guidelines for student/teacher ratios. We currently have 42 staff assigned to the program."

FitzGerald described how the Virtual Academy is more than just the computer experience. "The program is structured so that middle and high school students have homeroom time [via Zoom] with their mentors and peers. Elementary students are taught in a synchronous session so they are live with other children. The students also have access to athletics and co-curricular activities at their school of record. For lab work, we provide online demos and virtual experiments. Before (and after) Covid we scheduled field trips for the children too."

FitzGerald sees the programs as still evolving. "We gather data, record results, and look at what tools become available. We're definitely not wedded to a specific platform. We see this as expanding our toolkit to respond to student needs."

By Steve Pearson

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// SCHOOLS — CONTINUED

WILL NEW CHARTER SCHOOLS OPEN IN WEST VIRGINIA?

Two Statewide Virtual Programs Approved, Then Hit Obstacles

GOVERNOR JIM JUSTICE signed House Bill 2012 in May of 2021, allowing for the establishment of up to 10 charter schools in West Virginia over the next decade. The law allows for two of these schools to operate as virtual programs that could enroll students residing anywhere in the state. The upper enrollment limit for the virtual charter schools (combined) is set at 5 percent of the statewide enrollment.

A New School Board

Unlike prior provisions for approving public charter schools in West Virginia, the law removed the necessity to obtain approval from a local school board and instead established a new West Virginia Professional Charter School Board to oversee new charter schools. Three organizations submitted applications to operate virtual charter schools to this new board, and on November 17, the board authorized West Virginia Virtual Academy and Virtual Preparatory Academy of West Virginia as virtual public charter schools. Both of these organizations now have the opportunity to negotiate a contract to begin operations in

the fall of 2022. The law specifies a ninety-day window for the sponsoring organization to negotiate and enter into a charter contract with the Professional Charter School Board.

A Lawsuit & Injunction

The status of these two virtual charters (and several other in-person charter schools also approved by the new board) were thrown into question on December 20, when Kanawha Circuit Judge Jennifer Bailey issued a preliminary injunction to the approval process, stemming from a lawsuit filed by several parents and teachers objecting to the constitutionality of the new law. The plaintiffs are objecting to the new law on the basis that it conflicts with the requirement to obtain local approval before establishing any new public school in a district. ❏



HOMESCHOOL AS AN OPTION

Beyond the Classroom

JEFFERSON COUNTY SCHOOLS tracks home-school attendance and reports 1,176 students electing this option as of December 2021 (approximately 12 percent of the combined student population). In Berkeley County, the home-school number is 2,112 (representing approximately 10 percent of the combined student population). Prior to the pandemic, Berkeley County recorded a much lower number of students schooling at home — in the neighborhood of 1,400 each year. Parents aren't required to provide a reason for choosing the homeschooling option, but the self-reported reasons indicate that concerns about Covid-19 triggered a significant increase in the number of families electing to educate their children at home during the current school year.

With these numbers, it's not surprising that plenty of local resources have been created to support the parents taking direct responsibility for their children's education, from social media support groups to structured co-op groups that hire tutors and arrange activities. While there are many motivations for why parents and children choose to school at home, a preference for hands-on learning and outdoor activities seems to be a common reason for choosing this option. Responding to this interest, the Potomac Valley Audubon Society offers a regular schedule of educational

programs specifically geared for homeschooled children at its Cool Springs Nature Preserve.

The desire to provide hands-on experiential learning goes hand-in-hand with a disinclination among many homeschool families to rely too heavily upon online learning activities. In speaking with some local families, concerns about social pressures and online distractions are reflected in very limited reliance on screen-based activities, both for learning and entertainment. Flexibility in the curriculum and the desire to tailor content and technique to each child were also mentioned as important factors in the decision to educate at home. ❏




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FAMILY-FRIENDLY HIKES

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// SPORTS



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WOMEN ON THE BALL AT SHEPHERD UNIVERSITY

Winning Seasons For Basketball & Volleyball



The Shepherd Women's Volleyball team compiled a 24-4 record for the season.

SHEPHERD UNIVERSITY'S ATHLETIC teams certainly have been working hard during the school's 150th anniversary year. The football team's multiple come-from-behind victories and extended run in the NCAA playoffs (falling in the semi-final game to eventual Division II champion Ferris State) gave students, alumni, and local fans plenty of reasons to remember the year. The women's teams are no less impressive — the basketball team has compiled a 10-1 record as of the end of December, with upset wins over two ranked teams (Gannon & Indiana PA). The volleyball team finished its season with a 24-4 record, competing into the PSAC semi-finals.

Volleyball coach Alex Hoekstra, in charge of the program since 2015, noted that five of the team's strongest players graduated in 2019. 2020 was expected to be a rebuilding year, but due to the pandemic, the team spent last fall's season working out and practicing. By the start of the 2021 fall season, the payoff to the extra off-season became quickly apparent on the court.

According to Hoekstra, fans can expect good things next year too: "We had an end of the season meeting with all of the players to plan for the offseason. This team is hungry and not happy that the season is over. We'll pick up again in mid-January for the next fourteen weeks with weight-lifting and training."

Hoekstra noted that the players participate in the on-campus summer camps also. Besides evaluating recruiting prospects among the high-school age players, Hoekstra says the camps are a good opportunity for younger players to explore the sport too. "Volleyball is a very social sport. It's challenging and competitive, but there are lots of ways to fit

into a team and constantly work on different skills. You see this social connection in our great alumnae network that supports the team — it's like a sisterhood."

Visit ShepherdRams.com online for current team, ticket and game information. The Volleyball team resumes play next August. The Women's Basketball team is 10-1 at the end of December and resumes play on Jan 5 (the next home game is Jan 8). Both teams play at the Butcher Center on the Shepherd University campus. Single game basketball tickets are \$5. Purchase online at ShepherdRams.UniversityTickets.com. For summer sports camp information, visit ShepherdAthleticCamps.com.



The Shepherd Women's Basketball team is undefeated so far this season (through December).

// COMMUNITY

HELPING PEOPLE GET BACK ON THEIR FEET

Jefferson County Community Ministries Provides Many Services To Assist



JCCM expects to serve over 1,800 clients in 2022. Volunteers fill many roles to assist the small staff of 11 (shown here, clockwise): Keith Lowry (blue shirt), Jan Jordan, Greg Petersen, Annette Jones, Kari Dean, Bethany Troxel, Judy James.

IT CAN BE HARD to get to a job or doctor's office without transportation. Imagine the difficulty if you have no shoes. Keith Lowry, the Executive Director of Jefferson County Community Ministries, says requests for JCCM's services are increasing dramatically this year: "We've had a 75 percent increase in the number of clients and a doubling of the volume of services we provide since June 2021. It's coming from people who are laid-off, people who are self-employed and business is slow, rent demands [after the eviction moratorium ended], lots of different reasons."

Lowry describes the focus of JCCM as "trying to prevent homelessness. You may see a very small number of people on the street, but that's not the typical client we serve. It's families

that need money to pay a utility bill, or gas money to get to work, small things that can trip people up [and lead to homelessness]." He continued, "A lot of what we do with our clients is solving a puzzle, identifying what the issues are and how we can help our clients fix them. It's about holding hands to help clients find their path to stability."

JCCM starts with intake interviews to gather that understanding. The range of services available include food assistance (which could be as specific as meeting special dietary needs), a clothing closet, skills programs to help clients navigate job interviews, personal relationships, budgeting and taxes, and health care coordination to connect clients with appropriate services. To assist with many aspects of these services, "we

ALL TYPES OF VOLUNTEERS WELCOME

JCCM can use help in many different types of volunteer roles. Ages 16+ can help behind the scenes with **sorting food and clothing**. Adult volunteers can help with things ranging from **simply riding along** with a staff person to take a client to a doctor visit to being trained to conduct **intake interviews** with potential clients. If you have skills to share with clients (**budgeting, interviewing, etc.**) JCCM can provide training for you to help clients directly. The **cold weather shelter** needs a volunteer to stay each night to provide backup to the on-site staff member.

Details on the web: JCCM.us/volunteer.

really rely on our volunteers," Lowry emphasizes. "We have 80 now and I could use 160. There's always a backlog of things to do." 📺

Jefferson County Community Ministries, 238 West Washington St, Charles Town WV. Web: JCCM.us. Email: Info@JCCM.us. Tel: 304-725-3186. Donations of cash, food & clothing accepted (visit website for drop-off times & donation options).



Volunteers help behind the scenes with sorting food donations to keep things organized and make sure the items given to clients are fresh. Clothing donations also require lots of help to sort and organize.



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PERSPECTIVE // LAW NOTES

GRAY DIVORCE INCREASES

Splitting Up After Age 50



THE DIVORCE RATE IN THE UNITED STATES hit a 50-year low in 2019 as a percentage of all marriages, continuing a decades-long trend. But like a lot of “trends,” the divorce rate is not the same across all demographics. For American adults who have hit the 50-year mark, divorce rates have actually doubled since the 1990s, according to the Pew Research Center. In my own mediation and collaborative law practice, I have seen a continuing increase in “gray divorce” since the early years of my practice. These over-50 couples are often choosing mediation or collaborative law because they are interested in the benefits of the two processes including saving money and preserving family relationships.

Divorce is seldom pleasant and, after age 50, may be complicated by multiple issues. Financial factors such as income, retirement savings, and insurance require detailed and comprehensive review. Long-term relationships between extended family members must be considered in deciding how to work through the divorce. Forgetfulness or impairments may complicate both negotiation and litigation in some situations. Some top considerations:

Earning and Income: By 50, many people are hitting their peak earning years. Many are planning to retire at age 60. After age 70, many have retired. These considerations are essential in the gray divorce when working on long-term budgets, dividing retirement accounts, and determining what type of spousal support or alimony will be necessary for both parties to continue to make ends meet.

Retirement Savings: When couples work on their post-divorce budget, they realize the truth in the old saying, “two can live as cheaply as one.” This can be even more profound for folks divorcing after, or close to, retirement. Equitable distribution requires that all marital assets be divided. This includes pensions and retirement accounts. Once a previously-adequate 401(k) is divided in half, it may no longer be sufficient for retirement. When multiple pensions and retirement accounts are involved, negotiations can be more complicated. Of course, using the collaborative process tends to provide more significant opportunities to find ways to maximize the funds available to both parties.

Insurance: After a divorce, parties have to obtain their own health insurance. They can be difficult if

they don’t qualify for Medicare. Parties can explore options available through COBRA and Individual Health Insurance under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to find sufficient health insurance for the parties until they qualify for Medicare.

Adult children and extended family: Divorce affects other family members too. Sometimes people think that adult children are not affected. However, parents often rely on their adult children for emotional support, damaging extended family relationships. The lesson is to be mindful in the collaborative process or mediation. Adult children may also have strong emotional connections to both parents. They also will need to adapt to a new image of their family. In the gray divorce, extended family such as grandchildren may be impacted by the change in the relationships and how family-centered events occur. When the divorcing couple has been married 30 or 40 years they may have close relationships with their in-laws that they want to preserve. All of these relationships should be considered when working on a resolution in the divorce.

Mental capacity: If either party has impairments, cognitive or otherwise, or substance abuse disorders, that will need to be addressed. Even subtle impairments can make it difficult to negotiate, and in cases involving serious impairment, decision-making will be impacted and accommodations may need to be established.

Where to Begin

What should you do if you are considering divorce after age 50? Start by learning about your options for counseling, financial, and legal advice, and select professionals that can focus on your needs. Thirty years ago, the only option available for persons seeking divorce was litigation: one party filed a petition seeking a divorce, the other an answer, and then during the course of the case, the parties would attend hearings and negotiate until they resolved the legal issues. Today, mediation and collaborative divorce bring the parties together to find the resolution best for them as they proceed through the process.

Once you understand the options, and if you decide to proceed, interview lawyers or mediators to learn more about the processes that they offer. Find a professional or professionals with whom you are comfortable. After you select a process and a professional, you will be creating an inventory of your assets and debts. That information will help the lawyer or mediator to help navigate the most financially healthy resolution. Being informed and prepared is the best way to maintain financial security and relationships, even when divorcing after 50.

By Brenda Waugh

Brenda Waugh, MA JD, is a lawyer/ mediator with Waugh Law & Mediation, serving clients in the Blue Ridge region of Virginia and the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia. Email: waugh@brendawaugh.com.

FINDING COMMUNITY
 >>> PAGES 14 & 15 <<<

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PERSPECTIVE // BOOK REVIEW

LOVE OF PLACE (AND POLITICS)

Stories from the Ballot Box, by H.S. Leigh Koonce

Publisher: Ellerslie Books (2021)

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



IT'S NOT GOOD FORM to reminisce about oneself when reviewing a book written by someone else, especially a book that on the surface might seem a detailed account of Jefferson County's electoral politics, but which is also a subtly personal look at a place to which the author is connected through generations. Still, as I read H.S. Leigh Koonce's *Stories from the Ballot Box: History and Reflections from Jefferson County*, I couldn't help but think of my own history with elections and voting.

In her introduction, former West Virginia Secretary of State Natalie E. Tennant points out how "voting is the right by which we have all other rights." Personally, I didn't know people were supposed to vote for their authorities and officials until I was 13 years old. Having grown up in a military dictatorship where the government had a tight grip on the flow of information, I simply thought, as a young man, that this was the way things worked. You had one head of state — forever.

As one goes through the pages of Koonce's book and learns more about the strides made by different groups in gaining political representation across West Virginia, it is easier to understand his fascination with local politics. While one may not necessarily agree that voting is the right that affirms all others, it is undoubtedly a tool of empowerment, one that is inextricably tied to Jefferson County's local character, history — and future.

Koonce currently serves as chairman of the Jefferson County Democratic Party Executive Committee, and he traces his family roots in the area to the late 18th century. Party affiliation aside, his book is a judiciously balanced account focused on women and African American candidates as well as the last 20 years of political elections in the county. The opening chapter alone is an excellent primer on the different political offices across the county and state, packing information that can help both newcomers and longtime residents understand the intricate web of elected positions that comprise our local and state political structure.

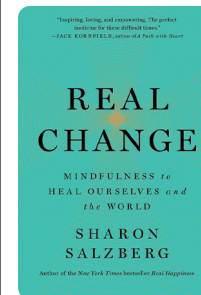
Narrated in a conversational tone, Koonce's book is at once an informative resource on local history and an accessible work that often recalls that one acquaintance many of us know who has an encyclopedic knowledge of a subject and can always regale you with an interesting anecdote or a meaningful historical tidbit.

In the last chapter, Koonce reflects on the future of Jefferson County and laments the deterioration of public debate in local politics as disagreements become more acrimonious and the political divide often seems like an unbridgeable gap for neighbors who should be working together toward the county's betterment. The phenomenon is undoubtedly a reflection of a broader national trend which, regardless of its causes, most can agree that it has become more vitriolic in the last decade or so. Local politics are not sheltered from this reality nor its more unsavory aspects such as online viciousness disguised as political activism and emboldened by anonymity. "I'm not sure I can recognize local politics anymore," the author says, and he highlights the need for elected officials from across the political spectrum "who are well informed on the issues and willing to sit down and work together," hoping the county can move beyond a climate of division.

It is in these passages that Koonce's work ultimately reminds me of what Joan Didion said in her book *The White Album* about attachment to one's home: "A place belongs forever to whoever claims it hardest, remembers it most obsessively, wrenches it from itself, shapes it, renders it, loves it so radically that he remakes it in his image."

A Note from the Editor — We hear from our readers that Gonzalo's book reviews are enjoyed by many. Unfortunately for us all, Gonzalo will be taking a break for 2022 to attend to personal responsibilities that will require significant travel. The Observer wishes him safe travels and we'll keep some free space on the bookshelf for his future reviews.

SELF CARE & REPAIR



Real Change: Mindfulness to Heal Ourselves and the World, by Sharon Salzberg

Flatiron Books (2020) \$24.99

A guidebook for how to use mindfulness to build inner strength, find balance, and help create a better world. Salzberg shares sage advice and indispensable techniques

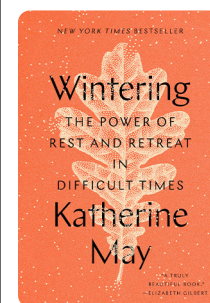
to help us free ourselves from negative feelings and actions. Whether you're resolving conflicts with a crotchety neighbor or combating global warming, this book teaches fundamental principles and mindfulness practices that bring us the clarity and confidence needed to take our next step into a better world.

Quit Like a Woman, by Holly Whitaker

Dial Press (2021) \$18.00



In a relatable voice that is honest and witty, Whitaker provides us with a groundbreaking look at drinking culture and a road map to cutting out alcohol in order to live our best lives without the crutch of intoxication. This book reveals the insidious role alcohol plays in our society and in the lives of women in particular. Further, it offers a feminine-centric path to healing from alcohol addiction. You will never look at drinking the same way again.



Wintering: The Power of Rest and Retreat in Difficult Times, by Katherine May

Riverhead Books (2020) \$24.00

An intimate, revelatory book exploring the ways we can care for and repair ourselves when life knocks us down. May unravels a moving personal narrative shot through with

lessons from literature, mythology, and the natural world. Her story offers instruction on the transformative power of rest and retreat, invites us to change how we relate to our own fallow times, and models an active acceptance of sadness. May we all find joy and peace in the hushed beauty of winter.

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PERSPECTIVE // NATURE

THE BARRED OWLS' DUET

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.



Barred Owl. D. Pifer artwork.

AS A NEW YEAR STARTS, I love to step outside at dusk and see the twigs of the bare trees etched against the greenish afterglow of sunset. I was about to call the dogs back into the house when I heard two barred owls hooting. We don't hear barred owls too often. Hearing them makes me smile.

To me, a barred owl sounds like a person trying to sound like an owl. I used to attend the annual meetings of the National Wild Turkey Federation during the 1980s. They always had a turkey calling contest, which included an owl hooting competition. Turkey hunters know that a spring gobbler will sometimes give his roost

location away before daylight by gobbling in response to a hooting owl. Contestants could use their own voice or a specially made owl call, and the judge would decide who made the best owl hoot. I can make a tolerable voice imitation of a barred owl, to which wild turkey gobblers, as well as wild barred owls, have responded. But I never entered a competition! Nowadays, most hunters use electronic owl calls.

Humans have a long history of imitating owls. Native Americans used owl hoots to communicate with each other after dark. Tlingit tribesmen hooted like owls when going into war to boost their confidence and to inspire fear in their enemies. The Cree people believed owl calls were a summons from the spirit world. If you hooted an answer to an owl call and received no response, you would die. Robbers in England signaled each other with an owl's call. They believed that, unlike the whispered human voice, it would be dismissed as a natural night noise.

Angela Crenshaw, a ranger at Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad State Park in Church Creek, Maryland, says Harriet Tubman frequently used owl calls to communicate with refugees fleeing slavery. Tubman imitated various owl sounds "to alert freedom seekers if it was OK, or not OK, to come out of hiding," Crenshaw says. Crenshaw claims that Tubman must have imitated the hoots of a barred owl, a bird she would have heard often while growing up in the southern states.

Barred owls have a call many people think sounds like "Who cooks for you? Who cooks for you-all?" These owls may not care who does your cooking, but their cadence matches those words. It seems to be a favorite call of barred owls everywhere. The first barred owl I ever heard in my native western Pennsylvania clearly ended a series of eight hoots with a characteristic southern "you-all." Now, in the woods behind our barn, barred owls sometimes wake me up at night with a single loud "Who-aww!" Owls even make this call in the daytime. Years ago my wife and I sometimes hooted like this to locate each other during our woodland adventures.

During their spring breeding season, pairs of barred owls seem to enjoy hooting contests with each other. They start out by trading the usual eight or nine hoots. As their excitement grows, they improvise and add loud whoops and yells until the woods echo with their wild music. Now that's a concert!

DO YOUR OWN BIRDWATCHING THIS JANUARY WITH PVAS
 >>> MORE INFO ON PAGE 16 <<<

BIRD COUNT — JAN 2

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT – INWOOD

Looking to be part of a really big project? The Charles Town and Inwood Christmas Bird Counts are part of a hemisphere-wide count that has been conducted every year since 1900 under the auspices of the National Audubon Society. This one-day count helps to monitor the status and distribution of early-winter bird populations. The data collected from this volunteer-based effort have been folded into what is now the longest-running database in ornithology, representing over 100 years of continuous information. This database is used to help spot trends in bird populations, which in turn can help identify shifts in environmental conditions.



Jan 2 (Sun) - anytime during the day. Participation details, maps and forms at PotomacValleyAudubon.org (under Calendar>Bird Events). Free (pre-registration required - email: bobdean52@gmail.com).

LOOKING AT WEATHER — JAN 12

BASICS OF FORECASTING

Mark Fresch, Technical Director of the Hydrological Ensemble Forecast Service, part of the NWS Office of Water Prediction (OWP), will present an in-depth look at how a weather forecast is made, discussing the different sources of weather data, the basics of how satellites and radar work, and an overview of the different types of weather models (American, European, etc.) and how they are constructed. Jan 12 (Wed), 7:00 - 8:30pm. TBD in person or online. Details (w/ location update) at PotomacValleyAudubon.org (under Calendar>Monthly Programs). Free.

TRIVIA CONTEST — JAN 19

ONLINE GROUP EVENT

Roy Boyle, Master Naturalist and high school science teacher, will host an online trivia event open to the public. Participants will learn about West Virginia's natural history and practice identification skills online in a game show-like format. Jan 19 (Wed), 7:30 - 8:30pm. Zoom & Kahoot website (requires computer & phone for group participation). Details at PotomacValleyAudubon.org (under Calendar>Master Naturalist). Free (pre-registration required - form on website).



PERSPECTIVE // CONNECTING HISTORY

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF A LOCAL COMMUNITY



The historic structure of St. Paul Baptist Church continues to serve an active congregation.

THE JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORIC Landmarks Commission board voted unanimously to add St. Paul Baptist Church of Kearneysville to the inventory of registered Jefferson County Historic Landmarks at its December meeting. St. Paul Baptist Church was nominated under Criteria A.1 — a property associated with events having made

a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history. Current trustee and church leader, Reverend Jeanette Eggleton, said there has been “excitement and true joy by all those who have been able to read the nomination” which tells the story of “the many who have sacrificed and worked to make Saint Paul the open, welcoming church it is today.”



The church continues to be a joyful gathering place.

A Home-Grown Effort

The years following the Civil saw the building of many segregated “colored” schools and churches in Jefferson County. Most were funded and built through the efforts of white missionaries from the North. Notably, St. Paul Baptist Church was one of the first churches in Jefferson County to be fully funded and erected by local Black community members. In 1879, John H. Fox, along with George W. Johnson and George Mason, purchased a plot of land in Hartstown, the African American community of Kearneysville. The Shepherdstown Register reported (April 5, 1879): “The colored folks have broken ground for a church in “Hartstown,” the southern suburb

of Kearneysville.” Fox, formerly enslaved and a Civil War veteran, was able to acquire a great deal of land in and around Kearneysville throughout the late 1800s. According to his granddaughter, Bertha Fox Jones, much of the lumber used to build St. Paul was from his land. Fox was also on the Board of Education for the local “colored” school in the early-mid 1870s, according to a contemporaneous article published in the Shepherdstown Register (February 6, 1874).

An Enduring Community

St. Paul Baptist Church has a rich history of quarry and mill pond baptisms, bush meetings, concerts, revivals, weddings, funerals, family reunions, and other community events. Families have remained dedicated to St. Paul through generations, and it remains a place that draws people home to visit whether they live nearby or have moved elsewhere. The congregation of St. Paul has a long history of community service and charitable giving (it ran a Red Cross Auxiliary program during World War I, for example) and, more recently, the “Willing Workers” committee donates and delivers food to community members and offers free baked goods following Sunday morning’s worship service.



The congregation includes all ages.

By Addison Reese

Addison Reese is one of five commissioners serving on the Jefferson County Historic Landmark Commission (JCHLC). The Commission plays a key role in highlighting the county’s diverse history through preservation of structures and historic landscapes as well as documenting the oral history of the people who live in these places.

If you have any records, photographs, and/or stories you would like to share about St. Paul Baptist Church or other under-documented places throughout the county, you can contact Reese at AddisonReeseJCHLC@gmail.com. To read the full landmark nomination for St. Paul Church, visit JeffersonCountyHLC.org.

EXPLORE // EVENTS & ACTIVITIES



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Visit WEARETHEOBSERVER.COM/EVENTS-ACTIVITIES for more events.

Email EXPLORE@WEARETHEOBSERVER.COM if you have an event or activity to include in our calendar.

DECEMBER EVENTS

DEC 29-31 (WED, THU, FRI) — APPALACHIAN CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL WINTER RESIDENCY Performances · \$15+ · Info/Tickets: AppalachianChamber.org

The Appalachian Chamber Music Festival presents three exciting holiday concerts guaranteed to warm the heart and stir the soul. Performances will be held in Harpers Ferry (Wed), Charles Town (Thu), and Shepherdstown (Fri). Visit the ACMF website for more info.

DEC 31 (FRI) — NEW YEARS EVE APPLE DROP · 4:30 – 6:00 pm at the Martinsburg Town Square. Family event co-sponsored by Main Street Martinsburg and Shepherd University. FREE. Info: [FB @MainStreetMartinsburgWV](https://www.facebook.com/MainStreetMartinsburgWV)

JANUARY EVENTS

JAN 1 (SAT) — NEW YEAR HIKE ON THE C&O CANAL TOWPATH · 10:30 am to 12:30 pm, meet at the Antietam Aqueduct (Canal Road, C&O Canal, Sharpsburg, MD) · FREE · Info/Register: SierraClub.org/west-virginia/events

JAN 8 (SAT) — ONE STREET OVER: DINNER AND A SHOW SERIES (traditional Irish music) · 7 pm at the Barns of Rose Hill, Berryville, VA · \$5-10 · Info/Tickets: BarnsOfRoseHill.org

JAN 11 (TUE) — ANTONIO SACRE, HOSTED BY SPEAK STORYTELLING · 7:30 pm, online only · \$15 · Info/Tickets: [email info@speakstoryseries.com](mailto:info@speakstoryseries.com).

JAN 14 (FRI) — KATE MACLEOD (AMERICANA) · 7 pm at the Barns of Rose Hill, Berryville, VA · \$20 · Info/Tickets: BarnsOfRoseHill.org

JAN 14 (FRI) — JAZZ ENSEMBLES CONCERT AT SHEPHERD UNIVERSITY · 7:30 pm at the Frank Arts Center Theater · \$15 · Info: Shepherd.edu/music/calendar-of-concerts

JAN 14 (FRI) — SHANNON BIELSKI & MOONLIGHT DRIVE, DUNLAP, AND MABE (bluegrass, Americana) · 8 pm at Bright Box, Winchester, VA · \$12 · Info/Tickets: BrightBoxWinchester.com

JAN 22 (SAT) — BRUCE MOLSKY AND TONY TRISCHKA (bluegrass, fiddle) · 7 pm at the Barns of Rose Hill, Berryville, VA · \$20 · Info/Tickets: BarnsOfRoseHill.org

JAN 27 (FRI) — SHEPHERD SALON SERIES — Sensuality and Eventuality (trombone and vocals) · 7:30 pm at the Frank Arts Center Theater · FREE · Info: Shepherd.edu/music/calendar-of-concerts

JAN 29 (SAT) — SALUTE TO DIVAS DRAG SHOW · Multiple shows at 7 & 10 pm · \$20 · Info/Tickets: BarnsOfRoseHill.org

JAN 30 (SAT) — TRAILS LESS TRAVELED: MURPHY FARM HISTORICAL HIKE (moderately easy, 1.5-3 miles) presented by the Harpers Ferry Park Association · 10-12:30 am, meet at HFNP Visitor Center (171 Shoreline Dr) · \$10 (pre-registration required) · Register/Info: harpersferryhistory.org

FEBRUARY EVENTS

FEB 5 (SAT) — 49 WINCHESTER WITH COLE CHANEY (alt-country soul) · 7:30 pm at the Barns of Rose Hill, Berryville, VA · \$15 · Info/Tickets: BarnsOfRoseHill.org

FEB 13-14 (SUN, MON) — DANCING LIGHTS SOAPS (pop-up) · Evolve Shepherdstown (110 W German, next to the Sweet Shop) · FREE · Info/hours at EvolveShepherdstown.com

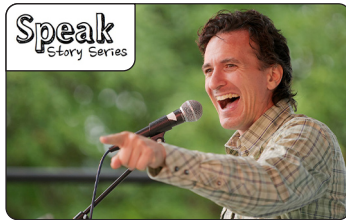
FEB 19 (SAT) — SHEPHERD JAZZ FESTIVAL CONCERT (local middle & high school jazz ensembles) · 7:30 pm at the Frank Arts Center Theater · FREE · Info: Shepherd.edu/music/calendar-of-concerts

FEB 25 (SAT) — SHEPHERD UNIVERSITY WIND ENSEMBLE CONCERT (w/ free pre-concert lecture at 7 pm) · 7:30 pm at the Frank Arts Center Theater · \$15 · Info: Shepherd.edu/music/calendar-of-concerts

EXPLORE // EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

STORYTELLER ANTONIO SACRE – ONLINE EVENT

Speak Story Series presents storyteller Antonio Sacre in an online performance Jan 12 (Tue), 7:30 pm. Sacre will tell tales of growing up bilingually in a Cuban and Irish-American household in his show titled “The Ninth Best Storyteller, the Second Best Dad.”



Tickets are \$15 and may be purchased at SpeakStorySeries.com. Sacre’s stories are rated PG (no swearing, but innuendo and stories intended for older folk; kids will still enjoy them). Email info@speakstoryseries.com for questions or information on season tickets for 2022. Web: SpeakStorySeries.com

MODEL TRAIN OPEN HOUSE IN SHARPSBURG

The Hagerstown Model Railroad Museum (at the Antietam Station in Sharpsburg) was founded in 1937 to promote the hobby of model railroads to the general public. The museum will present its annual open house during January, each Sunday (Jan 2 – 30), 1:00-5:00 pm. Visitors can see a variety of operating model train layouts as well as real railroad equipment displays. The museum is also typically open to the public on Tuesdays and Thursday mornings during member work days.

Hagerstown Model Railroad Museum is located at 17230 Shepherdstown Pike, Sharpsburg, MD. No charge for entry. Wheelchair access. Web: AntietamStation.com.



KIDS READING AT SHEPHERDSTOWN LIBRARY

The children’s reading programs at the Shepherdstown Library are back in their old home upstairs at the Market House building. The staff and volunteers are excited, says volunteer Lance Dom. “It’s been 5 months since we closed [from the car running into the building] and our temp space next door was very cramped and cold. Now that we’re back, this building feels like an auditorium. I’m happy to be able to see patrons, and it’s great to hear the children’s voices in the building again.”

The library offers three weekly programs for infants & 1 year-olds on Tuesdays at 10:15 (“Lap Babies”); for 2 & 3 year-olds on Tuesdays at 11:15 (“Toddler Time”); and for 4 & 5 year-olds (“Pre-K Listeners”) on Wednesdays at 10:15. These programs will restart on Jan 11 & 12. The adult and teen rooms are open as well. Shepherdstown Library, 100 East German Street. Web: ShepLibrary.org. Tel: 304-876-2783.



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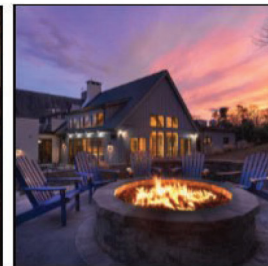
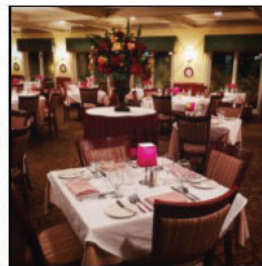
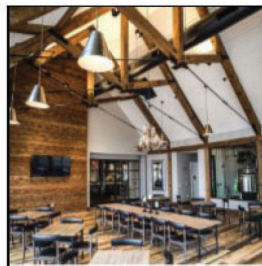
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EXPLORE // COMMUNITY SPACES

ARTIST'S CONFLUENCE & MERCANTILE MAKES SPACE FOR ART



Roselyn Sanders Mendez curates the works consigned for sale in the shop. The art for sale includes jewelry, furniture, metalwork, paintings, photography, and other media – an eclectic mix that can change daily.

IF YOU REMEMBER the Mellow Moods cafe in Shepherdstown, you'll know where to find The Artist's Confluence & Mercantile, a new shop opened just after Thanksgiving by co-owners Roselyn Sanders Mendez and Todd Cotgreave. Mendez is a local artist and Cotgreave ran the former Town Run Tap House, a popular community gathering & performance space. The new shop presents the work of dozens of local artists & artisans on consignment for sale.

Talking about the story behind the name — "confluence & mercantile" — Mendez remarked, "This space was originally built to be a general store and has a history as a gathering place for the community. I think of a confluence

as two rivers coming together, and I wanted this to be a place where artists can join together, where they can present and work in a dedicated space. When artists can communicate with each other, it's like creating new currents that drive us. With the pandemic we lost a lot of opportunities for community and conversation and we're hoping this space can be a place to rebuild both."

She continued, "This community is full of talented people keeping traditional arts alive. It can take a lifetime to build these skills, and showcasing these works is an opportunity to inspire others. We're hoping this is a place where folks can see and speak with the artists.

For example, there was a fourteen year old who was fascinated by one of Dan Tokar's metal pieces — and Dan was here to explain how he made it. For many artists, it's important to have an audience to receive our creations. I know for myself, I appreciate seeing my work move out into the world so I have the mental space to create new work."

Mendez says she hopes this will be more than just a gallery: "We want it to become a place to offer wares and connect with the community. We see it as an alive space, bringing new ideas together."

The Artist's Confluence & Mercantile, 119 West German St, Shepherdstown, WV. FB: The-Artists-Confluence-Mercantile. Email: TheArtistsConfluence@gmail.com. Open daily (FB msg or email for current hours). Artists' consignments welcome.



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EXPLORE // COMMUNITY SPACES

BOLIVAR BREAD OFFERS A LOCAL MIX IN NEW STOREFRONT



Bolivar Bread Bakery features a growing selection of locally-produced specialty food – as owner Katie Kopsick says, “bread and things that go well with bread.”

KATIE KOPSICK OPENED THE DOORS of her new bakery location in Harpers Ferry at the end of October. In addition to her own bread and pastries, the store stocks items that pair well with bread (jams, honey) and snacks, all of which she sources from local producers. The current mix includes items from Appalachian Chocolate (Shenandoah Junction), Black Dog Coffee (Bardane), Deliteful Dairy (farmstead cow cheese, milk, cream & butter – Williamsport, MD), Locke’s Mill Grains (organic stone milled flour – Berryville, VA), Mad Magic Kombucha (Warrenton, VA), Mountaineer Popcorn (Shepherdstown), Shepherds Manor

(farmstead sheep’s milk cheese – New Windsor, MD), Sister Sue’s Jams and Jellies (Martinsburg), Sugar High LLC (cocoa bombs, caramel apples – Charles Town), and Two Moms and a Cupcake (cupcakes, candies – Bolivar), and Kopsick says she’ll be adding more in the coming months.

“We thought we’d have a ‘grand opening’ after a while, but we just kept on rolling.” Literally, as it turns out. “As a “cottage baker,” I’ve been baking for wholesale customers and deliveries for years, but never in a store front situation,” Kopsick explained. “When I was working to set up the store, I worried whether people would come. I was really surprised by how many people have been stopping by, both locals and out-of-town visitors. I’m already making at least three times the volume of what I projected — and certainly buying a lot more flour. I was also surprised by what would sell. Pastries were not part of my original plan, but they sell so well I have reconfigured the kitchen to add space for making and storing them.”

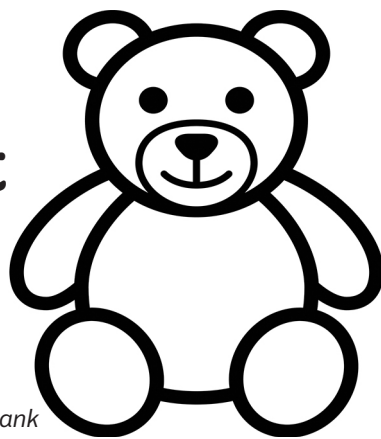
Kopsick says she has plans to make use of the extra space in the store to offer hands-on classes. “Not just me teaching about bread-making, but other people sharing family recipes for cooking and baking. My hope is that it becomes a community sharing and learning space.”



Gen Lejune, owner/baker of Two Moms and a Cupcake, is one of the featured local food-makers and also works in the bakery.

Bolivar Bread Bakery, 914 Washington St, Harpers Ferry WV. Web: BolivarBread.com. FB/IG: @BolivarBread. Email: bolivarbread@gmail.com. Tel: 304-535-8108. Open Wed-Thu-Fri 8am-4pm, Sat-Sun 8am-5pm, Closed Mon-Tue.

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EXPLORE // STAY ACTIVE THIS WINTER

PARKS & TRAILS FOR ALL

WINCHESTER GREEN CIRCLE (WINCHESTER, VA)

Parking on/near trail · Dogs OK · Multiple trailheads

Over 5 miles of multi-use trail connecting areas of historic, recreational, and natural areas of interest in Winchester. Parking available at Jim Barnett Park (1001 E Cork St), Winchester Visitor Center (1400 S Pleasant Valley Rd), Shawnee Springs Preserve (Hollingsworth Dr), Court Square Autopark (E Boscawen St), parking garages in downtown Winchester, and near Abrams Creek Wetlands Preserve. *Info/trail maps: WinchesterVA.gov/green-circle-trail.*



CHET HOBERT PARK (CLARKE COUNTY, VA)

225 Al Smith Circle, Berryville, VA
Free parking · Dog park · Public restrooms

Kids will love the playground and slides at Chet Hobert Park. With a 2-mile fitness trail, outdoor sports fields/courts, and a public dog park, there's something for everyone. *Info: ClarkeCounty.gov/government/parks-recreation.*

POOR HOUSE FARM PARK (BERKELEY COUNTY, WV)

233 Almshouse Road, Martinsburg, WV
Handicap parking · Dogs OK · Public fishing lake

Poor House Farm Park has over 2 miles of meandering walking trails through wooded and open areas around the edge of the park. Some areas of the trail are steep and narrow so watch your step. If you need a rest, enjoy a seat by Rickard Lake, which is stocked for public fishing (license required). *Info: Mbcparcs-rec.org/parks-and-facilities.*

PVAS NATURE CENTER EVENTS

WELLNESS WALK AT COOL SPRING PRESERVE — JANUARY 18, 10 AM TO - 12 PM



Join PVAS' Program Coordinator Krista Hawley on a guided walk of Linda's Loop and the Pond Trail. Attendees will have the opportunity to see the handiwork of Beau, the preserve's resident beaver. *Registration required, visit PotomacAudubon.org/event. Walk begins at 10:00 am at Cool Spring Preserve (1469 Lloyd Road, Charles Town). Dress warmly.*

WINTER BIRD WALK — JANUARY 8, 7:30 - 10:30 AM

Take part in the monthly bird walk at the USGS Eastern Ecological Science Center. This walk will be led by experienced birders who will show participants how to spot and recognize the diversity of birds found at this site. *Registration required, visit PotomacAudubon.org/event. Walk begins at 7:30 am at the Science Center (407 Reservoir Road, Kearneysville). Dress warmly. Children welcome with an adult.*



INTERPRETIVE TRAILS & NATURE WALKS

Rose Hill Park (Winchester, VA)

1871 Jones Road, Winchester, VA
Free parking · Dogs OK · Public restrooms

Combine a healthy walk with an educational experience as you stroll along the 1.25-mile interpretive trail at Rose Hill Park. If you're looking for more to do in the area, the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley (901 Amherst St, Winchester) is just a few miles away and offers trails, gardens, historical exhibits, and art galleries. *Info/maps: Fcva.us/departments/parks-recreation/parks.*



Catoctin Creek Nature Center (Frederick County, MD)

2929 Sumantown Road, Middletown, MD
Free parking · Restrooms (during visitor center hours) · ADA-accessible · Dogs OK

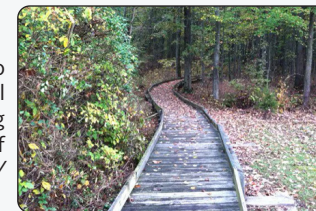


Enjoy a paved, 0.5-mile ADA-accessible path as well as easy trails through wooded areas and along Catoctin Creek. The visitor center is open Thursday through Sunday and features live-animal displays and other educational exhibits. *Info/maps: Recreater.com/151/Catoctin-Creek-Nature-Center.*

Mt. Briar Wetland Preserve (Washington County, MD)

19822 Millbrook Road, Keedysville, MD
NO dogs allowed in preserve · Limited parking

This park offers visitors the opportunity to observe the beauty of a natural wetland. Stroll through the park using the 1-mile floating boardwalk and take in the sights and sounds of this secluded preserve. *Info: Washco-md.net/parks-facilities/county-park.*



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—C.G. Jung (*C.G. Jung Speaking*, p. 98)

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