

The WV INDEPENDENT Observer

JEFFERSON COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

JUNE 2023

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Talk About Plans For
Growth In Jefferson

4

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Ranson Discusses
Zoning Changes

5

COMMUNITY

Shepherd University
Updates Campus

6

COMMUNITY

Byrd Center Promotes
History & Civics

7

LOCAL BUSINESS

Herbalist Thrives
In Shepherdstown

9

STATE GOVERNMENT

Highlights From The
Legislative Session

10

EXPLORE & ENGAGE

12 Event Calendar

13-14 Activities

15 EMS Changes

16 School Notes



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THIS PAPER WANTS TO BE RECYCLED.



On the cover: photograph of a red barn off Old Country Club Road north of the Beallair and Breckenridge West subdivisions taken in May 2023. Above: photograph of the same barn taken in November 2020.

TO OUR READERS — There’s only a few obvious changes between the picture above (taken in 2020) and the same scene from May of this year on the cover of this issue. No doubt this view to the Blue Ridge Mountains beyond the red barn has been pretty much the same for many decades.

But change is coming. Long before either of these photos were taken, nearby fields had already been approved for the Breckenridge East subdivision, roughly one thousand homes. That long-dormant plan was recently replaced with another: the Jefferson County Planning Commission voted in May to approve a concept plan submitted by Enel North America to construct a 125 megawatt solar facility on 660 acres. Local residents who commented at the Planning Commission meeting expressed concerns about the transformation, but the recently amended zoning ordinance allows this solar project as a principal permitted use in the residential growth zone — as long as the project conforms to the zoning requirements, it’s a “by right” development, just like a housing development.

A lot of the articles in this month’s issue touch on change (we didn’t plan it that way, it just happened — a sign of the times). Some of these stories are more complex than others and we’ll be posting more material on our website for several of them (sign up for our email newsletter at WeAreTheObserver.com if you want to get highlights as we follow these issues). And if you want to speak up and give your suggestions to the team working on updating the County’s Comprehensive Plan, come to the public input session on June 5 at Jefferson High School (see page 4). It’s a choice — speak up or sit back and enjoy the view (while it’s still there).

Steve Pearson
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Find *The Independent Observer* on the Street

Look for the **red & white** sidewalk boxes!
Coming this summer

Our goal is to keep residents informed about what’s happening in Jefferson County — to provide an independent perspective and help residents explore and engage with the community and local government. We intend to keep the newspaper free to readers and, as the population of Jefferson County continues to grow, we’re changing how we mail the paper to local residents. Depending on each month’s story topics, we’ll be mailing to different neighborhoods around the county. If you don’t see an issue in your mailbox at the beginning of each month, **you can still find us in our red & white newspaper boxes.**

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// LOCAL GOVERNMENT

RANSON PLANNING COMMISSION LOOKS AT REZONING

Jefferson Orchards Requests Industrial Zoning For Site Near Rockwool

By Steve Pearson

A ZONING CHANGE REQUEST in Ranson has prompted significant questions and concerns. Ranson staff vacancies haven't helped matters, with the city's Planning Commission meeting on May 1 for only the second time in nine months. Planning Commission President Mike Anderson, who also serves on the Ranson City Council, repeatedly pointed to the staff turnover and vacancies over the past year — “we can't have a meeting without the staff to present an agenda.”

Rezoning Request Deferred

In mid-May, Todd Wilt, the newly-hired Ranson City Manager, noted that Ranson was in the process of hiring a new Community Development Director (that's the role that oversees the planning process in Ranson) and emphasized the intent to hold monthly meetings of the Planning Commission going forward. One of Wilt's first actions in his new role was to remove an application for rezoning from the May Planning Commission agenda, citing insufficient public notice. The parcel in question is 194 acres across Northport Blvd from

the Rockwool factory. This parcel is currently in the SmartCode Residential/Commercial zone and the application is to change the zoning to Industrial. The property owner, Jefferson Orchards, states that the development options allowed in the current zoning are not viable and that the property is best suited for the uses allowed under Industrial zoning.

Local Residents Raise Concerns

Dr. Christine Wimer, representing the Jefferson County Foundation, spoke at the Planning Commission and also at the May 16 Ranson City Council meeting. In her comments and written statements, she questioned the assumption that the existing Smart Code zoning would block commercial development on the property: “Keep the smart code zoning and the existing T1 & T2 zones [natural & rural] buffer zones. The special district business available in the SmartCode zone would allow up to 120 acres for commercial development and would eliminate the possibility of uses that would have air emissions or contribute to possible water pollution.” Wimer also noted that it was the property owner's own decision to place a restriction that blocked residential development on the parcel as part of the



Local residents raise concerns about the potential for more heavy industry in Ranson.

previous subdivision of the property to provide the land for the Rockwool factory.

June 5 Public Meeting

The Ranson Planning Commission is scheduled to meet on June 5 at 7:00 pm in the Ranson Council Chamber (312 South Mildred St). The rezoning application for the Jefferson Orchards property is expected to be on this meeting agenda, along with additional opportunity for public comment.

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// COMMUNITY

SUMMER CONSTRUCTION AT SHEPHERD UNIVERSITY



The East Loop will be closed to both vehicles and pedestrians during the project. The University is requesting that walkers and bikers who want to access the Rumsey Bridge and the C&O Canal trail traverse the commuter lot to the west of the Nursing School to exit onto Duke Street.

WHEN STUDENTS RETURN TO SHEPHERD University in the fall, they will notice some changes to the east campus. Over the next few months, two former dormitories on the East Loop — Kenamond Hall and Turner Hall — will disappear. For those not familiar with the campus, the East Loop stretches from the circle in front of the Nursing School and around past the old dining hall to connect to the parking lot by the stadium pavilion (more about the parking later). The University had previously evaluated options for renovating these buildings, but the costs of addressing the structural deficiencies and maintenance issues were prohibitive.

The University has hired Reclaim Company, a demolition company that specializes in reclaiming, recycling, and repurposing materials, as part of the removal

project. Reclaim will use a slightly different process from the typical bulldozer and dumpster approach, but one the University felt had value — both from financial and environmental perspectives. Work is already underway to remove and process usable materials from Turner Hall. Once anything with salvage value is removed, the crew will move on to Kenamond Hall (in about a month) and the heavy work of bringing down Turner will begin. Kenamond Hall will come down at the end of the summer.

The plan for the Turner site is to restore the area to green space for now — while preserving future options to build a new structure on the site overlooking the Potomac River once specific needs (and funding) are identified. The Kenamond site will become a parking lot. According to Sonya Sholley, Associate VP for



Reclamation work is already underway at Turner Hall

Strategic Initiatives & Presidential Operations at Shepherd University, the brick and other masonry from the demolished buildings will be ground into gravel onsite and provide the fill below the new parking lot. Sholley remarked, “when we presented this plan to the students and told them we were adding 95 parking spaces for commuters, the room broke out in applause.”

Dr. Scott Barton, VP Finance & Administration for Shepherd, emphasized that the funds for these projects are coming from federal awards and are not diverting any funding that could be used to support student programming or faculty. President Mary J.C. Hendrix expressed her appreciation for the state’s Senators who supported the funding of this project: “Shepherd University is profoundly grateful to Senators Capito and Manchin for their Congressionally Directed Funding Awards, which have allowed us to begin the transformation of our East Campus”, said Dr. Mary J.C. Hendrix, Shepherd’s president. “This project includes deliverables that will benefit our campus and community at large. We are very excited to see the progress!”

See more pictures and information about this project at WeAreTheObserver.com.



(Left) A new gateway will span the King Street entrance to the campus. You can view the architectural drawings for the gateway project and plans for the parking lot changes at WeAreTheObserver.com. (Right) A separate project will add a covered bus stop on King Street, just north of the new gateway.

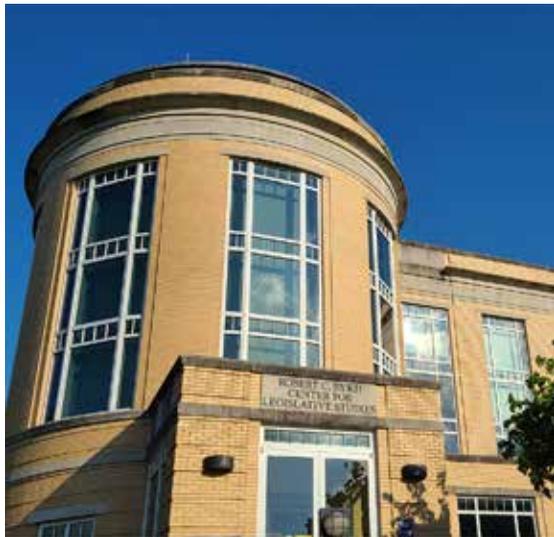
// COMMUNITY

BYRD CENTER SUMMER FUN

Food, Friends, and All that Jazz

By Lee Doty

Lee W. Doty is a retired lawyer and Shepherdstown resident who writes the Norma Bergen mystery series.



THE ROBERT C. BYRD CENTER for Congressional History and Education will host its third Summer Fundraiser on Saturday, June 10 from 6 to 8 pm (rain or shine) on the grounds of historic Patterson’s Mill in Martinsburg. The event will support the Center’s civics education initiatives, including its intern program, and celebrate its twentieth anniversary as a non-profit organization on the campus of Shepherd University.

The fundraiser’s featured entertainer is pianist Bob Thompson. From street corner doowop gigs to house pianist on NPR’s Mountain Stage show, Bob Thompson is arguably West Virginia’s best loved jazz musician. Catering will be provided by the popular Taste of Greece food truck.

The Center’s mission is to promote a better understanding of Congress and the Constitution through its educational programs. As a non-profit organization, it must raise funds for staff and operations not covered by the State of West Virginia or Shepherd University. The fundraiser will allow the Center to continue to develop and expand its programs.

The main reason for supporting the Center’s programs, according to Dr. Ray Smock, Interim Director of the Center, who is back at the helm after retiring in 2018, “is because civics education and understanding of how government works is needed now more than ever.” He noted that the nation’s most recent report card on the

scores of eighth graders for United States history and civics shows “we are going backward, not forward.” Only fourteen percent of students reached a proficient mark in U.S. history and twenty-two percent in U.S. civics. “Students need to know how government works. Compromise is the oil that makes Congress work. Today, we’ve run out of oil. We’ve forgotten how to compromise for the good of the country.”

The Center’s archives include the extensive office files of five West Virginia members of Congress, the largest being those of Senator Byrd, the longest serving Senator in U.S. history. The archives are the foundation for the Center’s U.S. history and civics programs.

Recently, the Center welcomed Matisha (“Tish”) Wiggs as its new archivist, whose role, among other duties, is to process its collection of congressional files so they can be used by scholars and other researchers. She will also direct the student internship program. Wiggs has these matters well in hand with an MSLS in Information and Library Science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, an MA in Public History, with a concentration in Historic Preservation, and a BA in American History.

Her first task is to organize the papers contained in 1600 file boxes of Robert Mollohan and his son Alan Mollohan who, combined, represented West Virginia in the House of Representatives for 46 years. Visitors to the file room containing floor-to-ceiling Mollohan file boxes will be impressed, if not buried. Smock expressed heartfelt confidence in the new archivist — “She understood immediately what had to be done.”

This summer, in partnership with Dr. Sylvia Bailey Shurbutt’s renowned Appalachian Studies program at Shepherd, the Center will offer a new approach to civics training with its “People Powered Program,” a modified version of the Center’s vaunted Teacher Institute program. The program, which provides continuing education opportunities for middle- and high-school teachers, will help teach civics from the viewpoint of people engaging with Congress to solve problems and shape the nation —the very definition of the democratic process. The Center’s congressional collection offers primary research material for this endeavor, whose goal is to “teach the teachers” who can then introduce this training throughout the state.

Summer Fundraiser Tickets are \$150 per person. Visit the Byrd Center website for more details (ByrdCenter.org).

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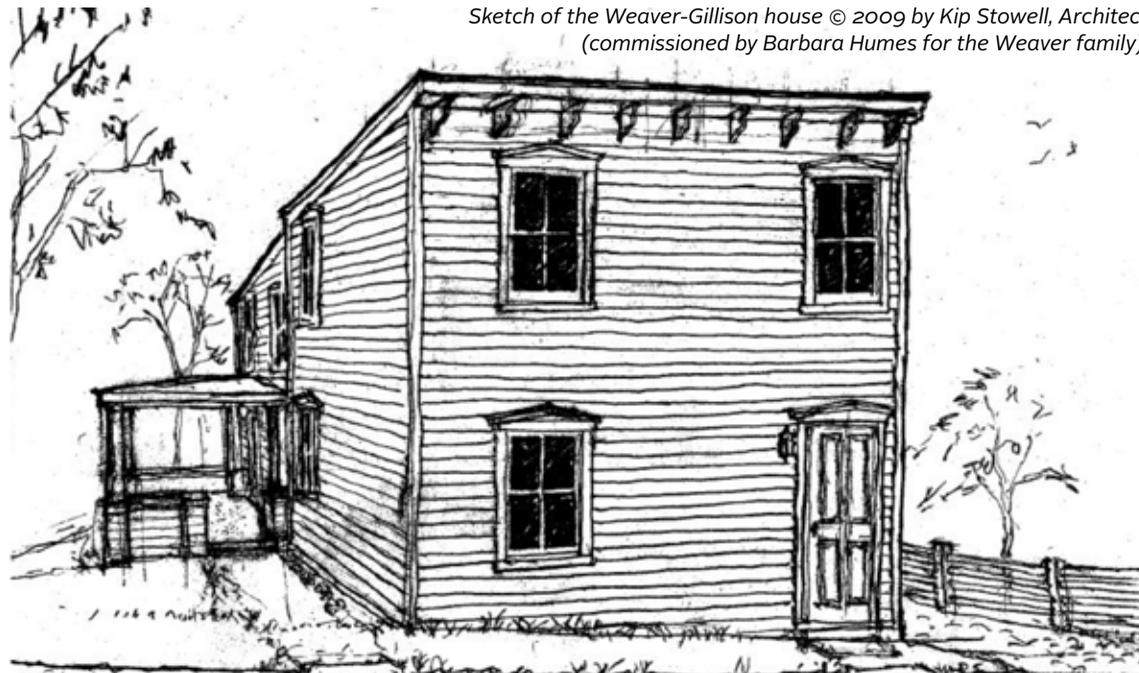
// HISTORIC PRESERVATION

NEED FOR FUNDING TO PRESERVE HISTORIC HOUSE

Home of Civil Rights Leader In Harpers Ferry In Danger of Demolition

LOCAL RESIDENTS HAVE LAUNCHED a fundraising campaign to save a historic structure in Harpers Ferry. The Weaver-Gilliam house was built by George Weaver around 1888 at what was then the outskirts of Harpers Ferry (diagonally across from today's Town Hall). Weaver resided here with his wife Julie and ran several businesses with his son James — including ice delivery and general hauling. Weaver was instrumental in founding the first black church in Harpers Ferry, Methodist Episcopal, and recent research has uncovered details of his involvement in the civil rights movement of the early twentieth century.

The house was designated a contributing structure to the Harpers Ferry Historic District in 2010, but has since deteriorated to the point that the Harpers Ferry Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) approved a demolition permit at its May 9 meeting. The demolition permit was paused for 90 days to allow family descendants and local supporters time to figure out an alternative path to immediate demolition — or if the building even needs to be torn down. While the building is certainly not habitable, it's not clear whether the building really is at risk of collapse or if it could be stabilized to preserve the option for a longer-term rehabilitation project. 📍



Sketch of the Weaver-Gillison house © 2009 by Kip Stowell, Architect (commissioned by Barbara Humes for the Weaver family).

The group seeks to raise \$5,000 by June 30 to support an emergency assessment of the building conditions as a precursor to applying for a grant from the West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office. *More details at [GoFundMe.com/Save-Harpers-Ferrys-WeaverGillison-House](https://www.gofundme.com/save-harpers-ferrys-weaver-gillison-house).*



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June 10 (Sat) – “Ulti-Mutt” Movie Marathon (FREE)
Stop in during Dog Fest for a day-long screening of family-favorite dog movies

June 13 & 14 (Tue & Wed) – Speak Story: Rev. Robert B. Jones, Sr., 7:30 pm
An inspirational storyteller, singer, instrumentalist, and visual artist whose work celebrates the history of American Roots music. Different program each night

The Shepherdstown Opera House is excited to welcome the Contemporary American Theater Festival this summer. CATF will move into the Opera House in mid-June and stay through July. Movies and live music will return in August!

**For event details, scan QR code above or visit
OperaHouseLive.com/Calendar-of-Events**

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PERSPECTIVE // LOCAL BUSINESS

LOCAL HERBALIST FOCUSES ON TRAINING & SELF-DIRECTION

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.

HERBALISM IS A TRADITIONAL folk medical practice with a timeless mythology, and Jefferson County is lucky to have one of the few comprehensive, in-person herbalism schools on the east coast within its borders. I spoke with Ashley Davis, clinical herbalist and co-owner of Tonic Therapeutic Herb Shop & Elixir Bar, to learn about the evolution of the store, which has been located on German Street in Shepherdstown for seven years.

At the time of our interview, I sat at the elixir bar gazing at walls of powders, herbs, and roots while Davis concocted a delicious herbal hot toddy for me. I had just come down with a cold — and I couldn't have gotten through the day without her remedy. Tonic is a rich local resource for quick-fixes and chronic resets, alike. Davis shared with me that Tonic is a space to explore the “mutually-supportive relationship between plants and people [through] high-quality products, medicine-making supplies and ingredients, individual herbal consultations, and educational programs.”

Tonic's Sacred Garden School (SGS) offers budding herbalists the opportunity to learn the art and science of herbal medicine for themselves. “People drive from four and a half hours away to come to classes,” she says, and one prospective student is even considering the commute all the way from Nashville. The school is a member of the American Herbalist Guild

(AHG), which maintains rigorous certification standards for its members — which sets Tonic apart from the practitioners and schools that don't go through the trouble of striving for such accreditation.

It takes many years of study and apprenticeship to attain the skill and credentials of a reputable herbalist. Now that students of Tonic's inaugural SGS clinical herbalist program are in their third year, focusing on practicum, the shop recently launched a low-cost herbal clinic under the supervision of senior herbalists such as Davis. The hours attained in the clinical practicum will enable graduates to register with the AHG, which requires a minimum of 400 hours of supervised clinical practice, among other intensive criteria.

The New Community Wellness Council (NCWC) clinic launched in February and was rapidly booked through June, which is a testimony to the resurgence of herbalism as a trusted ally in health and wellness. Davis shares that the clinic has had “a really overwhelming response... everyday that I come into the front of the store I meet someone who's in so much need of guidance.” One of the greatest hurdles to overcome now is simply getting more herbalists trained to meet the burgeoning demand.

A visit to the NCWC clinic, or with any senior herbalist on the Tonic staff, includes a holistic physical, mental, and emotional assessment via testing and active conversation, which on its own is one of the most appealing aspects of herbalist culture: to simply be heard. Davis explains that her team of herbalists, senior and junior, then “collaborate on recommendations and optimal formulas for the client.” Regular follow-ups are maintained and clients are encouraged to exercise their intuition and autonomy in achieving their health goals.



Herbalism is, above all, a participatory path to sustained health and wellness. “We provide a space for people to choose natural solutions, to support ethical companies, local growers, and a space for people to learn how to strengthen their bodies and psyches with plants,” Davis asserts.

All in all, it's an exciting time for this retail store and educational platform in the heart of Shepherdstown. Davis and her team are offering beginner-level classes, such as Foundational Herbology & Medicine Making Circles, to introduce plant-curious individuals to the art and science of herbalism. Tonic also sells “organic and ethically-sourced and, when possible, locally grown, herbs and herbal products” to support clients seeking anything from improved digestion, deeper sleep, reduced stress, to improved mental focus — or a timeless mountain-medicine remedy to warm the heart through a common cold.

Located at 140 East German St, Shepherdstown WV. Tel: 304-870-4527. Instagram tonic_herbshop & sacredgardenschool. Web: TonicHerbShop & SacredGardenSchool.com.

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SOME BILLS THAT FAILED IN THE LEGISLATURE THIS YEAR

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*.

THERE HAVE BEEN MANY reviews of bills that passed and became law in West Virginia this year. However, there were far more bills that were introduced but not passed by the legislature. This month's column points out some bills that did not pass but were sponsored by Delegate Hardy and Senators Barrett and Rucker (last month's column reviewed unsuccessful bills sponsored by Delegates Clark, Espinosa, and Ridenour).



(Left to right) Delegate Hardy, Senators Barrett and Rucker

Student Debt Reduction for STEM Teachers

HB 3068 would have given teachers specializing in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics a total of \$10,000 of student debt reduction (\$5,000 for 5 years of teaching and an additional \$5,000 for an additional 5 years of teaching). *Delegates Hardy and Clark along with seven other delegates sponsored this bill, but it stalled in the House Finance Committee.*

Extension of Time - Electronically Register to Vote

HB 3008 would have extended the time to electronically register to vote from close of business on the final day of registration to 11:59 p.m. on the

final day of registration. *This bill stalled in the House Judiciary Committee. It had seven sponsors including Delegates Hardy and Espinosa.*

Date of Municipal Elections

HB 2782 and SB 682 both sought to require municipal elections be held at the same time as regularly scheduled primaries or election days. *These bills stalled in the Judiciary Committees of the House and the Senate. Ten delegates sponsored the House bill and two Senators, including Senator Rucker sponsored the Senate bill.*

Third Grade Success Act

SB 274 would have provided a system of support for early literacy and numeracy for students in kindergarten through third grade. *This bill passed in the Senate but stalled in the House Finance Committee. Ten senators sponsored this bill including Senator Barrett.*

Moment of Silence in Schools

SB 599 would have recognized a right of students to freedom of religion in school by requiring schools to have a moment of silence at the beginning of each school day to exercise that right. In addition, teachers would be required to keep students in their seats and silent and free from distractions during that time. *Six senators sponsored this bill, including Senator Rucker but it stalled in the Senate Education Committee.*

Mandatory Subjects to be Taught in Public Schools

SB 216 would have required that public schools must teach the Holocaust, other genocides, and financial literacy by the end of 12th grade. *This bill passed the Senate but was stalled in the House Finance Committee. Two senators sponsored this bill including Senator Rucker.*

Work Requirement to Receive Unemployment Benefits

Current eligibility requirements to receive

unemployment benefits include actively seeking work. SB 59 would have changed this requirement to a mandatory four job searches per week. *This bill passed in the Senate but stalled in the House Workforce Development Committee. Four senators sponsored this bill including Senator Barrett.*

Reporting Mental or Physical Disabilities to Division of Motor Vehicles

SB 727 would have required that mental or physical disabilities be reported to the Division of Motor Vehicles so that a determination could be made as to whether an individual should retain their driver's license. *This bill was sponsored by four senators, including Senator Barrett. It stalled in the Senate Judiciary Committee.*

Permitting Parents to Decline Medication for Newborns

SB 32 would have allowed parents and guardians to refuse state mandated medication that is given to newborns to prevent eye infections, including infections which can lead to blindness. *Three senators, including Senator Rucker, sponsored this bill. The bill stalled in the Health & Human Resources Committee.*

Administration of Anesthetics by Nurses

Current law permits nurses with appropriate training and licenses to administer anesthetics in the presence of and under the supervision of a physician or dentist. SB 52 would have permitted nurses to administer anesthetics in cooperation with physicians and dentists. *This bill stalled in the Health & Human Resources Committee. It was sponsored by Senator Rucker (main sponsor) and ten other Senators.*

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FINDING BALANCE IN CONFLICT

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.

WHEN THE ENCHANTING NOTES of a wood thrush reached my ears as I woke up this morning, I smiled. Nice as it is to hear birdsong in our own woods and plant native trees on our own property, I wonder about mankind's role in nature. Can we keep using our natural resources wisely and sustainably while at the same time protecting and treasuring our wild natural lands?

I take comfort in thinking about how two leading fathers of American conservation dealt with this problem. During the 1890s, America faced an environmental crisis similar in many ways to our situation today. Our country had nearly ended its westward expansion. Corporations bought up huge tracts of land for timber and mining. What was left of the unclaimed land set aside for farming and homesteading had become overrun with grazing cattle and sheep. Big game animals were a rarity, and our remaining forests were in real danger of destruction. Something had to be done.

In 1896 the National Academy of Sciences sent a team of commissioners on a four-month tour of the Western United States and asked for their recommendations. Among these commissioners were two young men, John Muir and Gifford Pinchot.

Muir was a preservationist who believed forests were sacred and had to be protected from logging, grazing, and mining. Pinchot was a conservationist, believing that forests needed to be used, sustained, and managed as a natural resource. Despite their widely differing viewpoints, the two men befriended each other during this glorified camping trip, fishing together on Lake McDonald on land that would

become Glacier National Park in Montana. Muir and Pinchot agreed that wild natural areas like Lake McDonald should be permanently protected.

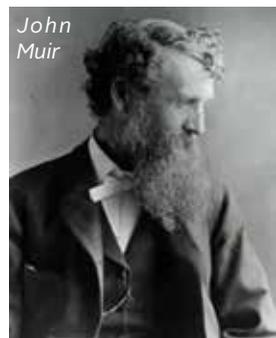
The result of the Commission was a congressional bill that would preserve national wilderness areas, combined with a system of forests protected by the government but open to every American's use. This bill failed to pass but ultimately led to the creation of the US Forest Service as a separate branch of government under the Department of Agriculture. Pinchot became the first chief of the US Forest Service in 1905 under President Grover Cleveland. With Pinchot's guidance, America's national forests were managed and cared for by the federal government. Timber was used like any other crop, not preserved as if in a museum.

Muir and his supporters believed the proposed Forest Service didn't do enough to protect America's pristine wild lands. They won a victory in 1899 when Mount Rainier in the state of Washington became a National Park. Muir, an avid writer and naturalist, went on to create the Sierra Club, an organization dedicated to preserving our nation's wilderness areas.

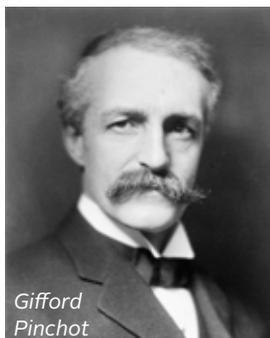
Muir and Pinchot's friendship fell out in 1908, when the City of San Francisco was granted the authority to dam the Tuolumne River in the Hetch Hetchy valley, located in the heart of Yosemite National Park in California. The city needed the dam to provide water for its growing population. Pinchot lobbied in Washington, D.C. for the dam's use. Meanwhile, Muir wrote fiery articles from the state of Washington in Harper's Weekly and Atlantic magazines condemning the destruction of public lands. Pinchot won out and the dam was built in 1913.

Today the US Forest Service and the National Park Service combine the legacies of tree-loving preservationists and user-friendly conservationists. On US Forest Service Land, the interests of lumber and mining companies are balanced along with recreational use by hunters, hikers, snowmobilers and cross-country skiers, in line with Gifford Pinchot's thinking. The National Park Service follows John Muir's preservation theory, protecting natural wonders like Sequoia trees for all to enjoy.

I can picture Muir and Pinchot in my mind, fishing companionably together. And I can also think of them seated by a campfire on the lake shore, heatedly discussing things late into the night. The same tension and tug-of-war between viewpoints continues to play out today, but I hold out hope that we can continue to listen to and respect each other, to seek out the common ground that supports a path to preserve and protect nature and still respect and encourage wise use of our natural resources.



John Muir



Gifford Pinchot

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JUN 3 (SAT) – BARK IN THE PARK – Fundraising event by Animal Welfare Society of Jefferson County - demonstrations, games (for humans & dogs), contests, vendors, rescues, food, entertainment · 10 am - 2 pm · Jefferson Memorial Park, Forrest Ave, Charles Town · FREE · Web: AWSJC.org

JUN 3 (SAT) – RANSON FESTIVAL & CAR SHOW – Car show (classics & hot rods), plus mobile escape room, ax-throwing, kids zone, petting zoo, craft vendors, and food trucks · 10 am - 3 pm · downtown Ranson · FREE · FB: RansonCVB

JUN 10 (SAT) – SHEPHERDSTOWN DOGFEST – Music, food, beverages, rescue parade, contests, demonstrations, vendors & lots of fun · 11 am - 5 pm · The Midway on the Shepherd University Campus, 300 N King St, Shepherdstown · FREE · FB: ShepherdstownDogFest

JUN 10 (SAT) – MOVIES AT SHEPHERDSTOWN OPERA HOUSE – Stop in during Dog Fest for a day-long screening of some family-favorite doggie movies (see website for times) · 131 West German St, Shepherdstown · FREE · Web: OperaHouseLive.com

JUN 10 (SAT) – BOB THOMPSON CONCERT – Fundraising event for the Byrd Center Congressional History & Education · Lawn concert & food truck event · 6:00 - 8:00 pm (rain or shine) · Historic Patterson's Mill (location details with ticket purchase) · \$150 · Web: ByrdCenter.org

JUN 13 & 14 (TUE & WED) – SPEAK STORY SERIES – Robert B. Jones is an inspirational storyteller, singer, instrumentalist, and visual artist whose work celebrates the history of American Roots music. His initial love was country blues guitar, but over the years his repertoire has expanded to include many styles of traditional African American folk music, including spirituals and gospel. Jones is also the co-founder of a non-profit organization called "Common Chords," a program that seeks to build bridges between communities using music, storytelling, and art. Each night will have a different program. · 7:30 pm · Shepherdstown Opera House, 131 West German St, Shepherdstown · \$15 · Web: SpeakStorySeries.com

JUN 17 (SAT) – WV FEST – Music (The Broomstix, The Josephines), food, beer garden, pepperoni roll bake-off, kids zone, vendors & lots of family fun · 10 am - 5 pm · Downtown Charles Town (street closures) · FREE · FB: Charles Town Now

JUN 23, 24, 24 (FRI, SAT, SUN) – NEW VOICE PLAY FESTIVAL – 4 new one-act plays presented by the Old Opera House Theater Company · 8 pm Fri & Sat, 2:30 pm Sun · Charles Town Opera House, 204 N George St, Charles Town · \$20 (\$15 senior, child, military) · Web: OldOperaHouse.org

JUN 24 (SAT) – STREET FEST – Music on 2 stages (Paul the Resonator, Chunky Lops, Jordan Siwek, Gypsy Ramblers, The Fly Birds, Low Water Bridge Band, Crush Funk Bans, Rozwell Kid, The JOGO Project), food, beer garden, pepperoni roll bake-off, kids zone, lots of craft vendors & artisans · 10 am - 8:30 pm · Downtown Shepherdstown (street closures) · FREE · Web: ShepherdstownStreetFest.org

JUL 1 (SAT) – FIREWORKS – Sam Michaels Park hosts the Jefferson County fireworks show to celebrate Independence Day · Gates open at 6:30, concert by Kelli Bell at 7:30, fireworks begin at dark · Bring your own chairs, blankets, food & drinks (no alcohol please). The AMP is a non-smoking venue · Details at FB (events): The AMP at Sam Michaels.

CONCERTS IN JUNE – LEVITT AMP MUSIC SERIES AT SAM MICHAELS PARK
The summer outdoor concert series at the AMP has shows every Thursday in June. Doors open at 6 pm, concerts start at 7 pm. Bring your own chairs, blankets, food & drinks (no alcohol please). The AMP is a non-smoking venue. Details at FB (events): The AMP at Sam Michaels. June schedule: Caitlin Krisco and the Broadcast (Jun 1), Derrick Dove & the Peacekeepers (Jun 8), Circa Blue (Jun 15), Carsie Blanton (Jun 22), Jah Works (Jun 30).

EXPLORE // CAMPS & CLASSES

SHEPHERD UNIVERSITY SPORTS CAMPS



Shepherd University will host multiple **soccer camps** this summer, run by student-athletes and coaches from the men's and women's soccer teams. Week-long, co-ed day camps will be offered the weeks of June 19, July 10, and July 31 (fee is \$149/half day, \$249/full day). A girls one-day ID camp for high school students interested in playing at the collegiate level will be held on July 20 (\$100). A girls residential team camp will be offered July 17-19 (\$299). The men's program will also be offering a four-day goalkeeper day camp for high school boys on July 24-27 (\$215).

Ram Football will hold two prospect camps, on July 19 & 26, for players entering grades 9-12 (fee is \$25). Two **softball camps** are also on the schedule — A skills camp for high school age students will be held on June 26-27 (fee is \$115) and a camp for girls entering grades 6-8 will be offered on June 28 (\$50).

Information about baseball, lacrosse, and tennis camps will be posted when finalized. Details & registration: ShepherdAthleticCamps.com

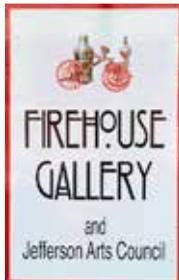
ACTORS WANTED IN CHARLES TOWN

The **Old Opera House Theater Company** is holding auditions for its summer show, “**The Sound of Music**,” the Rodgers & Hammerstein award-winning musical based on the von Trapp family's story.

Audition times are June 4 (Sunday) at 2 pm and June 5 (Monday) at 6 pm. **Youth performers are encouraged** to audition on Sunday (minimum age is 7). Participants should be prepared with a Broadway-style show tune to sing. Performance will be on July 28, 29, 30 and August 4, 5, 6. *Details at OldOperaHouse.org*



ART CLASSES IN CHARLES TOWN



The **Firehouse Gallery in Charles Town** (108 North George St, Charles Town) is offering an **Introduction to Pen and Ink Drawing** class. The class will meet on June 7, 14, 21, 28 (Wednesdays), 5:30 to 7:30 pm (\$85 fee).

This workshop is focused on learning or reinforcing the basics of the pen and ink illustration technique, including artistic concepts, choice of materials, use of color, types of lines, shading, smudging, and washes. *Open to ages 12 & up. More info at FireHouseGalleryWV.org.*

ART CAMP IN HAGERSTOWN

The focus of the **Washington County Museum of Fine Arts** (401 Museum Drive, Hagerstown, MD) **2023 summer camp for kids** is “**Little Vikings: Explore Legends and Magic**” taking its theme from the museum's new exhibition titled *Landscapes & Legends of Norway: William Singer and His Contemporaries*.

Campers will **explore and create art inspired by Norse gods, legends, and folk tales**. *Camp dates are July 17-21, 8 am to 4:30 pm. Open to ages 8-12, fee is \$280. Details & registration: WCMFA.org/art-classes/camps.*



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—C.G. Jung
("The Spiritual Problem of Modern Man", Collected Works, vol 10, par 195)



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EXPLORE // NATIONAL GUNS TO GARDENS DAY

LOCAL CHURCH FINDS USE FOR UNWANTED GUNS

Guns To Gardens Turns Firearms into Garden Tools

THE SHEPHERDSTOWN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH is hosting a gun surrender event on June 11 at the Shepherdstown Fire Department (details below). This event is part of the Guns to Gardens program that enables people to safely surrender unwanted firearms and have them transformed into garden tools or art. The event in Shepherdstown is part of the Presbyterian Church (USA)'s national Guns to Gardens Day observance, in which Presbyterian churches all around the country will be participating. It will be the first ever Guns to Gardens event in West Virginia.

The goal of Guns to Gardens is “to end gun violence, promote safe gun storage, and maintain safe neighborhoods” according to its website. The organizers stress that the Guns to Gardens program is not “anti-gun” — it does not challenge anyone’s right or choice to legally own firearms. Rather, it’s a faith-driven response to the sharply-increasing incidence of gun-related deaths and injuries in this country, particularly among children. “Guns to Gardens gives a way for gun owners who, for their own personal reasons, wish to surrender a gun and to give it a new, life-affirming purpose,” said Pastor Gusti Newquist of Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church. “It is an honor to participate in an effort where Scripture — “And they shall turn their swords into plowshares” (Isaiah 2:4) — is brought to life in our modern world.”

Unlike traditional gun buy-back events, where gun owners are paid market value for their guns, Guns to Gardens events typically offer gift cards as an expression of thanks to the gun donors. “We don’t compete with the open market, so these events don’t draw people

seeking top dollar for their guns,” says Deanna Hollas, the Presbyterian Church (USA)’s first ordained minister of gun violence prevention. “Guns to Gardens draws people who are inspired by its underlying spirit of transformation.”

Jay Hurley, owner of O’Hurley’s General Store in Shepherdstown, will be one of the volunteers dismantling guns at the event. Hurley, a lifelong gun enthusiast and collector, commented on his participation in Guns to Gardens: “I honor the importance of firearms in our country’s history. But I also recognize the growing need to get guns off our streets and, for some, out of our homes. So, while I chop up guns on June 11, you may see tears falling down my cheeks. Still, I’ll be happy to do it.”

All donated guns will be dismantled on site during the event (see details below). After the event, the dismantled gun materials will go to local blacksmiths, who will craft the metal into garden tools, to be sold locally.



June 11 (Sunday), 1 pm to 4 pm
Shepherdstown Fire Department,
8052 Martinsburg Pike, Shepherdstown

Anyone with an unwanted firearm may bring it to the event (please do not drop off guns outside of the event hours). An individual can drop off as many firearms as they like.

The firearms should be in working order, unloaded, and stowed in the trunk of the donor’s car (or in the rear of SUVs and trucks). While the donors remain in their vehicles, trained volunteers will remove the firearms, check them, record the serial numbers, and transfer them to a dismantling station. The donors will proceed to that station to observe their guns being cut into parts (following ATF guidelines) by trained volunteers. Because the owners watch their guns’ dismantlement, there is no transfer of ownership. At the end of the process, donors will receive a gift card to a local grocery store: \$50 for handguns, \$100 for shotguns or rifles, and \$200 for semi-automatic weapons.

For security and privacy reasons, only gun donors, press, and the volunteer staff will be allowed on the Fire Department premises during the event. Press must check in with the event organizer. Donors’ privacy must be maintained. No photos will be permitted. Learn more about the Guns to Gardens project at GunsToGardens.org.



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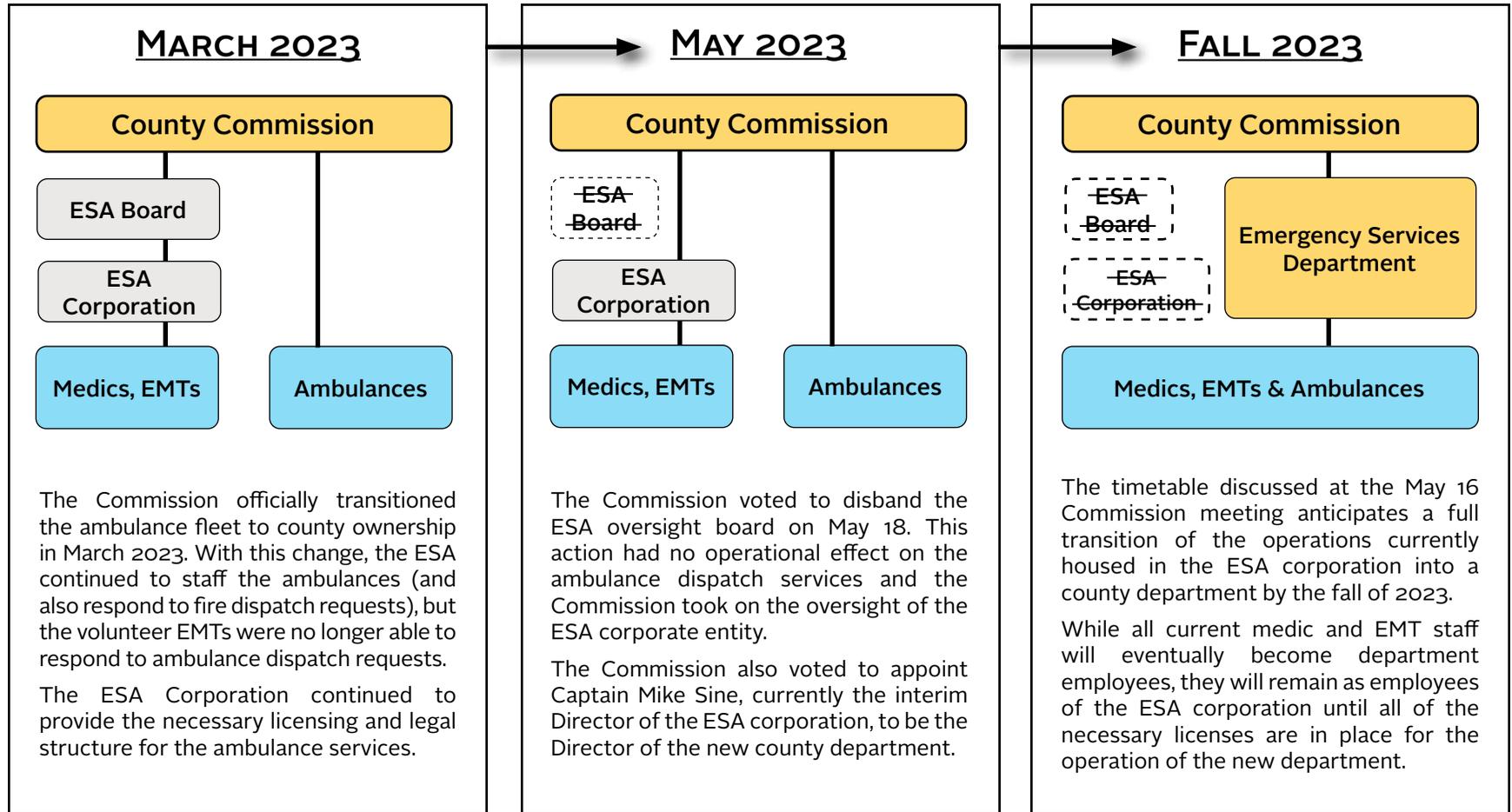
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ENGAGE // AMBULANCE SERVICES

COUNTY CONTINUES RESTRUCTURE OF AMBULANCE DEPARTMENT

PRIOR TO JULY 2022, JEFFERSON COUNTY'S AMBULANCE SERVICES operated with a mix of volunteer EMTs, ambulances owned by the 7 volunteer fire companies, and full-time medics and EMTs employed by the county's Emergency Services Agency (ESA). The ESA was structured as a public corporation, with oversight by a 7-member board appointed by the County Commission.

In July and August of 2022, the County Commission voted to transition the ambulance services to a county department. The first step was to purchase 10 ambulances from the volunteer fire companies. Following a six month project to update the ambulances and equipment, the Commission finalized leases with 4 of the volunteer fire companies on March 1 to begin the transition to a county-run department (outlined below).



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ENGAGE // SCHOOLS AND SOLAR

SCHOOL BOARD REFERS RACIAL SLURS PROTOCOL TO COMMITTEE



AT ITS MAY 8 REGULAR MEETING, the School Board discussed a draft protocol that would provide guidance to teachers and staff on responding to incidents between students involving racial slurs. During public comment, Heather Murray, a parent and educator, shared the frustrations of many students and parents with the alarming frequency of racially-directed aggression and taunting and the school system's problematic response to discipline in cases of racial bullying. The protocol presented by the Superintendent suggests a multi-step process to intervene, evaluate, act, and follow-up. At the May 22 regular meeting, the Board received an update from the Superintendent about recently enacted state legislation (HB2890) that imposes specific requirements for student discipline, including tiered responses. The board voted to refer the draft protocol on racial slurs to a recently-formed citizens advisory committee, to be reviewed and incorporated into that committee's recommendations due later this year for a broader update to student discipline policies.

You can find details of the proposed protocol and links to submit public comment and questions at WeAreTheObserver.com.

COUNTY COMMISSION DISCUSSES PILOT AGREEMENT FOR SOLAR



THE NEW COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR, Makayla Zonfrilli (at left in the photo) attended her first meeting with the County Commission on May 18. In addition to taking action to dissolve the ESA board (see page 15), the Commission received a proposal for a PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) agreement for the Wind Hill Solar project. *A copy of the solar project presentation and analysis of the PILOT proposal will be posted at WeAreTheObserver.com.*

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