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THIS PAPER WANTS TO BE RECYCLED.



The Elmwood Cemetery Association has begun long-needed repairs to the roof, gutters, windows and siding of the caretaker's house on Kearneysville Pike, just south of Shepherdstown. The association plans to restore the interior next.

TO OUR READERS — It's an old saying that living is expensive, but dying isn't cheap either. It can cost thousands of dollars a year for the general care and maintenance of a cemetery. Elmwood (above) generates revenues from sales of new plots and burial fees. It also has an endowment that the Elmwood Cemetery Association has managed for many years to help with expenses. Contrast the Fairview Cemetery (page 11) which has struggled since its creation to collect enough fees to maintain its property. Not something that the cemetery residents can do anything about, other than to remind us of an ongoing history of separate — and not equal.

A century of debates over separation and equality linger today in our conversations about public schools. Often the largest employer in many localities across the country (including Jefferson County), public school systems both help shape local economies and offer the promise of bringing people together to help build the future of a community. It's a promise not always fulfilled and one that we ignore at our common peril. The Observer presents the seven candidates running for the Jefferson County Board of Education and we hope that you'll listen carefully to what they have to say — and cast your vote on May 10.

Looking at the roster of school board candidates in the context of Women's History Month, it's worth noting that just over a century ago, none of these individuals would have been eligible to vote, much less run for office. It takes strength to step forward, something that Lee O'Neill demonstrates with her energy and passion to help students make connections that just might save someone's life (page 4). Likewise, our book reviews this month offer a few suggestions for finding inspirations of strength and resilience.

Steve Pearson
EDITOR IN CHIEF

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// SCHOOLS

CONNECTING TO PREVENT TEEN SUICIDE

Brian O'Neill Jr. Foundation Brings Program to Local Schools



Hedgesville High School students created posters to remind their peers of their sources of strength.

LEE O'NEILL IS ON A MISSION to bring best practices for suicide prevention to Eastern Panhandle schools. Starting two years ago with Musselman High, O'Neill now provides the program — developed by nationwide organization Sources of Strength — to all four high schools in Berkeley County.

In early February, O'Neill was at Hedgesville High leading a workshop for two dozen or so students. It's not so much a training session as it is an opportunity to encourage the kids to build the program. "We meet two times a month, to help the kids get confident in their abilities," says O'Neill. "We give them ideas and language they can use in the school and out in the community. What we're working on today is our first campaign at Hedgesville, to identify trusted adults — not just those teachers and staff

who are willing to help, but specific individuals who are identified by other students as being welcoming and understanding."

"It's part of identifying the multiple sources of support that a child can go to," O'Neill continued. "These posters (image above) the kids are making today highlight the 'Sources of Strength' wheel — different avenues for kids to build positive connections." She points out that building emotional strength and resilience doesn't just reduce suicide, it reduces substance abuse, sexual abuse, and bullying.

For O'Neill, the mission to bring this program into the local schools is personal. She lost her own son Brian at age 23 to suicide. Her response was to launch the foundation bearing his name and become a certified Sources of Strength trainer. Now in its third year, the Brian



The 'sources of strength' program helps kids identify possibilities for connection that are meaningful to them.

O'Neill Jr. Foundation has trained more than 130 students as peer advisors and 40 adults as mentors in Berkeley County Schools. O'Neill's goal next year is to continue the program in Berkeley County schools and also have the program adopted by the Jefferson and Morgan County school systems.

On May 14, the foundation will hold a Stronger With Each Step 5K Run in Shepherdstown to raise funds for these programs. Registration information will be posted on BrianOneillJrFoundation.org and Facebook @ BrianOneillJrFoundation. More information about Sources of Strength at SourcesOfStrength.org. If you know of someone who needs immediate help, contact the National Suicide Hotline 1-800-273-8255 or Crisis Text Line 471471.

By: Steve Pearson

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// ELECTIONS

SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION ON MAY 10

Seven Candidates Running for Three Seats



IN MAY, VOTERS WILL SELECT three individuals to serve four-year terms on the Jefferson County Board of Education. There are five seats on the Board. Of the current members, Mark Osbourn and Donna Joy are serving terms that run until 2024, Kathy Skinner and Laurie Ogden are running for re-election this year, and Gary Kable was also running for re-election but has withdrawn from the race.

The May election for school board is held at the same time as the primary election for other local, state and federal offices, but May is the one and only election for Board of Education. The school board election is also non-partisan (no party affiliation will appear on the ballot). The three candidates with the most votes will be seated on the Board on July 1 to serve for the next four years.

State regulations require that candidates reside in Jefferson county. No more than two members can be from the same Magisterial District (Charles Town, Harpers Ferry, Kabletown, Middleway, Shepherdstown), but candidates run county-wide and all voters can vote for any candidate (with three open seats, every voter can select up to three school board candidates this year).

Public Schools Affect The Entire Community
All Jefferson County residents who are registered to vote are eligible to cast a ballot in the school board race. Even if you don't have children in

the public schools, the quality and reputation of the system matters to the economic vitality of a community. "When a company is looking to locate in a community, they have their business criteria for the return on their investment," says Dennis Jarvis II, Executive Director of the Jefferson County Development Authority. "They also look at the overall quality of life for their employees and the local amenities, including schools. The Jefferson County Public Schools are highly ranked within West Virginia and that helps attract businesses. Personally, the public schools were a factor in my own decision to relocate from North Carolina to Jefferson County, particularly the eagerness of the Superintendent and the staff to work with industries to support career pathways for students. For businesses, the public schools are part of the long-term value they look for when locating and expanding in a community."

Voting Details
Election Day is May 10, with regular polling locations open from 6:30 in the morning to 7:30 in the evening. Early voting will begin on April 27 and run through May 7. Absentee ballot requests must be received by May 4. **The last day to register to vote (or update your voter registration) is April 19 (Tue).** You can check or update your voter registration online at GoVoteWV.com, a website managed by the West Virginia Secretary of State.

ABOUT THE CANDIDATES

The Observer spoke with all seven of the candidates currently running for the Jefferson County Board of Education (Gary Kable has withdrawn his candidacy after resigning from the Board in February). A brief snapshot of each candidate, along with a summary of their responses to The Observer's questions, appears on the following pages. Additional responses and information will be published in future issues and online at WeAreTheObserver.com/Elections-2022-Candidates.

FLIP TO THE NEXT PAGE TO READ CANDIDATE BIOS AND PRIORITIES >>>

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TWO YEARS OF COVID-19
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// ELECTIONS - CONTINUED

MEET THE CANDIDATES: BOARD OF EDUCATION

➤ ANDREA ELLIOT

Email: CelebrateL10@aol.com

Candidate Snapshot — Resident in Jefferson County for 5 years. The candidate responded to The Observer but declined to provide any information or statements.

➤ BARBARA FULLER

Email: Fuller4BoardOfEd@gmail.com
 FB: BarbaraFullerforJeffersonCounty
 Web: Fuller4BoardOfEd.wisite.com/bffcboe

Candidate Snapshot — Resident in Jefferson County for 14 years. 4 children attended Jefferson public schools (2 graduated Jefferson High School). Prior community service includes documentary photography for middle school sports games. Currently a volunteer 'Search Angel' helping adoptees learn about their birth families. Prior work experience in brokering equipment leases and loan workouts.

Priorities

The top priority for me will be to get the finances into check. I have seen waste in many areas. One that sticks out is the Board office, it is time to trim the fat. Without access to a complete budget it is hard to identify specifics, but I do have some ideas about the needs of the county. I would like to see the Shepherdstown Elementary school remain as close to Shepherdstown proper as possible. If retrofitting and updating the current middle school is an option and is in the budget I would love to see it happen. I would love to see our own technical school in the county. Students lose approximately one and a half hours in transportation to Berkeley county. I would love to see more STEM programs in the county. It is the way of the future. Public in-person charter schools are good for Jefferson County, imagine if one was a STEM school. Children are like snowflakes, not one is the same and not all learn the same. Parents deserve the opportunity to educate their child that suits the child's needs.

Concerns

My biggest concern is transparency. I think that people have given up going to Board meetings because their voices appear to fall on deaf ears. As an elected official the Board members have a duty to reply to the people who voted them in, good or bad. Staffing issues are a major issue. I would like to utilize all the necessary outlets to give our teachers and service personnel a wage they can say is not only fair but can keep them here in Jefferson county. I also feel that we have growing issues with special education and providing appropriate IEPs [individualized education programs]. I would like to see the process streamlined and offer help for parents to get the services they need.

➤ LAURIE OGDEN

Email: LOgden1@Comcast.net

Candidate Snapshot — Resident in Jefferson County for 25+ years; 3 children who are graduates of Jefferson High School, 1 child currently attending JHS. Prior community service includes 2 terms on BOE (since 2014), member & vice president of Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce. Currently employed as a supply chain analyst. Prior work experience as a teacher, business owner, factory worker. Degrees in Early Childhood Education & Sports and Health Sciences.

I decided to run for the board of education originally, due to my love for children, seeing them reach their full potential, and to leave the system better than I found it for the students that come long after my children have graduated. I still believe this. I have had a student in Jefferson County Schools for the last 15 years and still do. There is much more work to be done but I am proud of the staff and students who have worked incredibly hard to make great things happen. Jefferson County is a place where people come to live and raise families from many different areas. The expectations and ideas can be very different. I am running to continue to try and hear, understand, and meet those needs and expectations.

Priorities

The retention and recruitment of staff in all areas of professional and service will be a priority. The shortages that affect us nationally and here in Jefferson County will continue. We will need to work together as a community, think outside the box, and discover some new and some similar ways to educate and care for our students. Supporting our students and staff as we all mentally recover from the last two years is a priority. This pandemic has touched us all in different ways. Finding our way forward together will take intentional areas of focus. Additional priorities include better special education services and support for parents and staff. The Board just recently hired an Assistant Superintendent of Special Education so full focus could be given to ALL Jefferson County students whether it is for reading and math scores or any area of needed growth. The excitement of finishing what we started with building the two new schools in Ranson and Shepherdstown is an additional priority.

➤ TIFFANI SHEPPARD

Email: SheppardForBOE@gmail.com
 FB: Tiffani Sheppard for JCSWV Board of Education

Candidate Snapshot — multiple children who are/have attended Jefferson County Schools. Currently employed as a manager in the hospitality/food service industry. Associate degrees in business administration and human resources management.

Priorities

I think there will still be lingering effects of the pandemic that will require immediate attention and curriculum will be a huge focus. Also, raising our proficiency rates should be a top priority. I believe that we need to focus on special education needs throughout the county. I also know that it would be extremely beneficial for our kids to return to being able to go on field trips and educational outings. My youngest kids have been disappointed by the cancellation of the all the time-honored traditions such as 5th grade trips to Star Base and Hershey Park. I would also support our music and sports programs throughout the county, including away camps for band and sports teams.

Concerns

We are going to have to address the curriculum and to what degree CRT is included. We also need to address the way our kids are being instructed. We have been continually moving toward online learning even in the classrooms and this is not doing great things for our children or their test scores. They need handwriting, communication skills, and they need the interaction with their teachers put back into learning rather than 10 minutes of instruction time and the rest "independent learning." My top concern is staff recruiting and retention, we need to be competitive when surrounding counties are paying so much more than Jefferson county. We need to address the fact that even though we have housing going up everywhere, our school enrollment is declining.

I think the school board and administration has disregarded and been very dismissive of parents and community concerns. They have often silently sat and disregarded pleas from parents, students, and teachers and then come back with sarcastic and underhanded remarks in later meetings which I don't believe they thought we were smart enough to catch, and that is not right.

➤ KATHY SKINNER

Email: SkinnerBOE@gmail.com
 FB: Skinner for School Board

Candidate Snapshot — Resident of Jefferson County for 19 years. 2 children who are graduates of Washington High School, 2 currently attending WHS. Prior community service includes 2 terms on BOE (since 2014), currently serving as President. Also service on Jefferson County Read-A-Loud board, Charles Town Now board. Licensed CPA, Bachelor's degree in accounting, Masters degree in business administration.

Priorities

Staff retention and recruitment must be our number one priority. Even before the pandemic, we had difficulty competing with the pay of school systems in



// ELECTIONS - CONTINUED

our neighboring states. With the pandemic, finding qualified teachers and staff became even tougher. Since I have been on the Board, our community has twice supported a levy to supplement the teacher pay we get from the state. In addition, the Board has implemented Phase One of our Recruitment and Retention Plan offering incentives and financial opportunities for our staff. Finding and keeping great staff is the key to academic achievement.

When I came on the Board in 2014, our two high schools were ranked #23 and #28 in the state; by 2021 our two high schools had moved up to #9 and #10 in the state. Jefferson County's most recent Reading and Writing SAT scores were #1 in the state. This is academic progress of which we can all be proud, and credit goes to our employees, especially during these tough times. We need consistency on the Board to keep improving our pay and benefit packages during these challenging times.

School safety is also paramount. One thing that we all learned during the pandemic is that a never-changing, one-size-fits-all approach to health and safety does not work. As the pandemic has shifted, whether due to new variants, the introduction of vaccines, or better understanding of how the virus spreads, we have shifted our policies to address the pandemic. We are proud of keeping schools open five days a week as much as possible, while also giving parents choices, such as by having their kids participate virtually. My second priority of safety means that the school system should never follow a simple-minded policy that will always apply to all people at all times, without any consideration given to changing circumstances.

➤ JOYCE SMITH

Email: J1Ellen@protonmail.com
 FB: Joyce Smith for Jefferson County BOE

Candidate Snapshot — Resident in Jefferson County 30+ years. Daughter is currently teaching at JCS elementary school.

Priorities

The first priority is, of course, hiring qualified teachers.... Pay is an issue. This also goes for our service personnel. Before it was said we didn't have the extra funds and now we do have the extra funds, and this is still an issue. We need to look at spending some of the surplus on this issue, recruitment needs to be ramped up. We also should be encouraging high school students to become teachers with incentives. Transparency is another ongoing issue. I would like to see questions posed to the board at meetings answered via the website, newspapers, etc. We can hold board meetings at different schools around the county for increased turn out. The board are the policy makers. Most of the policies for JCS are very outdated. While new ones need to be made, old ones need to be reviewed and I feel this should be done on a yearly basis.

Concerns

My top concern is the teacher shortage as well as service personnel shortage. We have the schools to accommodate the children but we have experienced a steady decline in student enrollment. We need to find out all the factors that contribute to that and with the

help of the parents and citizens make positive changes to reverse that. I feel that the public school system has a lot of work to do over the next coming years to improve in areas like special needs, teacher retention, basic curriculum ... so that parents want to have children attend public school.... If I had small children in public school I would look into charter schools and possibly homeschooling.

Things To Change

The present board not listening to parents' concerns regarding masking. The introduction of the Black Math Genius program which many parents feel is divisive and an intro into CRT. The recent Amplify program that was voted in without taking parents' concerns into account of having elements of common core. The recent hiring of 4 or 5 new administrative positions in the Central Office while we are short on teachers and bus operators.

➤ CARMEN TAYLOR-BRATTON

Email: Carmen-Taylor-Bratton4BOE@gmail.com

Candidate Snapshot — Grew up in Jefferson County, Alumna of Jefferson High School. 1 child graduated from JCS schools, 1 currently enrolled. Prior community service includes classroom parent volunteer (reading, field trips, tutoring), Currently volunteering as a tutor with JCS for elementary math and reading.

The Board needs to connect with the community. I would want to listen and publicly address concerns the community brings up. If we are not part of the solution, we are part of the problem. I'd like to bring back unity to our community, between the students, the parents, and the staff. I've been attending a lot of Board meetings and the Board needs to respond to the questions posed, to help keep families in the public school system.

Priorities

Our number one priority should be the children and I would push the board to focus on several key areas to support them: improving academic success and test scores; keeping our students healthy; restructuring the special education program. I would also advocate to expand the reading, math and STEM programs to include free tutoring. I'd also like to expand community access to schools through adult and community learning programs.

Concerns

I believe families should feel good about their children's education and I want to help guide Jefferson County Schools to be the education of choice for families. I will work to address the needs of families that have chosen to opt out of Jefferson County Schools to home school or attend private school. I respect the fact that the legislatures felt they needed to design alternative school programs. But it will be our job to address the concerns of families so that they may choose Jefferson County Schools as their top educational option. On the budget, I'd like to review the salary raises given to administrators in 2020 and see if service personnel, teachers, principals and coaches can be added to that pay raise.

“Reason becomes unreason when separated from the heart ...”
 —C.G. Jung (*The Symbolic Life*, p. 311)

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TWO YEARS OF COVID IN THE EASTERN PANHANDLE

By Terrence Reidy, MD, MPH

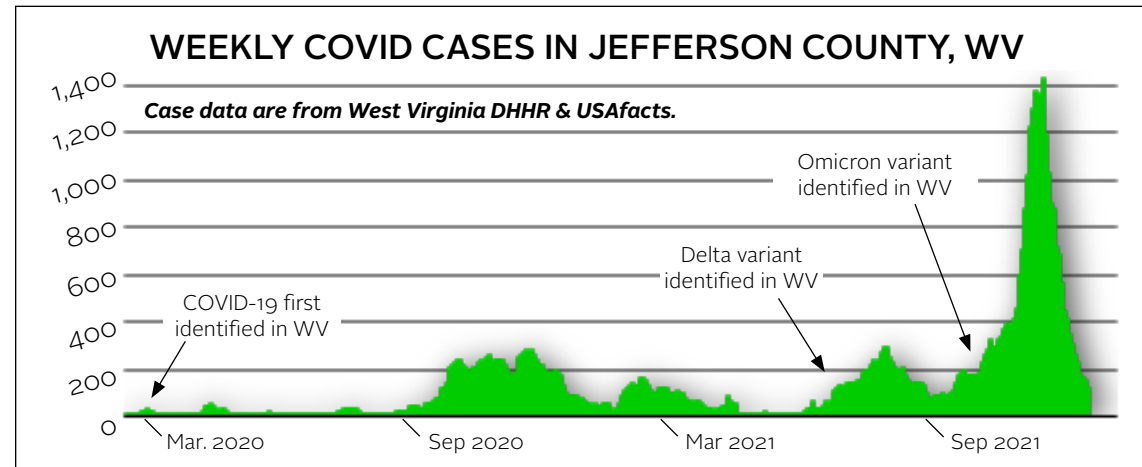
Dr. Reidy is the Health Officer of the Jefferson County Health Department.

Two years ago, in early March 2020, West Virginia was the only state in the country without a documented COVID-19 case. Anticipating the virus would soon arrive, Governor Jim Justice issued an order to close all West Virginia schools (pre-K to grade 12) after Friday the 13th of March. At the time there was very limited information about the virus, but the date was an omen of what was to come. Four days later the first case of COVID was diagnosed in Jefferson County. By April, Berkeley, Jefferson and Morgan Counties were determined to be “hot spots” and Governor Justice issued expanded Stay-at-Home orders and additional restrictions for the three Eastern Panhandle counties.

The First Wave

The first COVID-19 wave in the spring of 2020 was, in retrospect, small and the “curve was flattened,” in Jefferson County (see chart). By the summer of 2020, more was learned about the disease, and it became less scary. Difficult economic and social restrictions were greatly relaxed. Still, new cases continued to be reported across the country and it became apparent that this virus was not going to disappear quickly. The number of local cases and hospitalizations remained low but steady through the end of the summer and the early fall of 2020. Then, in October 2020, the story started to change. With cold weather, football games, and holiday gatherings, case numbers and hospitalizations climbed, and hospitals in the Eastern Panhandle and surrounding counties were significantly strained in December and January.

“CASES IN THE PAST 3 MONTHS HAVE EQUALED THE TOTAL NUMBER IN ALL OF THE PRIOR MONTHS COMBINED.”



Vaccines Help Turn the Tide

By late December 2020, vaccines for this previously unknown coronavirus became available, one year after the initial identification of the virus. For many weeks West Virginia led the country with the largest percentage of vaccines administered. The state’s rapid vaccinations for vulnerable nursing home residents were widely praised, although the rollout of the vaccine to the general population was much more uneven at first. By February, local clinics were organized to process hundreds of patients a day, relying on the hard work of several hundred civilian and Air National Guard volunteers who assisted the Jefferson County Health Department, West Virginia University Hospitals, Berkeley-Morgan Health Department, and many other organizations to administer tens of thousands of doses of vaccines (see article in *The Observer*, April 2021).

A Slow Summer Turns To A Hot Winter

Cases and hospitalizations decreased, increased, and decreased again through the spring of 2021. By the summer, most public health restrictions were no longer required but many people continued to adjust their social behaviors to avoid infection. By July of 2021 there were very few cases in West Virginia (see chart). The downward trend continued into August until the delta variant arrived. A small spike at first, the delta variant led to increased cases and infection rates.

Locally, the peak of new infections in the fall of 2021 looked similar to the wave that hit in the previous fall. Cases declined by early November, but that declining trend reversed and then in December 2021 surged with the arrival of the omicron variant in the Eastern Panhandle. For three weeks there were more than 100 new cases of COVID-19 identified daily. In Jefferson County, the number of COVID-19 cases in the past 3 months (since mid-November

2021) have equaled the total number in all of the prior months combined.

Vaccines Lower Risk For All

The good news — a substantial number of people in our local community now have some level of immunity to COVID-19. The Eastern Panhandle has a population of about 194,000 and over the past two years there have been 53,000 documented cases of COVID-19. This is a 27% rate of documented infection. Vaccination has also provided some immunity to 61% of Jefferson County residents with 51% of residents completing their initial series.

Additionally, there has been over one year of real-world experience with COVID vaccines. Although vaccinated people can still get COVID and can become seriously ill or die, there is a marked decrease in the chance of severe illness or death. Vaccines may also decrease prolonged symptoms (long COVID) or multi system inflammatory disease.

Particularly if you are over age 50, it’s important to complete the initial vaccinations and keep up with boosters. Most of the serious cases of COVID and deaths are in the elderly. There have been over 440 COVID deaths in the Eastern Panhandle (a death rate of 0.23% of the total population). Of the Jefferson County residents aged 70 or over with COVID, about 8% have died — 32 times the rate of the general population. Vaccination can make a significant difference for the senior population — a direct protection from their own vaccination and a reduced risk of transmission if the younger people around them are vaccinated.

We should not be as terrified of this virus as we were two years ago, but the hospitalizations and deaths continue — and it’s up to all of us to respond as a community to manage this virus that will remain among us for the foreseeable future.

ISOLATED & TOGETHER, TALES OF STRENGTH



Matrix, by Lauren Groff, Riverhead Books (2021) & *Queen of the Sea*, by Dylan Meconis, Walker Books (2020)

Review by: Danielle Johnson. Originally from New York, Danielle Johnson is a writer and political scientist who has lived all over the world. She has a PhD in Politics from Oxford University and is writing her first novel. She lives in Shepherdstown with her husband, kids, and dog.

IT IS QUITE A FEAT to richly imagine the life of a historical figure about whom so little is known, but Lauren Groff does it with aplomb in her most recent novel, *Matrix*. We are introduced to the heroine Marie when she is still very young: “She rides out of the forest alone. Seventeen years old, in the cold March drizzle, Marie who comes from France.” This is a nod to the single historical truth we have about Marie, a twelfth century French female poet.

Groff immediately highlights Marie’s strength, if not her beauty. “Her face is wet with rain, not tears. She has yet to cry for having been thrown to the dogs.” For at this tender age, court politics have conspired to see Marie exiled to a remote convent in England. The truth of her fate does not escape her. It is permanent, and Marie “at last understood that she would be sent into her living death alone.”

But as she grows and learns to negotiate relationships both within the convent and without, Marie becomes a powerful figure in her own right. She also learns to love, and be loved — perhaps her greatest challenge as she comes to lead the Abbey.

At times Marie appears more like an army general than an abbess: her visions inspire the nuns in her abbey to work hard and fight back against the male-dominated world that puts them and their way of life at constant risk. There are impossible works of engineering in Marie’s story and literal battles, all showcasing the power of female friends to work together

to protect themselves. And yet, Marie’s great works come at a huge personal cost. Groff is adept at showing Marie as a real flesh and blood woman, a proto-feminist who sees the conflict inherent in being a woman with ambition who also happens to love. When one of the women she loves the most dies in part due to Marie’s ruthless expectations, Marie begins to question the relationship between love and devotion in a world that is so dismissive of women:

“She has made her life holy, she has lived sinless, she has said all the right words, but deep within she has coveted her own rebellious pride,” is Groff’s description of the arrogance, which brought a final illness upon Marie’s favorite sister, Wulfhild. “Her endless hunger ate up the daughter of her spirit. Her actions always in reaction to the question of what she could have done in the world, if she had only been given her freedom.”

We are left to wonder: has it been worth it? We root for Marie and we are proud of the barriers she topples and the leadership she shows in doing so. And yet, we cannot help but feel that the consequences are tragic — even if necessary.

Dylan Meconis’ graphic novel *Queen of the Sea* is the perfect complement to Groff’s *Matrix*. Although targeted at young adults, this beautifully illustrated book has much to offer for any age. *Queen of the Sea* is also inspired by real events: the exile of young Queen Elizabeth by her sister Mary in the sixteenth century. Meconis uses this history as a springboard to tell the story of Margaret, a young girl living on a barely-accessible island of nuns, her origins a mystery to all but the abbey’s Prioress.

Both novels outline medieval convent life in simple but fascinating terms, deeply immersing readers into this long-ago, seemingly esoteric world. But Meconis’ heroine Margaret makes no bones about how foreign this life — her “paradise” as a child, a paradise that must be lost in order to be regained — must seem to outsiders.

While *Queen of the Sea* unfolds like a page-turning mystery, filled with scandalous secrets, court intrigues, and forbidden loves, both the text and the illustrations have a restrained, subtle beauty to them. As in *Matrix*, we see women coming of age insulated from a world dominated by men, and yet are continually struck by their bravery and their ingenuity in the face of deeply distressing events. And these women are successful despite the great odds against them, although success does not always equal happily-ever-after. Like Groff’s Marie, their success often requires great devotion — and great sacrifice.

WOMEN SPEAK UP

Brazen: Rebel Ladies Who Rocked the World, by Penelope Bagieu

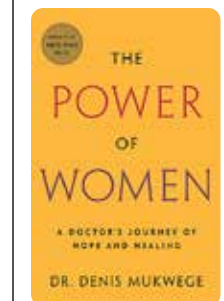


First Second (2018) \$17.99

With her characteristic wit and dazzling drawings, celebrated graphic novelist Bagieu profiles the lives of these feisty female role models, some world famous, some little known. The stories of Nellie Bly, Mae Jemison, Josephine Baker, Naziq al-Abid & others in this comic biography are sure to inspire a next generation of rebel ladies. Throughout history and across the globe, one characteristic connects the daring women of *Brazen*: their indomitable spirit.

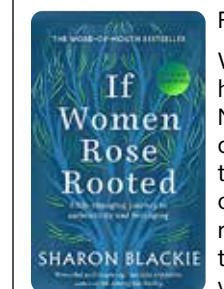
If Women Rose Rooted, by Sharon Blackie

September Publishing (2019) \$14.95



This book is a passionate song to a different kind of femininity, a rallying cry for women to reawaken their natural power — not just for the sake of their own wellbeing, but for love of this threatened earth. Blackie leads the reader on a life-changing journey, drawing inspiration from the wise and powerful females in native mythology and guidance from contemporary women who have re-rooted themselves in land and community and taken responsibility for shaping the future.

The Power of Women, Dr. Denis Mukwege



Flatiron Books (2021) \$28.99

World-renowned doctor and noted human rights activist, Dr. Denis Mukwege, has penned an inspiring clarion call-to-action to confront the scourge of sexual violence, offering lessons of from women’s resilience, strength, and power. At the heart of his message are the voices of the many women he has worked with over the years. This book illuminates the enduring strength of women in the face of violence and trauma and gives hope for the potential of individuals to turn the tide.

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PERSPECTIVE // NATURE

DRAMA AT THE NEST

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, West Virginia.



Smitty (left) and the Bella (right) making nest repairs in January, before Bella was ousted by the new female.

and tried to land on the nest on January 31. The next day Bella, the resident female, was back at the nest. Fresh blood showed in several places on her head and neck, as if she was in a fight. She hasn't been seen since.

Now in mid-February, the new female and Smitty are behaving like an old, mated pair. He brings fish to the nest for her to eat. They vocalize to each other and mate frequently. The new female's central tail feathers show black markings, indicating she is evidently a younger bird. It usually takes four or five years for a young eagle's head and tail feathers to become completely white.

Viewers watching the eagle nest cam can chat and post comments at the site. Watching nature on a live camera in real time isn't like watching a nature show on television. Anything can happen at any time and folks often get emotional about it. Even seasoned viewers may risk becoming attached to the eagles as individuals, which makes unpleasant events very upsetting.

But this is normal eagle behavior. During the early nesting season bald eagles compete fiercely for prime nesting sites. As their numbers increase, bald eagles are raising more young birds each year. When these young eagles reach breeding age, nest competition is a good thing. Hard as it is to watch, any eagle that can't protect its nest from intruders is unlikely to be a successful parent.

First thing in the morning, my wife and I spend a few minutes checking in on our favorite nests. Dozens of such live cameras are set up throughout the country. Most of them operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Find out where they are on Facebook (@BaldEagles101).



The new female feeding on a fish delivered by Smitty. The dark markings on her middle white tail feather indicate she is a young bird.

THEY WERE ALL SET TO START a family. The nursery was almost ready. Then one day everything changed when a young stranger appeared. Is this the trailer for a new soap opera? No, it's part of the drama that's unfolded over the past month keeping viewers tuned in to the live camera feed at the Shepherdstown eagle nest.

This camera (search Eagle Cam|Outdoor Channel) is trained full time on an eagle nest on the west side of the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) campus near Shepherdstown. The nest rests high in a tall sycamore tree about ¼ mile from the Potomac River. A young pair of bald eagles built the nest in 2002 and it's remained active since then. The NCTC mounted a camera on a branch above the nest that first went live in 2006 and has delighted viewers every year.

Over the years the old tree has suffered storm damage to its upper branches, but it has survived. As successive pairs of eagles have added new sticks and grass to the nest each year, it has steadily gained size and weight. The nest is now larger than a Volkswagen beetle.

Last December the current pair of eagles, nicknamed Bella and Smitty, started bringing large sticks to reinforce the nest rim and dry grass and other soft material for the lining and nest cup. As the new year began, they spent more and more time at the nest, rearranging and sometimes squabbling over stick placement. The nesting season seemed off to a good start until a new female eagle attacked



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LOCAL EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

>>> PAGES 14 TO 16 <<<



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PERSPECTIVE // HISTORY

REMEMBERING & MAINTAINING FAIRVIEW CEMETERY

Jefferson County Historic Landmarks Commission



(Above, left) Albert Washington served in the 5th Massachusetts Colored Volunteer Cavalry during the Civil War. (Above, right) The land between the Huntfield housing development (visible in the upper left of this aerial image) and the Fairview Cemetery (shown in the bottom right of the aerial image) has been approved for development. Construction poses a risk of disturbing unmarked graves if appropriate archeological surveys are not carried out prior to disturbing the land.

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 historic sites throughout the county, you can contact Reese at AddisonReeseJCHLC@gmail.com.

CEMETERIES NOT ONLY SERVE as resting places for our loved ones but also offer windows into our history. Old family graveyards are often a lasting mark of the wealthy landowners of the 19th century. Cemeteries established to bury the Civil War dead, like Elmwood, Edge Hill, and Pine Grove, remind us of the true cost of war. Church cemeteries are monuments to the congregations and community who once prayed together within their walls.

On January 7, 1873, the *Spirit of Jefferson* newspaper announced the need for “a new burial ground for the colored people” of Charles Town and vicinity, “that they should have a decent and secure resting place for their dead is a question that admits of no debate but the plan by which such a burial place should be secured has not heretofore been definitively fixed upon.” A few months later, an update was provided including the individual donations made to help secure land for a cemetery. Established during the

Reconstruction period, Fairview Cemetery, referred to as Ventosa Cemetery of Gibsontown on the original tax card, contains the remains of more than 1,100 people of color, including more than 70 military veterans of the Civil War, WWI, WWII, Korea, and Vietnam.

Not Always Remembered

There are many graves without identifying markers, so the date of the first burial is unknown. Death registers and existing marked headstones indicate that recorded burials began by the late 1870s. By far the largest Black cemetery in the county, the actual scale of the cemetery is still unknown due to limited records and the number of stones that have become covered.

The entire area is a reminder of the not-to-distant history of Jefferson County. As you enter Fairview cemetery, you pass remnants of the Gibsontown homesteads once owned by families interred in the cemetery. To the right is Page Jackson Elementary School, built after school segregation was deemed unlawful and carrying the same name as the first black high school in Jefferson County (Page Jackson High School, now the site of the Jefferson County Schools' administrative offices). The Page Jackson name honors two prominent black educators interred at Fairview: Phillip Jackson, longtime principal of Page Jackson High School, and former slave turned prominent teacher, Littleton L. Page.

Turning To The Future

Fairview continues as an active cemetery, but maintenance and preservation are a struggle. “We want to preserve the history, but we also want to get the present straightened up,” explained

Bryan Rutherford, a trustee of the cemetery association. “Our goal is to keep the cemetery maintained. We get a small amount of donations, but it's not enough – we need to set up a fund for regular maintenance. There are a lot of stones knocked down that need to be put back up.”

Rutherford also noted a concern about mapping all of the plots and boundaries. Finding graves outside of unfenced boundaries is a common issue with rural cemeteries. When these cemeteries were surrounded by woods and farmland, it wasn't an issue. In the case of Fairview, the pending construction to build out the adjacent Huntfield development poses a risk of disturbing unmarked graves if appropriate archeological surveys are not completed before disturbing the land.

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EXPLORE // LIVE MUSIC

MOZART CONCERT ON MARCH 19 & 20



THE FRIENDS OF MUSIC WILL RESUME their 2021-2022 concert season with two performances of an all-Mozart concert by the Two Rivers Chamber Orchestra. Titled “Winds for Wolfgang,” the concert will feature famous selections from Mozart’s “Marriage of Figaro” and “Magic Flute,” and the entirety of his Serenade No. 10 (“Gran Partita”). The Orchestra’s music director, Jed Gaylin, will conduct.

This is the first time the Friends have offered an afternoon matinee concert. Friends president Judy Miller Jones said this is partly to allow greater social distancing among audience members while concerns over COVID-19 continue, and partly because a good number of concertgoers have indicated a preference for afternoon performances. She said matinees will also be offered for the next two Friends’ concerts this season, and if this format proves to be as popular as expected, it will become a regular feature of future seasons.

The Friends of Music is a non-profit organization founded in 1999 to support and promote musical excellence. The Two Rivers Chamber Orchestra was established by the Friends in 2007 and held its first concert in the fall of 2008. Gaylin has been music director

since 2012. He also serves as music director of Baltimore’s Hopkins Symphony Orchestra and the Bay Atlantic Symphony in New Jersey, and he is the Principal Guest Conductor of the Cape May NJ Music Festival.

Two additional concerts are planned this season. The Vivaldi Project will perform on April 3 & 5, featuring innovative programs of Baroque and Classical string repertoire. The Two Rivers Chamber Orchestra will return on May 21 & 22 with guest cellist and Sphinx Competition winner Christine Lamprea. More information about the Friends, the Orchestra, and the concert season is available online at FriendsWV.org.

Event details: March 19 (Sat), 7:30 pm, March 20 (Sun), 3:00 pm. Both performances at the Trinity Episcopal Church in Shepherdstown (208 W German St). Admission is \$35 per person (free for Friends of Music members). Ticket purchase online (credit card) at FriendsWV.org or by mail (check only) to FOM, PO Box 220, Shepherdstown, WV 25443. Tickets will be available at the door if space is available (seating will be limited by social distancing requirements).

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March 1-5, 2022

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ELECTION INFO >>> PAGE 5

LOCAL // HOUSING ASSISTANCE

HELP FOR RENT, MORTGAGE & UTILITY PAYMENTS

THE ECONOMIC UPS AND DOWNS of the past two years have made a tight housing market even tougher for many individuals and families throughout West Virginia, but there are grant programs available to help keep people in their homes. Statewide, the West Virginia Housing Development Fund received \$350 million in pandemic relief funds from the federal government to assist renters. The Fund is also working on a mortgage assistance program, to be launched later in 2022. Locally, Shepherdstown just announced a \$60,000 grant program to assist homeowners and renters. Both programs are designed to help keep people in their homes to prevent even greater dislocation and hardship.

Mountaineer Rental Assistance Program

The West Virginia Housing Development Fund has been accepting applications since March of 2021 for the Mountaineer Rental Assistance Program. In January 2022, Emily Allen of *Mountain State Spotlight* reported that the program had disbursed only \$45 million of the \$350 million budget. In February, Erica Boggess, Director of the Housing Development Fund, provided an update on the assistance program during a press conference with Governor Justice: “To date, we’ve distributed \$53.7 million, helping almost 13,000 households for an average of \$4,100 per household, tax-free to



the renters. Once the applications are here, we’re seeing that 96 percent of applicants are receiving funding, but we need more people to apply... the U.S. Treasury has begun to recapture funds that aren’t being used. So for us to preserve as much of this funding as possible and use it in West Virginia, we really need to spread the word and get more and more people to apply.” This program is open to renters living anywhere in West Virginia. Apply online at WVHDF.com or call 866-623-6284.

Help for Shepherdstown Residents

The Corporation of Shepherdstown is partnering with Catholic Charities of West Virginia to

disburse a \$60,000 Community Development Block Grant received from the state to assist families or individuals who need immediate financial assistance to pay mortgage, rent, or utilities bills. This program is intended to help low-to-moderate-income households within the Corporation of Shepherdstown who are facing economic hardship due to the pandemic. Grants will be disbursed based on demonstrated need, the availability of funds, and documented eligibility for assistance, including income and residency requirements. Proof of residency within the corporate limits of Shepherdstown will be required. Catholic Charities is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. The agency is open to serving all people regardless of their race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, socio-economic background, marital or family status. Residents seeking assistance should contact Siobhan Bertone 304-267-8837 (extension 10) at the Martinsburg Office of Catholic Charities. The information provided to Catholic Charities will be kept confidential.

Help with Applications

Individuals who need help navigating the application process for housing assistance programs can also contact Jefferson County Community Ministries. Online at JCCM.us, email Info@JCCM.us, phone 304-725-3186.

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EXPLORE // EVENT SPOTLIGHTS

FOLK MUSIC AT SHEPHERD UNIVERSITY

The School of Music will host the **LUA Project** at the Frank Center (University Drive / Parking Lot G) for an afternoon of discussions on March 3 (Thu) followed by a performance on March 4 (Fri). The music of the LUA Project is inspired by *Son Mexicano*, Appalachian song forms, Jewish and Eastern European tonalities, baroque melodic ideas, and Scotch-Irish narrative storytelling approaches.

The Thursday afternoon schedule: Discussion & demonstration of the group's musical concept at 12:30 (Shipley Recital Hall); Discussion of the songwriting & composition process at 2:00 (Shipley); Discussion & performance of Appalachian fiddle tradition, Irish music, Polka, Tango, and Tejano music and the textural context for arrangements at 2:00 (Rehearsal Hall 166). The Friday evening performance begins 7:30 in the Frank Center Theater.

Admission to the Thursday activities is free; Tickets to the Friday performance are \$15 (\$10 for SU students, alumni, faculty, staff, seniors and under 18). Purchase online at Shepherd.edu/music/calendar-of-concerts. Information about LUA Project at LUAProject.org.



RESTAURANT WEEK

Restaurant Week is coming to Jefferson County, from March 1 (Tue) through March 5 (Sat). The participating restaurants will be offering discounts, unique menu items, and creative cocktails to help shake off the winter and celebrate the bloom of spring.

In Charles Town: Alfredo's Mediterranean Grille and Steakhouse, Barstool Sportsbook (Hollywood Casino), Inkwell's Tavern, Joan + Joe Coffee, La Mezzaluna Cafe, Black Dog Coffee (Shenandoah Jct).

In Harpers Ferry / Bolivar: Battle Grounds Bakery and Coffee, Country Cafe, The Rabbit Hole, White Horse Tavern.

In Shepherdstown: Bavarian Inn Resort & Brewing Company, Blue Moon, The Devonshire Arms Cafe and Pub, Kings NY Pizza, Lilah Restaurant, Mecklenburg Inn, Mountaineer Popcorn Company.

Check for updates at DiscoverItAllWV.com/blog and Facebook @VisitJeffersonCountyWV.

EXPLORE // EVENT SPOTLIGHTS



Photo credit: Kat Gollock

STORYTELLING – ONLINE PERFORMANCE

Speak Storytelling presents **Mara Menzies** in an on-line performance on March 8 (Tue) at 7:30 pm. In this performance, titled **"Looking Forward - Looking Back,"** Menzies will tell powerful, devastating, beautiful stories from across the African continent. She is an award-winning performance storyteller, who draws on her rich cultural Kenyan-Scottish heritage to create worlds that explore contemporary issues through legend, myth, and fantasy.

Tickets are \$15 (free for season ticket holders), available online at SpeakStorySeries.com. Speak is for adult audiences, mature youth allowed at guardian's discretion. Email info@speakestoryseries.com for more information.

A GUIDED WALK IN THE MARSH



Krista Hawley, Adult Program Coordinator at the Potomac Valley Audubon Society (PVAS), offers monthly **wellness walks** at PVAS nature preserves. Everyone is welcome on these easy-level walks. Participants advised to wear warm, comfortable walking shoes. Trails may be wet and muddy in spots.

The next walk is at **Stauffer's Marsh** on March 15 (Tue), from 10:00 am to noon. Meet at the front parking lot of the preserve (across the road from 4069 Back Creek Valley Road, Hedgesville, WV). The trail system at Stauffer's is not extensive, but the group will enjoy a walk along the meadow and Back Creek, with opportunities to observe waterfowl and perhaps glimpse the beaver. Future walks will be at Yankauer (April 12) and Eidolon (May 10).

More info at PotomacAudubon.org (calendar) or email Krista Hawley at AdultPrograms@PotomacAudubon.org.

LECTURE: WARRIORS IN PEACE

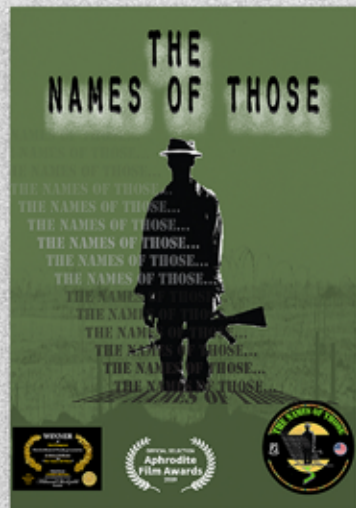
Dr. Stephen Goldman will speak on the topic of **"Warriors in Peace: White and Black Union Veterans and the Fight for Equality in Post-Civil War America"** presented by the Shepherd University President's Lecture Series on March 22 (Tue) at 6:30 pm in the Robert C. Byrd Center for Congressional History and Education Auditorium (213 N King St, on the Shepherd University Campus).

Dr. Goldman's lecture will discuss how white and black Northern veterans sustained their dedication to the causes for which they had battled and bled, and continued the struggle for freedom and opportunity for every American in the decades after the Civil War. In the same vein, Goldman will also discuss how veterans created the model of social activism based on military service that American citizen soldiers, sailors and marines have emulated in modern times, as well as the enduring power of veterans' warrior identity.

Shepherd UNIVERSITY Admission is free, advance registration required. The lecture will also be available on Zoom. More information at Shepherd.edu/president (President's Lecture Series).

58,220 MEN AND WOMEN DIED SEE THEIR NAMES SCROLL

MARCH 25TH, 26TH AND 27TH, 2022 (PLEASE WEAR A MASK)



Vietnam Veteran J. Kimo Williams' 20 Hour video Memoriam is a physical art installation that scrolls the names of those who died as a result of their service in Vietnam.

The names scroll over a three-day timeline; **10 am to 5 pm** March 25th and 26th, concluding **11 am to 5 pm** March 27th, 2022, at the **War Memorial Building** in Shepherdstown, WV. 102 E. German St. It also simultaneously scrolls on **YouTube** (www.thenamesofthose.com).

Public Law No: 115-15, **Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Act of 2017**, officially designated by Congress on March 29th as the official day to recognize Vietnam Veterans and their service to the country. In that spirit, **FACES OF VIETNAM**, a photography exhibit of images from Kimo's return visits to Vietnam (1998-2010), will be part of this installation and the official recognition weekend. **"We must always remember those who sacrificed"- Kimo Williams**

For a description of the art installation and photo exhibit, please visit www.thenamesofthose.com.



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FEBRUARY EVENTS

FEB 25 (FRI) — 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

FEB 26 (SAT) — BIRDING THE BLUE RIDGE CENTER · 8 am at the Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship, 11661 Harpers Ferry Road, Hillsboro, VA · FREE (registration required) · Info/register LoudounWildlife.org/events

MARCH EVENTS

MAR 4 (FRI) — OPENING NIGHT: ART DURING A PANDEMIC (local artists, music, poetry, live performances) · 6 pm at the Barns of Rose Hill, Berryville, VA · FREE · Info: [FB@ BarnsOfRoseHill](https://www.facebook.com/BarnsOfRoseHill)

MAR 4 (FRI) — LUA PROJECT, presented by the Shepherd Salon Series (a blending of Mexican, Appalachian & Atlantic basin music) · 7:30 pm at the Frank Arts Center Theater · \$15 · Info: Shepherd.edu/music/calendar-of-concerts

MAR 6 (SUN) — AFTERNOON CHAMBER MUSIC CONCERT, presented by the Shepherd Salon Series (clarinet, vocals, piano, viola) · 3 pm at the W.H. Shipley Recital Hall · FREE · Info: Shepherd.edu/music/calendar-of-concerts

MAR 8 (TUE) — MARA MENZIES, HOSTED BY SPEAK STORYTELLING · 7:30 pm, online only · \$15 · Info/Tickets: SpeakStorySeries.com.

MAR 10 (THU) — EMPOWERING COMMUNITY THROUGH READING (Kickoff Event) · 6 pm ONLINE live stream · \$10 (adults), \$5 (students, 65+), free (under 5) · Info/Zoom link: Shepherd.edu/calendar

MAR 12 (SAT) — THE BULLDOG CLASSIC (indoor percussion & color guard home show) · Noon at the Martinsburg Highschool Gymnasium · \$10 (adults), \$5 (students, 65+), free (under 5) · Info: MHSBulldogBand.com

MAR 19 & 20 (SAT, SUN) — WINDS FOR WOLFGANG, presented by the Two Rivers Chamber Orchestra · 7:30 pm (Sat) and 3 pm (Sun) at the Trinity Episcopal Church, Shepherdstown · \$35 · Info/Tickets: FriendsWV.org/current-season

MAR 25 (FRI) — SHEPHERD SYMPHONIC BAND · 7:30 pm at the Frank Arts Center Theater (pre-concert lecture at 7 pm) · \$15 · Info: Shepherd.edu/music/calendar-of-concerts

MAR 26 (SAT) — TRAILS LESS TRAVELED: WHERE THEY REST: HARPER CEMETERY (moderately easy hike, 1-2 miles) led by the Harpers Ferry Park Association · 10-11:30 am · \$10 (pre-registration required) · Register/Info: harpersferryhistory.org

MAR 26 (SAT) — WESTERN CENTURIES (county, Americana, rock-n-roll) · 7 pm at the Barns of Rose Hill, Berryville, VA · \$20 · Info: [FB@ BarnsOfRoseHill](https://www.facebook.com/BarnsOfRoseHill)

MAR 26 (SAT) — CONSIDER THE SOURCE (acoustic/electric, sci-fi fusion, post-world) · 8 pm at Bright Box, Winchester, VA · \$17 · Info/Tickets: BrightBoxWinchester.com

SAVE THE DATE

APR 9 (SAT) — THIS RACE IS FOR THE BIRDS 5K & 10K, presented by PVAS (ages 10+) · Trails of Broomgrass Farm, Gerrardstown · \$30 · Register/Info: RaceForTheBirds.org.

MAY 13-15 (FRI-SUN) — FOSL FABULOUS BOOK SALE RETURNS · Stayed tuned for future information on donating, volunteering, and specific times, including a special preview & reception · Info: FoslWV.org

MAY 21 & 22 (SAT, SUN) — THE BACK ALLEY TEA AND TOUR RETURNS, hosted by the Shepherdstown Community Club · Walking garden tours and high tea in the War Memorial Building ballroom, Shepherdstown · More info to come soon




WOMEN'S LACROSSE HOME GAMES
 March 5, 1 p.m. *Frostburg State*
 March 19, 1 p.m. *Shippensburg*
 March 26, 1 p.m. *East Stroudsburg*
 March 30, 4 p.m. *West Chester*
 April 9, 1 p.m. *Bloomsburg*
 April 27, 4 p.m. *Millersville*
 April 30, 1 p.m. *Kutztown*

MEN'S BASEBALL HOME GAMES
 March 11, 2 p.m. *Mansfield*
 March 15, 12 p.m. doubleheader *Alderson Broaddus*
 March 19, 12 p.m. doubleheader *Bloomsburg*
 March 26, 12 p.m. doubleheader *Shippensburg*
 March 29, 12 p.m. doubleheader *Bluefield State*
 April 1, 2 p.m. *Kutztown*
 April 8, 2 p.m. *West Chester*
 April 16, 12 p.m. doubleheader *Millersville*
 April 22, 2 p.m. *Lock Haven*
 April 30, 1 p.m. doubleheader *Tiffin*
 May 1, 1 p.m. *Tiffin*
 May 7, 12 p.m. doubleheader *East Stroudsburg*

WOMEN'S SOFTBALL HOME GAMES
 March 8, 1 p.m. doubleheader *West Liberty*
 March 29, 12:30 p.m. doubleheader *WV Wesleyan*
 April 3, TBA doubleheader *Seton Hill*
 April 13, 1 p.m. doubleheader *Frostburg State*
 April 15, 1 p.m. doubleheader *Lock Haven*
 April 22, 1 p.m. doubleheader *Kutztown*
 April 30, 1 p.m. doubleheader *Millersville*

MEN'S AND WOMEN'S TENNIS HOME MATCHES
 March 23, 2 p.m. *Fairmont State*
 March 26, 1 p.m. *Edinboro*
 March 27, 1 p.m. *Mercyhurst (M), California (PA) (W)*
 April 1, 2 p.m. *Marymont*
 April 2, 1 p.m. *WV State (M), Lock Haven (W)*
 April 5, 2 p.m. *Millersville*

MEN'S AND WOMEN'S GOLF MATCHES
 March 26 and 27, *Black Rock Golf Course, Hagerstown, MD*

See complete schedules at www.shepherdrams.com

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