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Printed by FNP Printing,

Frederick, MD.

THIS PAPER WANTS TO BE RECYCLED.



The Jefferson County Museum has an exhibit documenting natural and man-made disasters in Jefferson County. Pictured here, from 1951, is a Citizens Fire Company truck in front of the remains of the Bates house in Halltown, which was destroyed when a truck carrying 15 tons of dynamite exploded after a broken tire chain created a spark. Mr. Bates perished in the explosion, which left an eight-foot-deep crater in the roadway. Photograph by Edwin A. Fitzpatrick, Jr.

**TO OUR READERS** — First it’s the daffodils. Then it’s the forsythia. The wind still blows cold, but springtime is in the air. Doug Pifer (page 11) explains that some of the haze we see around this time is quite natural — just trees doing what trees do. Local garden club leaders have been eager for spring too. For some, it’s been a four-year wait to stage their annual home and garden tour (page 4). It’s quite a show, and it raises money for beautification projects around the Eastern Panhandle.

These are some serious gardeners that organize this tour and prepare the floral decorations, but if you’d like to try a little gardening yourself, that’s certainly encouraged too. Especially if you visit Dogwood General in downtown Shepherdstown (page 8) which hopes to become a hub for backyard gardeners and food growers with larger ambitions as well. Likewise, the Jefferson County Development Authority is looking to help make connections between local producers and customers with its new “Agriculture at Home” program. When we say Jefferson County is growing, it’s not just houses.

The Jefferson County budget (page 7) is also slated to grow next year (it’s an annual trend, despite the pruning that’s often applied by the Commissioners). Since it’s not easy for many citizens to make it to the county meetings, *The Observer* will be looking at the county and school system budget numbers over the next months — sign up for our new email newsletter at *WeAreTheObserver.com* if you’d like to learn what we find out.

**Steve Pearson**  
**EDITOR IN CHIEF**



*Andrew Skinner*

*Stephen Skinner*

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// COMMUNITY

# GARDEN CLUB TOUR SHOWCASES MEMBER TALENTS

## Event Raises Funds for Community Beautification Projects

THE SHENANDOAH-POTOMAC GARDEN COUNCIL is presenting its 65th House and Garden Tour at the end of April. The Council had suspended its signature event for the past three years and the members are eager to decorate and show off the seven houses on the 2023 tour. The Garden Council is an affiliate of the West Virginia Garden Club and comprises nine local clubs in the Eastern Panhandle: Berk-Mar, Dolley Madison, Gateway, Norborne, Olde Berkeley, Perennial, Shenandoah, Windflower, and Wizard Clip. The proceeds from this annual event are used to fund beautification projects organized by these clubs in the local community.

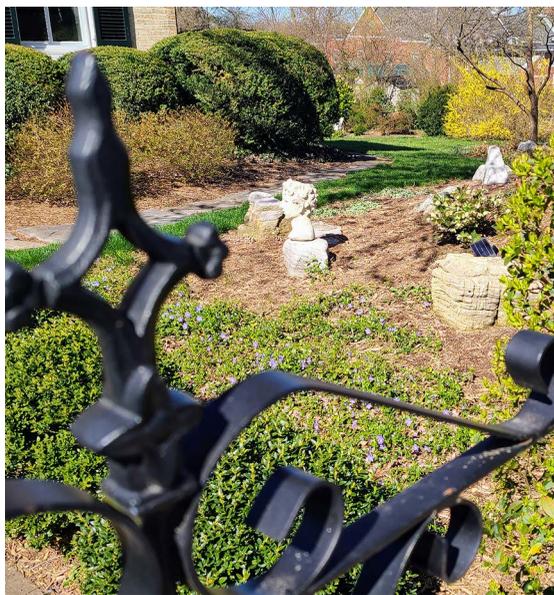
Visit [WVGardenClub.com](http://WVGardenClub.com) to learn more about the federated garden clubs in West Virginia. If you are interested in getting involved, you can complete the “join a garden club” form on the website to be connected to a local club.📍



The 2023 House and Garden Tour features seven houses: Greywind, Burkhart-Palmer House, and Apple B&B in Martinsburg; the Christian Clise House in Shepherdstown; Seven Magnolias (shown above) in Harpers Ferry; Porterfield House (garden detail shown far left) in Charles Town; and the Elizabeth Smith House in Middleway.



The 2023 House and Garden tour takes place on April 29 & 30 and features seven houses decorated by members of the participating clubs. Details and directions are online at [Shenandoah-PotomacGardenCouncil.org](http://Shenandoah-PotomacGardenCouncil.org). Advance tickets for the entire tour are \$20 (\$10 for children under 12); walk-up tickets are \$25 (\$10 for children). Single admission tickets are \$8.



The Shenandoah Garden Club approached the City of Charles Town in 2013 with ideas for beautification projects in the City. Mayor Peggy Smith was quick to encourage the club and, with the support of the Dolley Madison and Wizard Clip clubs, the native planting garden in Evitts Run Park was installed. Local botanist and landscape architect Paul Guay assisted with the selection of the plantings. While the initial plan was for the City to provide maintenance, the garden clubs have since signed up to provide ongoing maintenance too. The funding for the initial project and maintenance comes from the Shenandoah-Potomac Garden Council.

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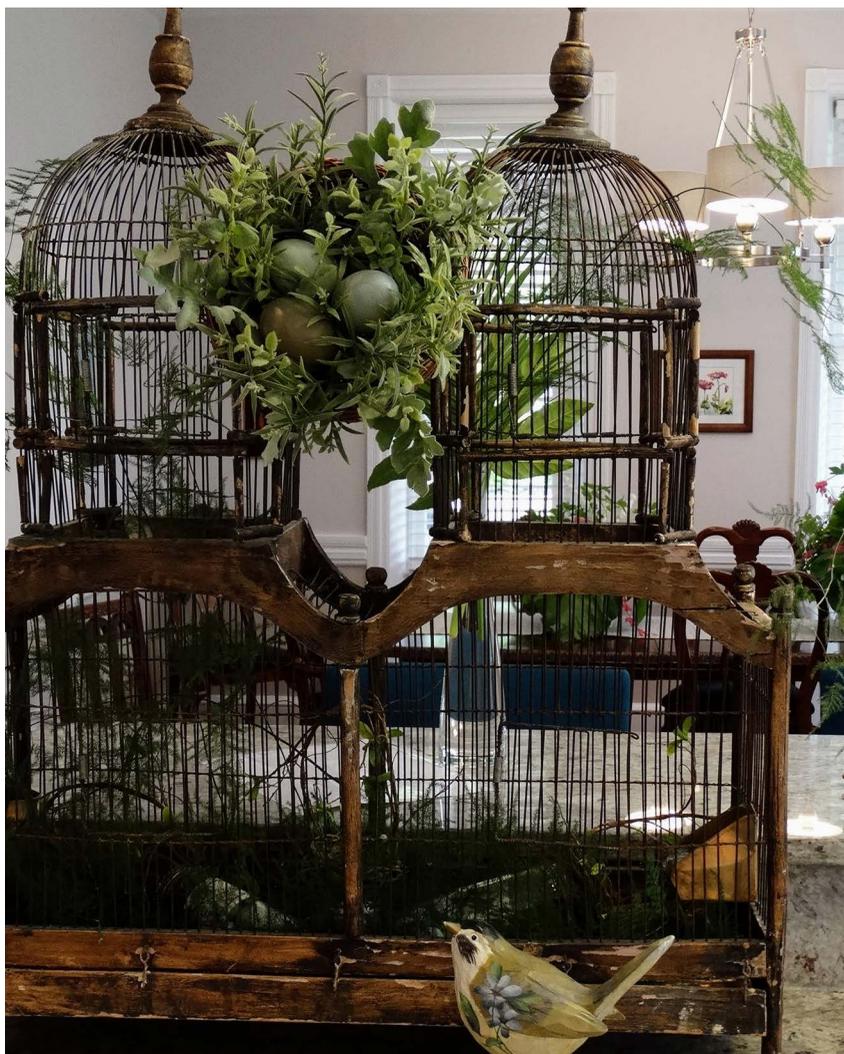
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The Shenandoah Garden Club decorated the Potts House in Shepherdstown for the 2019 tour. Shown above working on the preparations in 2019 are Mary O'Hara (Club president), Jewell Hellems (Past President), and Norma Akers (Corresponding Secretary).



The houses on the tour are decorated with floral arrangements created by club members. Some, such as this birdcage arrangement (above) in the Potts House (2019 tour), are quite elaborate.

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// ECONOMY

# AGRICULTURE AT HOME: JEFFERSON COUNTY

## New County Program to Promote Local Products



AGRICULTURE  
AT HOME

JEFFERSON COUNTY

DRIVE AROUND JEFFERSON COUNTY and you will see evidence of agricultural production. But, where can you buy locally-grown and made products? Later this month a new program launches to help make it easier to find and buy such products.

“We’re looking for as many participants as possible, as long as they meet program requirements,” said Ryan Snyder, Agriculture

Development Coordinator for the Jefferson County Development Authority (JCDA).

Snyder led the JCDA’s efforts to win funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for the new Agriculture at Home: Jefferson County program. Snyder and team are using the federal funds to develop branding for locally-grown and produced products (see image, right). They are also creating printed marketing materials, a website, and a mobile app.

The economic, health, and social benefits of locally-grown foods and food products are well documented. Buying local keeps 65% of each dollar in the community compared to buying in large chain stores. Local foods are fresh and less likely to be heavily processed. Relationships between buyers and producers promote community cohesion and resilience.

To participate in the new program, producers must apply, meet certain requirements, and then self-certify annually. Once approved, participants will be able to display the new “Jefferson County WV Grown” and “Jefferson County WV Made” logos. The JCDA also plans to publish lists and maps

showing participating producers, including those who accept SNAP benefits.

The JCDA team will attend the April 29 Charles Town Farmers Market to display and distribute information about the new Agriculture at Home program. Additional information will be available online at [JCDA.net](http://JCDA.net).



The new logos for the Agriculture at Home: Jefferson County Program

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// GOVERNMENT

# COUNTY COMMISSION SETS \$32 MILLION BUDGET

## March 27 Public Hearing Draws Slim Crowd And Few Questions

THE JEFFERSON COUNTY COMMISSION unanimously approved a budget to submit to the State, following a short public hearing at 9:30 in the morning on Monday, March 27. The lone citizen commenter who attended the hearing questioned the short notice and lack of detail in the draft budget document that was released at

4 pm on the previous Friday. This budget covers the fiscal year (FY24) that starts on July 1, 2023 and runs through June 30, 2024.

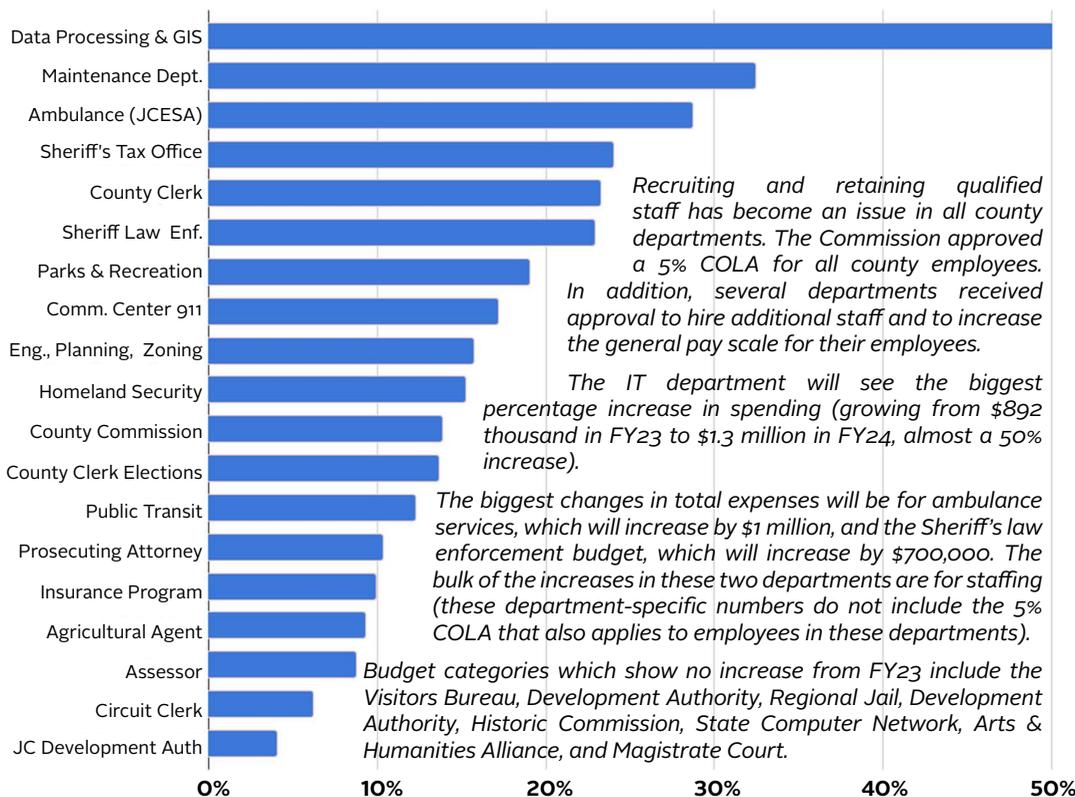
The County's revenue for FY24 is projected to be \$33.2 million, up from the FY23 revenue budget of \$29.2 million. The County's revenues come from real estate property taxes,

personal property taxes, and other various fees, plus interest and some grant funds. The biggest revenue change from FY23 is the inclusion of ambulance billings, which is estimated to add an additional \$1.6 million in revenue (this number reflects amounts to be billed to patients and their insurance companies for transport to a hospital, which is separate from the ambulance fee charged to all residents).

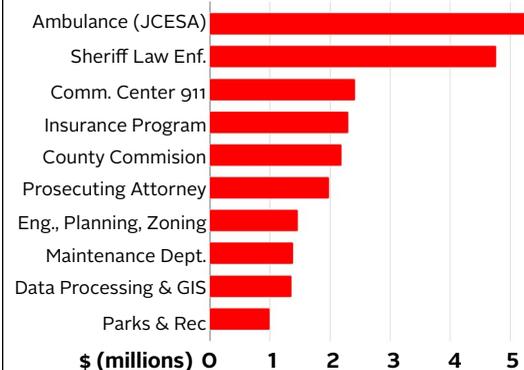
The County has budgeted for \$32.9 million in expenses for FY24, for a net surplus of \$284,652. The budgeted surplus for the current year is \$1 million and the actual surplus for FY22 (last year) was \$3.8 million — these surplus amounts are transferred to the County's capital outlay fund at the end of each fiscal year (this is the fund that the county uses to purchase vehicles, other equipment, and building improvements/expansions).

Visit [WeAreTheObserver.com](http://WeAreTheObserver.com) for more coverage of the Jefferson County Budget.

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PERSPECTIVE // LOCAL BUSINESS

# SHEPHERDSTOWN STORE LOOKS TO SUSTAIN LOCAL CONNECTIONS

By Erin Atticus Mooney

*Erin Atticus Mooney is the former owner of a creative events and leadership development company based in Washington, D.C., a creative business coach and consultant, and a lover of nature.*

**SHEPHERDSTOWN LOCALS** have long been reclaiming historic spaces; access to old buildings with a rich history is part of the charm of this small town. Walking into the new Dogwood General store on German Street feels as though the building itself has reclaimed its original incarnation. A quick peek at the history confirms why it feels right at home here — the Morris & Brown general store opened here in 1804; the Tabler family took over in 1922 and continued minding the store until 1962. Mary Ball, the present-day owner, has implemented a vision for the old bones of this space to house inventory ranging from paper-wrapped bamboo toilet paper, household goods, and eco-friendly toiletries, to elegant ceramics crafted from local clay, grain feed, vintage hardware, and even vintage clothing.

### Modern Take On A Vintage Concept

The concept of a general store is about as vintage as it gets in this country. Long before the behemoth specialty and department stores of modernity became epicenters of consumerism, every town had a general store to provide the basics. Ball intends to offer just such a shop for locals and visitors alike who desire quality, durability, and even beauty in their products. She insists on products that are “made well, with minimal packaging and limited plastic,” selecting “local when possible,” so that shoppers can benefit from a web of intimate marketplace connections.



Mary Ball, owner of Dogwood General in Shepherdstown

Connection itself — more than the products and convenience of the store — is the driving motive behind Ball’s vision. She says, “Creating space for people has always felt really important to me. I love it when people come in and see other people they know in this space and spend time together. That feels so good.” The building that Dogwood General calls home has a strong history as a gathering space — the prior occupant was an arts collective and before that it was a yoga studio and a locally-owned cafe. Ball looks to maintain the energy of a community hub.

### A Place for Conversation & Connection

I saw this in action when a local resident came into Dogwood General first thing in the morning to purchase grain feed. The three of us chatted about the evolution of the local area over the decades. It was a lively five-minute conversation packed with fascinating information. I myself came away feeling more intimately connected to the town. These sorts of interactions are the lifeblood of the store and enthusiastic support by locals will ensure its endurance. “Anything we can do,” she says, “to support the cycle of local creators and shops is fulfilling.”

Ball, now in her early thirties, describes how her early career shaped her ethos in opening a sustainability-focused general store. She had worked with environmental photographers in her twenties who imprinted “the sentiment that it’s important to be a steward of the spaces and life around you, whenever and wherever you can.” We giggled about how, looking back, our meandering experiences in life braided together in unexpected ways — she didn’t exactly foresee herself opening a general store.

### Jumping In Without Hesitation

When the opportunity to lease the storefront arrived in November 2022, she committed and opened just twenty days later, on Thanksgiving weekend. Ball, with her million-watt smile, is just that kind of person. “It’s fun!” She beams and radiates joy while reflecting on her endeavor to open shop, build relationships, support creators, and be of service to a town she adores. Her warm personality infuses Dogwood General with the kind of homespun hospitality that invites you to linger.

Ball hopes to build Dogwood General into a meeting place for programs that support “incredible farmers” around the area. She’s enthusiastic to now offer a flower CSA [community supported agriculture group] with Whispering Flower Farm and an herbal CSA with Sacred Roots. Patrons can set up those memberships and collect their goods in the store.

In the future, Ball aims to maximize use of the Dogwood General’s space by expanding her local-made inventory and offering classes. She’s currently looking for a local broom-maker, which speaks fittingly to her vision to clean up consumerism and usher in a new (old) way of living.

*Dogwood General is located at 119 West German Street, Shepherdstown WV. Web: DogwoodGeneralStore.com.*

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PERSPECTIVE // POETRY

# INHERITED JUSTICE BLACK HOLE IN MEMORY OF GEORGE FLOYD, AND TOO MANY OTHERS.

We circle,  
Resisting the pull,  
Watching what we say,  
Where we go.  
“Remember who you are,”  
Our parents warn,  
As we circle,  
Trying to keep our distance  
From the no escape.

We circle,  
From the orbits  
Where “kindship” was  
Gone with the wind of the  
Auction block, to  
More sophisticated ways  
To give a life for a living.

We circle,  
Ten and two,  
Hands on the wheel,  
Hoping for  
The touch of  
Empathy that can exhale,  
Helping us to survive  
A turn for the worst.

We circle,  
Witnessing  
All colors of cracked skulls  
Flowing the same red  
Standing up for  
My life, our lives, with  
The lives that matter.

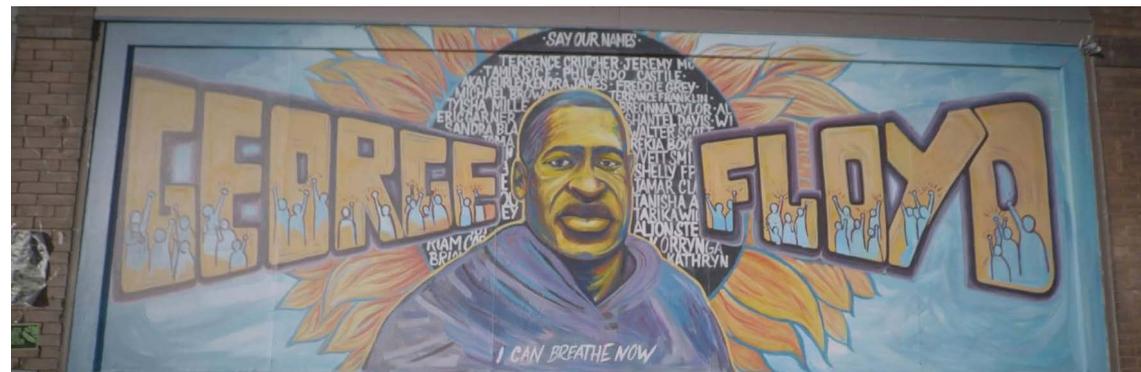
What can be done,  
As we circle,  
Struggling to not be,  
Painted out of  
The picture.

Flashing lights!

My turn is over and  
It happens to me.  
I cannot breathe,  
Calling for mom,  
As I am excused  
Into  
The disappearing  
Darkness.

**Poem By: Thomas Small**

*Thomas Small is a thirty year resident of Jefferson County, with a poetic outlook on life.*



Mural at 38th Street & Chicago Avenue in Minneapolis. The George Floyd Global Memorial is organizing a “Rise & Remember” celebration in May 2023. A conference and related activities will take place in Minneapolis and organizers are also encouraging others to host virtual and local events around the country. Info at [GeorgeFloydGlobalMemorial.org](http://GeorgeFloydGlobalMemorial.org).

“Everything that the modern mind cannot define it regards as insane.”

—C.G. Jung  
(*Psychology and Alchemy*, 1944)



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# BILLS PASSED IN THE 2023 WV LEGISLATIVE SESSION

By Susan Benzinger

Susan Benzinger is a retired tax attorney and active volunteer in Jefferson County. During her 2022 campaign for WV State Delegate campaign she became very familiar with the issues facing West Virginia and offered to share updates on the state legislature during the 2023 session with *The Observer*.



Governor Jim Justice (and Babydog)

MARCH 11 WAS THE END of the sixty day legislative session for 2023. Legislators went home having passed 333 bills (293 bills passed in 2022). The Governor has signed nearly one-third of these bills and is expected to sign the remainder soon (he signed all but 13 bills passed in 2022). Absent a special session called by the Governor, our legislators will next meet in January 2024 to vote on new legislation.

## State Budget

The 2024 budget (for the fiscal year that begins on July 1, 2023 and ends on June 30, 2024) is \$4.87 billion dollars, a slight increase from the 2023 budget. It includes many standard items for running the state as well as raises, rebates, and tax rate cuts. It relies on budget surpluses (actual taxes collected that exceed the expected collections used for purposes of crafting the budget) to replace the income taxes that were cut and to fund the rebates for personal and business property. Surpluses are currently at all-time highs and are not guaranteed for the future. While the tax cuts and rebates are welcome, it is unclear if they will be permanent and what steps will be taken if surpluses fall.

*How our local delegation voted on the budget: For – Sens. Barrett, Rucker, Delegates Clark, Espinosa, Hardy; Not voting (absent) – Delegate Ridenour. Status: the Governor has signed this legislation.*

## Pay Raises For Public Employees

Public employees (public school teachers, school service personnel and state police) are to receive an annual pay raise of \$2,300 effective July 1, 2023. Effective in 2025, the Governor is to receive a \$30,000 raise and the constitutional officers (state agriculture commissioner, attorney general, auditor, secretary of state and state treasurer) will receive \$20,000 raises. Also approved were raises and reimbursements for delegates and senators, effective in 2025.

*How our local delegation voted: For pay raises for public employees – all members of our local delegation. For pay raises of governor, constitutional officers, delegates, and senators – Sens. Barrett, Rucker, Delegates Clark, Espinosa, Hardy; Not voting (absent): Delegate Ridenour. Status: the Governor has signed this legislation.*

## Tax Rebates

Tax rebates for personal property taxes (on such items as cars and boats) and business personal property were approved. This means that these taxes must still be paid to counties but will be treated as a rebate on state income tax returns.

*All members of our local delegation voted for this legislation and the Governor has signed this legislation.*

## Tax Rate Cuts

The legislature passed a tax rate cut of 21.25 percent effective January 1, 2023. The state tax department has provided new tax tables to employers so that withholding in paychecks will reflect this tax rate cut. At year end, taxes will be calculated on individual returns using the new tax rate. Excess withholding will be applied to taxes due and may result in a refund.

*All members of our local delegation voted for this legislation and the Governor has signed this legislation.*

## Limit On Insulin Costs

As of January 1, 2024, a patient's cost of insulin is capped at \$35.00 per month.

*How our local delegation voted: For – Sens. Barrett, Rucker, Delegates Clark, Espinosa, Hardy; Against – Delegate Ridenour. Status: The Governor has signed this legislation.*

## Public Employees Insurance Association (PEIA) Premiums

Citing increases in expenses, the Governor signed a bill to raise premiums (except for retirees), even though he has previously said he would not raise premiums while in office. While each individual insurance situation is unique,

it is expected that the premiums will increase approximately \$200 per month for a married individual covering their family and spouse.

*All members of our local delegation voted for this legislation and the Governor has signed this legislation.*

## PEIA Retiree Raises

Retirees with 20 years of service, who are 70 years old by July 1, 2023, and who currently receive less than \$1,000 a month will receive a one-time payment of \$1,500.

*How our local delegation voted: For – Sens. Barrett, Rucker, Delegates Clark, Hardy, Ridenour; Not voting (absent): Delegate Espinosa. Status: the Governor has signed this legislation.*

## Guns on Campus

Concealed weapons are now permitted, and cannot be excluded, from college campuses in West Virginia.

*All members of our local delegation voted for this legislation and the Governor has signed this legislation.*

## Economic Development Authority

Of the ARPA funds that were given to West Virginia (federal funding to assist states to recover from the COVID epidemic), \$482 million was transferred to the Economic Development Authority at the end of the session. ARPA funds may only be used to replace revenue lost during COVID. They may be used for such items as (a) investing in broadband, sewer, and water, and (b) for household items such as food, rent, mortgage, utility assistance and childcare. The legislature put no such restrictions on the funds allocated to the Economic Development Authority.

*All members of our local delegation voted for this legislation and the Governor has signed this legislation.*

## Dark Money

Changes were made to allow lobbying groups to report fewer donations. This means that the public will not know everyone who is giving money to support issues.

*How our local delegation voted: For – Sens. Barrett, Rucker, Delegates Clark, Espinosa; Against– Delegates Hardy, Ridenour. Status: Still awaiting the Governor's signature (as of March 25).*

*The detailed history of all legislation for the recent session is available at WVLegislature.gov (bill status).*

PERSPECTIVE // NATURE

# WINDY DAYS ARE IMPORTANT

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.*

**LOOKING OUT THE KITCHEN WINDOW** one morning last week, I thought it had started to snow. When I went out later, I saw that my “snowflakes” were really the fluffy seeds of sycamore trees. After hanging all winter packed tightly into “buttonwood balls,” they had broken free. Each individual nutlet had a bright buffy parachute that carried it away on the wind. Fluffy sycamore “snowflakes” drifted in windrows along the road, sticking to the muddy ground and piling up next to the fence.

Dispersal of seeds by wind, called anemochory, is a reproductive strategy of many trees, shrubs, and wildflowers. Wind dispersal gives seeds a much better chance to germinate than if they just fell to the ground under the plant. Tree anemochores include maples, tulip trees, and ashes, as well as cone bearing pines

and spruces. All these produce winged seeds that twirl like helicopters. Sycamore and cottonwood trees, and wildflowers such as dandelion and milkweed, practice anemochory by releasing their seeds into the wind on silky parachutes.

Early spring winds also disperse pollen — sometimes in dramatic ways. One day I looked out the window and thought I saw smoke coming from the grove of red cedar trees in our middle pasture. My panic left me when I realized it was just the wind blowing clouds of cedar pollen. Red cedars are either male or female. Female red cedars are easily recognized in the late summer when hundreds of small, waxy cones in their branches turn from green to powder-blue. Male cedars are less striking until late winter, when thousands of tiny reddish-brown cones at the ends of their branches open and release pollen. These cones often grow so densely they turn the tree from dull green to brick-red. On dry, warm days as early as mid-February, the fragrance of cedar fills the air. The slightest breeze, or even a bird alighting on the branches, releases a cloud of pollen. A stiff wind blowing through a grove of male cedar trees on a warm, dry winter day can look like smoke from a grass fire.

Wind pollinated flowers of red, silver, and sugar maple trees burst forth in late winter and early spring. The flowers are so small they often go unnoticed. Yet, from a distance every



Illustration of sycamore “buttonwood ball” seed pod  
Credit: D. Pifer.

maple tree in the woods wears a red, orange or pink halo, bright tints of spring against the wintry gray of surrounding trees.

As folks who tap maple trees know, when maple trees bloom in late winter, maple tree sap turns as bitter as the March wind, marking the end of the sugar-making season. But to the squirrels, maple flowers are a feast, coming just as the first of their babies are born. Last week I saw a gray squirrel swinging in the wind, hanging onto an outer branch of a silver maple while nibbling the flowering buds. It reminded me that, despite the cold, spring is on its way.



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EXPLORE // ACTIVITIES & ENTERTAINMENT

**MAR 31 (FRI) – SHEPHERD UNIVERSITY MUSIC** – The Shepherd Chamber Singers and Camerata present a spring concert · 7:30 pm · Frank Center (Theater) 260 W Campus Dr, Shepherdstown · \$15 (\$10 senior/youth, free for SU student/faculty) · Web: [Shepherd.edu/music](http://Shepherd.edu/music)

**APR 1 (SAT) – RABIES CLINIC** – See website for restrictions and instructions · 8 - 10 am · Moose Lodge, 77 Universal Forest Product Rd, Ranson · \$10 per pet · Web: [AWSJC.org](http://AWSJC.org)

**APR 2 (SUN) – TROMBONE CONCERT** – Organized by the Mid-Atlantic Trombone Alliance and hosted by Shepherd University · 5 pm · Frank Center Auditorium, 260 W Campus Dr, Shepherdstown · FREE · Web: [Shepherd.edu/music](http://Shepherd.edu/music)

**APR 6-8 (THU-SAT) – PICASSO AT LAPINE AGILE** – Shepherd University's Contemporary Theater Studies program presents the absurdist comedy written by Steve Martin · 7 pm · Marinoff Theater, 92 West Campus Dr, Shepherdstown · 7 pm · Pay what you can · Web: [Shepherd.edu/theater](http://Shepherd.edu/theater) · Also Apr 14 & 15 at 7 pm; Apr 16 at 3 pm

**APR 11 & 12 (TUE & WED) – SPEAK STORY SERIES** – Carmen Deedy · 7:30 pm · See website for program & location · \$15 · Web: [SpeakStorySeries.com](http://SpeakStorySeries.com) >> see spotlight page 13

**APR 14-15 (FRI-SAT) – RELAY FOR LIFE** – A 12-hour community event where teams and individuals come together to honor, celebrate, and raise funds and awareness to help free the world from the pain and suffering of cancer · Opening ceremony at 5:30 pm Friday · Lot G (by Wellness Center), 164 University Dr, Shepherdstown · Donation & registration information at Facebook: [JeffCoWVrelay](https://www.facebook.com/JeffCoWVrelay)

**APR 14 & 15 (FRI & SAT) – MOVIE NIGHT** – At Shepherdstown Opera House · 7:30 pm · 131 West German St, Shepherdstown · See website for title & tickets · Web: [OperaHouseLive.com](http://OperaHouseLive.com) >> see ad page 5

**APR 15 (SAT) – EAGLES NEST HIKE** – Guided 2-mile hike (easy/moderate, rocky) to view nesting sites of osprey, peregrine falcons, and bald eagles within Harpers Ferry NHP · 11 am · Pre-registration required, details at website · FREE · Web: [HarpersFerryHistory.org/event-registration](http://HarpersFerryHistory.org/event-registration)

**APR 15 & 16 (SAT & SUN) – TWO RIVERS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA CONCERT** – "Hapsburg by Happenstance" with works by Mozart, Webern & Hayden · 7:30 pm Sat, 3 pm Sun · Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church, 100 West Washington St, Shepherdstown · \$40 · Web: [FriendsWV.org](http://FriendsWV.org) >> see spotlight page 13

**APR 16 (SUN) – BACH SONATAS REIMAGINED** – Happy Retreat Parlor Concert Series, presented by the Appalachian Chamber Music Festival · 3 pm · Happy Retreat, 600 Mordington Ave, Charles Town · \$25 (limited availability) · Web: [HappyRetreat.org](http://HappyRetreat.org)

**APR 19 (WED) – TOURISM SUMMIT** – Networking & informational event organized by the Jefferson County Convention & Visitors Bureau · 8 am - 4 pm · Bavarian Inn, 164 Shepherd Grade Rd, Shepherdstown · \$95, pre-registration required · FB: Visit Jefferson County WV >> see ad page 5

**APR 21 (FRI) – SHEPHERDSTOWN FILM SOCIETY** – The Last Waltz (2002, directed by Martin Scorsese) After 17 years on the road, The Band holds a farewell concert · 6 pm · Robert C. Byrd Center CHE (auditorium), 213 North King St, Shepherdstown · FREE · Web: [Shepherd.edu/lifelonglearning](http://Shepherd.edu/lifelonglearning)

**APR 22 (SAT) – BIRDS OF VIRGINIUS ISLAND HIKE** – Guided 2 mile hike (easy) to view native birds in Harpers Ferry NHP · 9 am · Pre-registration required, details at website · FREE · Web: [HarpersFerryHistory.org/event-registration](http://HarpersFerryHistory.org/event-registration)

**APR 22 (SAT) – EARTH DAY AT SAM MICHAELS PARK** – Family-friendly event with activities for kids and adults to explore the wonder of nature in their own backyard · 10 am - 2 pm · FREE · FB: [JeffCounty.ParksNRec](https://www.facebook.com/JeffCounty.ParksNRec) >> see spotlight page 15

**APR 22 (SAT) – JAZZ BRUNCH & SILENT AUCTION** – Fundraiser for Eastern Panhandle Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority · Doors open 10:30 am · \$35, pre-purchase only · Holiday Inn, 301 Foxcroft Ave, Martinsburg · email [EPACdstinfo@gmail.com](mailto:EPACdstinfo@gmail.com) >> see spotlight page 13

**APR 22 (SAT) – TREE CLIMBING COMPETITION** – Spectators welcome at the International Society of Arboriculture event · 8:30 am - 3 pm · FREE for spectators · Morgan's Grove Park, Kearneysville Pike, Shepherdstown · FB: [Shepherdstown Community Club](https://www.facebook.com/ShepherdstownCommunityClub) >> see spotlight page 15

**APR 27 (SAT) – CULINARY MUSHROOM CULTIVATION** – Tabler Farm community workshop series · 10 am - 4 pm · Tabler Farm Center (location details with registration) · \$20, pre-registration required · Web: [Shepherd.edu/suaic-2023-workshop-series](http://Shepherd.edu/suaic-2023-workshop-series)

**APR 28 & 29 (FRI & SAT) – MOVIE NIGHT** – At Shepherdstown Opera House · 7:30 pm · 131 West German St, Shepherdstown · See website for title & tickets · Web: [OperaHouseLive.com](http://OperaHouseLive.com) >> see ad page 5

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EXPLORE // ARTS & PERFORMANCE

**STORYTELLING IN SHEPHERDSTOWN**



Speak Story Series hosts story artist **Carmen Deedy** in live performances on **April 11 and 12** (show starts at 7:30 each night). Tuesday's program will be *Dill and Corky: Tales of a Feral Childhood*, in which audiences are introduced to the time when a Cuban refugee kid meets a Tennessee refugee kid, in small town Georgia, in the days before bicycle helmets and hand sanitizer. Wednesday's program will feature a selection of the artist's favorite stories. *Speak is for adult audiences. Mature youth allowed at guardian's discretion. Tickets are \$15 (purchase online or at the door). Artist information and location details will be posted online at [SpeakStorySeries.com](http://SpeakStorySeries.com)*

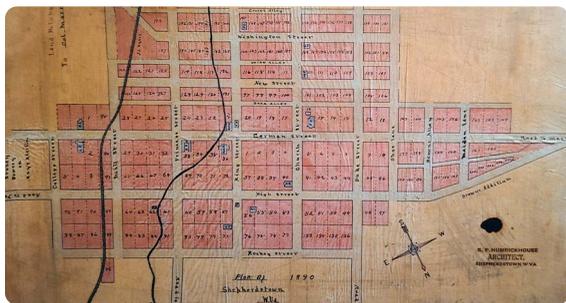
**TWO RIVERS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA CONCERT**

**Jed Gaylin** will conduct from the keyboard as the soloist in celebration of his 10th anniversary as Music Director with the Friends of Music, in a **concert entitled "Hapsburg by Happenstance."** The featured work will be Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 12 in A major, along with performances of Anton Webern's Langsamer Satz ("Slow Movement") and Haydn's Symphony No. 44 in E minor ("Trauer"). Gaylin characterized the concert program as "a program of wild contrasts, all with a Viennese accent." He said the Webern work is "surprisingly lyrical" for a 20th century composer, and the Haydn symphony is one of that composer's "most expressive 'Sturm und Drang' symphonies. *Performances at 7:30 on Saturday, April 15 and 3:00 on Sunday, April 16; both at Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church (100 West Washington St.). Tickets are \$40, available for purchase online at [FriendsWV.org](http://FriendsWV.org) or at the door (space available).*



**HISTORY MUSEUMS OPEN FOR SPRING**

The **Historic Shepherdstown Museum** opens for 2023 with a new exhibit featuring maps of Shepherdstown and Jefferson County, giving visitors a glimpse into the geography of the past (and how much of it is still recognizable today). The 1890 map by local architect S. P. Humrickhouse shown here is an example of what visitors can see in the extensive collection. 129 East German St, Shepherdstown. Open every Saturday 11 am to 5 pm and Sunday 1 to 4 pm, from April 15 through October. Web: [HistoricShepherdstown.com](http://HistoricShepherdstown.com).



The **Jefferson County Museum** is now open Tuesday through Friday 10 am to 4 pm and Saturday 9 am to 1 pm. The new museum director, Lori Wyson, is planning to open an exhibit in May focused on the Prohibition era in Jefferson County. 200 East Washington St, Charles Town (below the library). Web: [JeffCoMuseum.org](http://JeffCoMuseum.org).

**JAZZ BRUNCH & SILENT AUCTION FOR SCHOLARSHIPS**

The Eastern Panhandle Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority will host its **12th annual Jazz Brunch and Silent Auction on Saturday, April 22**, featuring the Howard Burns Quartet, at the Holiday Inn, 301 Foxcroft Ave, Martinsburg. Doors open at 10:30 am and festivities begin at 11. Tickets are \$35 in advance (available until April 16), with proceeds from the event to fund the chapter's scholarship awards and other local public service projects. The organization will honor two female high school seniors with a \$1,000 Scholarship Award. Additionally, two male and two female high school seniors will be awarded with a \$500 Book Scholarship Award. *For tickets, email [EPACdstinfo@gmail.com](mailto:EPACdstinfo@gmail.com). For donations or sponsorships contact Tamara Togans at [TTogans@gmail.com](mailto:TTogans@gmail.com).*

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EXPLORE // ACTIVITIES



## DOUBLE SNAP INCENTIVE AT FARMERS MARKETS

The SNAP benefits, formerly known as food stamps, are a form of government assistance that helps low-income individuals and families purchase food. For 8 years now, with the help of federal and local grants, the **Charles Town and Shepherdstown Markets have doubled SNAP benefits**, providing a way for low-income individuals and families to access fresh, healthy food.

By accepting SNAP benefits, farmers markets are helping to make fresh, healthy food more accessible to everyone, regardless of income. This benefits not only low-income individuals and families but also the local farmers and producers who rely on farmers markets as a vital source of income. Our local program has been one of the most robust and sustainable in the country bringing nearly a half million dollars to the markets over the last 8 years. The Freedoms Run grant program, the amazing market managers, and the Eastern Area Health Education Center are making this possible!

*Program info: [WVFresHealthyBucks.com](http://WVFresHealthyBucks.com). The Charles Town Farmers Market is open every Saturday (from April 15), 9 to noon, operating at the 100 block of South Samuel Street. The Shepherdstown Farmers Market is open every Sunday (from March 19), 9 to 1, operating behind the old Market House at King and German Streets.*

## RABIES CLINIC & BARK IN THE PARK

The Animal Welfare Society of Jefferson County will hold a Rabies Clinic for dogs and cats on April 1 (Sat), at the Loyal Order of the Moose Pavilion, 77 Universal Forest Product Rd., Ranson, 8 to 10 am (to reduce traffic congestion, please do not arrive earlier than 7:45). The vaccination cost is \$10 cash or check for each pet. See the website ([AWSJC.org](http://AWSJC.org)) or call (304-725-0589) for important details on eligibility, instructions, and what to bring.



The Welfare Society is also accepting vendor applications for its 15th annual Bark in the Park to be held June 3 at Jefferson Memorial Park in Charles Town. Details and forms on the website or call 304-725-5972.

## EASTER EGG HUNT & MARKET

Things are going to be hopping in Shepherdstown on Saturday, April 8. Festivities kick off at 10 am with **FlowHippie performing artists** on McMurrin lawn (corner of German & King Streets), followed by the egg hunt with timed starts beginning at 10:30. The **annual Easter Market** featuring 40 local artists and artisans will run from 11 am to 5 pm in the War Memorial Building (102 East German St). Local businesses will be sponsoring a small business crawl throughout the day - get your passport stamped to enter drawings for prizes. Facebook: *Shepherdstown Community Club (events)*.



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EXPLORE // ACTIVITIES

**EARTH DAY ACTIVITIES AT SAM MICHAELS PARK**

Elks Run WaterFaire is organizing an Earth Day 2023 event on Saturday, April 22 at Sam Michaels Park from 10 am to 2 pm. Activities will include bird and nature walks, a rain barrel workshop, a rain garden planting at the park, and food trucks. This will be a family friendly event with activities for kids and adults to explore the wonder of nature in their own backyard.

If you are interested in participating in the rain barrel workshop, please contact Jody Sims at jsims@epcd.us. The first twenty registrants will receive a free rain barrel. On Friday April 21 at 7 pm, the Jefferson County Parks and Recreation Commission will show the movie The Lorax at the AMP pavilion. *More info at Facebook: JeffCounty.ParksNRec.*



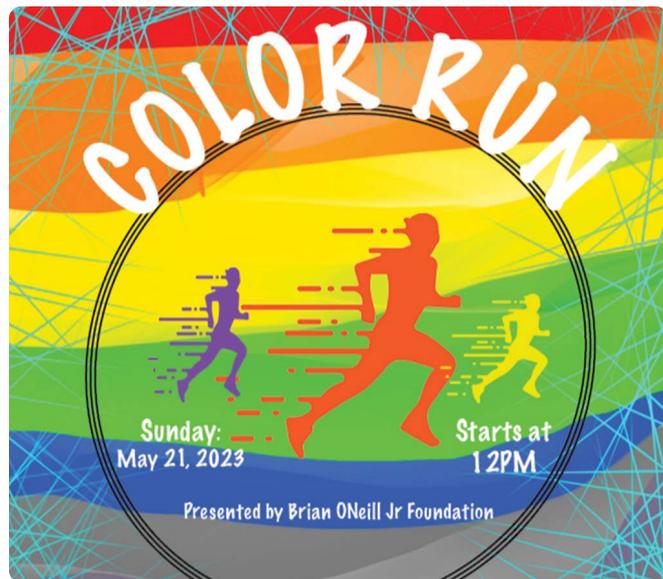
**TREE CLIMBING COMPETITION AT MORGAN'S GROVE PARK**

The 2023 Tree Climbing Competition, organized by the International Society of Arboriculture's Mid-Atlantic Chapter will be held at Morgan's Grove Park on Saturday, April 22, 8:30 am to 3 pm. Spectators are welcome to watch this competitive event that features dozens of professional tree climbers competing in multiple skills and timed events. *More info at Facebook: Shepherdstown Community Club (look for the post in the newsfeed).*



**SUICIDE PREVENTION FOUNDATION SEEKING EVENT SPONSORS**

The Brian O'Neill Jr Foundation is a locally-based nonprofit organization focused on the fight against suicide. The foundation is seeking sponsors for its annual Stronger With Each Step 5K run to be held on May 21 at the Hedgesville High School Cross Country field.



The mission of the foundation is to empower individuals and their families to prevent youth and young adult suicide. All funds raised will go to our organization to be used toward providing education such as SafeTALK, supporting evidenced-based programs and promoting Sources of Strength in our middle schools, high schools, and throughout the community for suicide prevention and awareness in the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia. Sponsorships can be cash or in-kind donations of goods or services. *For details, contact: Lee O'Neill at BrianOneillJrFoundation@gmail.com or visit BrianOneillJrFoundation.org.*

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**SHOP LOCAL >>> PAGE 8**

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ENGAGE // PROTECTING CHILDREN

**VOLUNTEERS STEP UP FOR CHILDREN**



*Pictured above from left to right: Cherish McMillan CASA-EP's Director of Communications and Outreach, Judge Cohee, Kate Kramer, Dawn Saddler, Samantha Fernandez, Karen Calhoun, Stephanie Cox, and Judith Zoll. For more information, visit MyCASAEP.org.*

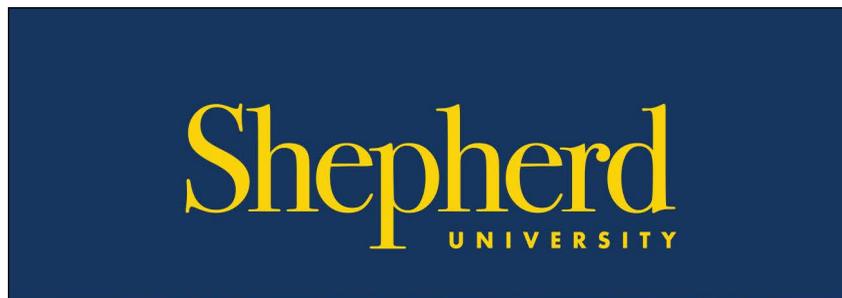
JUDGE BRIDGET COHEE OF WEST VIRGINIA'S 23rd Judicial Circuit swore in seven new court-appointed special advocates on March 17. These individuals are joining a team of 70 other volunteer advocates who are trained by CASA-EP (Court Appointed Special Advocates of the Eastern Panhandle) to work with children who find themselves in the state's foster care system. Judge Cohee remarked that, "the goal for each child is family reunification, but creating a new family through adoption is also a beautiful thing" and noted the key role these volunteer advocates play in providing a voice for the children throughout the court-supervised process.

Michelle Sudduth, executive director of CASA-EP, expressed her gratitude to these community members "who have stepped up to provide a voice for a child. Their commitment translates to better outcomes for vulnerable children and youth and more services to families. Our volunteers are truly an inspiration to anyone who wants to involve themselves in meaningful, challenging, and high-impact volunteer service."

**ENCOURAGING FIREARMS SAFETY**

IN 2022, ACCIDENTAL SHOOTINGS RANKED as the leading cause of death for children according to a study published by the Kaiser Family Foundation. A group of local residents recently raised funds through End Family Fire, a firearms safety program organized by the Brady Center (BradyUnited.org), to display two billboard advertisements (one on Route 9 near Martinsburg and the other on Route 51 in Inwood) encouraging safe firearm storage.

The goal of the End Family Fire program is to end shootings that involve an improperly stored or misused firearm in the home. Through locally-sponsored advertising programs, End Family Fire encourages gun owners and non-gun owners alike to talk about safe gun storage and keep our community, and especially our children, safe. To assist with this effort, contact Lee Doty at [rtdlwd@outlook.com](mailto:rtdlwd@outlook.com).



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