

The WV INDEPENDENT Observer

JEFFERSON COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

OCTOBER 2023

COMMUNITY

Country Roads
Take Us Home

4 >>>>>>>>>

COMMUNITY

Child Care Center
Marks 50 Years

6

COMMUNITY

Local Woman Leans
Into Challenge

8

NATURE

A Chance To Fish
Brings Smiles

9

GOVERNMENT

Residents Comment
On Local Issues

10

GOVERNMENT

County Commissioners
Create Confusion

11

EXPLORE & ENGAGE

12 Events & Activities

13 Imaginary Horribles

14-15 Music & Theater

16 Halloween Fun



The Rumsey Bridge into Shepherdstown has been getting heavy traffic between 3 and 6 pm, as drivers seek alternatives during the three-month closure of Route 340.

The rock slide remediation project in Harpers Ferry will continue until December 11, 2023.



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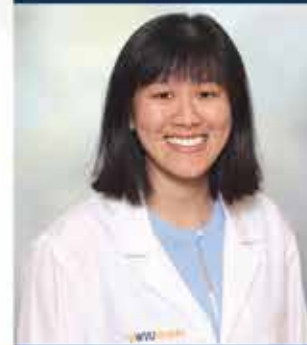
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THIS PAPER WANTS TO BE RECYCLED.



The youth of FFA and 4-H do a lot of hard work before and during the County Fair — including keeping the stalls and animals clean.

TO OUR READERS — It’s not normal when the headlines talk about what elected officials didn’t do — as in, didn’t show up for work and didn’t fulfill their responsibilities. Commissioners Jennifer Krouse and Tricia Jackson have been making claims about abuse of power, backroom deals, and self interest. But what they are doing seems likely to disrupt the normal operations of the County.

Both Jackson and Krouse refused to attend the regular Commission meeting on September 21 (see page 11). Both posted to social media during the meeting, cloaking their actions as some noble cause. Sadly, their claims seem no more full of truth than the wheelbarrow pictured above.


Looking back at the first Commission meeting of 2023 (see our February issue), the vote to appoint Steve Stolipher as Commission President was 3-2, with Jackson and Krouse on the “nay” side. With one of the seats on the commission remaining empty (going on 3 months now), in part due to the actions of Jackson and Krouse, it’s easy to conclude that their most recent coordination to block a quorum is more about politics than a plea for better governance.

The political provocateur Steve Bannon, recently convicted of contempt of Congress, coined the phrase “flooding the zone with s**t” to describe the tactic of manipulating the political discussion to sow confusion with the goal of creating chaos and breaking the system. It’s wearisome enough to see that mode of discourse overtake our national politics, but to see it disrupt the normal operations of our county government should give us all pause.

 Steve Pearson
EDITOR IN CHIEF

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Look for the black racks (inside) and the red & white boxes (outside)

 **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 pick up a free copy at these locations:**

DOWNTOWN SHEPHERDSTOWN

- Post Office (street box)
- Community Garden Market
- Four Seasons Books
- MJ’s on German DeliCafe
- Sweet Shop Bakery
- Shepherdstown Public Library

BOLIVAR - HARPERS FERRY

- Bolivar Bread Bakery
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- Bakerton Market

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- Middleway Market
- Depot Market (Summit Point)
- South Jefferson Public Library

DOWNTOWN CHARLES TOWN

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- Charles Town Library

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// COMMUNITY

JEFFERSON COUNTY TOURISM LEADS WEST VIRGINIA

Expect Strong Growth Ahead After Route 340 Temporary Roadblock Ends



Annette Gavin Bates (center) with Chair of the Tourism Advisory Council, Jeff Lusk (left) and Tourism Secretary Chelsea Ruby (right).

WEST VIRGINIA'S TOURISM SECRETARY Chelsea Ruby recently presented the “Tourism Professional of the Year” award to Annette Gavin Bates, leader of the local Jefferson County Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB). “Annette is a true leader in our industry and is most deserving of this recognition,” remarked Ruby. “She’s devoted her life to promoting her community — and her state. The results have been phenomenal with Jefferson County continuing to soar in visitor spending on her watch. I truly appreciate her dedication and look forward to continuing our work together as we promote the Eastern Panhandle as a world-class tourism destination.”

The mission of the CVB is to bring visitors into the county, so planning for the impact from the three month closure of Route 340, the main connection between Jefferson County and the Baltimore/Washington metropolitan area, has occupied Gavin Bates’ attention for the past several months. *The Observer* asked her to share her thoughts on the importance of tourism to the local economy and what’s ahead — both in the next three months and into the future. 📍

Observer: *How did you get started in the tourism industry and what advice would you give to a young person thinking about a career in this field?*

Gavin Bates: At the age of 25, I married into the industry. My former in-laws owned Cliffside (which is now the Clarion) in Harpers Ferry. From there, I worked in sales and management at Hill Top, and then opened the Inn at Charles Town at Hollywood Casino. With 23 years in the hospitality industry, I laid a pretty strong foundation for my current role in promoting Jefferson County’s tourism. I think some of the best advice I can give to someone thinking about a career in tourism is to start at the front of the house, in a restaurant or hotel, be motivated to

learn, listen, and watch your fellow coworkers and management. Always remember to value your relationships and make strong connections, and don’t take this lightly, but never burn bridges. While I “married” into the industry and moved up over the years, I consider education a key component of success. When I was at Hollywood Casino, I took many continuing education classes and still do today. As a matter of fact, it is a core principle of every good Director of a CVB to find learning opportunities. Finally, I would add, surround yourself with good, positive people. They are the ones who will help lift you up.

Observer: *We can tell by the license plates that Jefferson County sees a lot of visitors. Can you share some numbers that capture how important tourism is to the county’s economy?*

Gavin Bates: Jefferson County accounts for more tourism dollars spent in West Virginia than any of the other 54 counties in the state. Tourism is a vital economic driver for Jefferson County and the entire Eastern Panhandle. According to 2022 data from the West Virginia Tourism Office, Jefferson County accounts for over \$825 million in visitor spend annually. The Eastern Panhandle accounts for \$1 billion in visitor spend annually — by far the largest of any travel region in West Virginia.

The tourism industry supports over 6,300 jobs in Jefferson County and with new projects in the works, these numbers will be increasing over the next several years.

These growth trends align with our Jefferson County hotel motel numbers; 2022 is the highest ever and I expect to see the county and region numbers for 2023 to reach an all-time high. In addition, according to the stats for Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, July 2023 had the highest number of visitors to the park since the early 1990s. Talking to local merchants, the month of July was exceptional and, in some cases, their busiest month ever.

Observer: *We know the pandemic changed a lot of travel habits. Has the local tourism-related economy fully recovered? How has it changed?*

Gavin Bates: For West Virginia, the tourism industry accounted for \$7 billion in economic impact to the state in 2022. This is an increase of 17 percent from pre-pandemic numbers. The rest of the country is averaging a modest 1 percent increase from pre-pandemic levels.

Visitors are seeking less-populated destinations featuring outdoor adventure and scenic beauty, which fits perfectly into what

West Virginia offers. For Jefferson County, we are benefiting from DC and Baltimore residents seeking a close-by escape from the city and finding our beautiful county within a short drive of home.

Observer: *You and your staff speak directly with a lot of the visitors. Where do they come from and what attracts them to Jefferson County?*

Gavin Bates: The DC and Northern Virginia market is by far our largest source of visitors. However, we have seen nice growth in visitors from Ohio and Pennsylvania over the last several years. We have placed more advertising in these markets with good results. Of course, in-state visitors are also a significant part of our success.

Visitors come to Jefferson County for our unique historical attractions and our incredible outdoor adventures. They also love our quaint and welcoming small towns filled with great dining and shopping options. Breweries and distilleries have also been a positive addition to the tourism product in the county helping to attract younger visitors and complementing our outdoor recreation opportunities. And of course, our racing and gaming brings a lot of visitors year-round.

Observer: *There’s been concern that the three month closure of Route 340 in Harpers Ferry will affect tourism-related businesses throughout the county. What have you seen so far, in the first weeks?*

Gavin Bates: Everyone knew from the beginning that the Route 340 closure would affect both visitors and business revenue. The CVB’s primary mission is marketing, and we wanted to develop some messaging to address the detours and change the narrative around them, so we developed an overall campaign “Country Roads lead to Jefferson County” to share with our businesses and organizations. The tag lines include “Detours lead to Adventures,” and “Go the Extra Mile and Support Local Businesses,” trying to remind all of us that this is a critical time for all partners. The response has been incredible, and I think our merchants really see and feel the outpouring of love. The first Saturday following closure was incredibly busy for the merchants in Harpers Ferry and even Shepherdstown. I literally had texts from merchants on Saturday that they were so surprised to see both visitors and locals come out. The true test will be in October when we historically see “leaf peepers” arrive. I really encourage our locals to support all the county merchants throughout this closure.



The Jefferson County CVB is collaborating with the Town of Shepherdstown to rehabilitate the historic Market House in downtown for use as a welcome center.

Observer: What do you see ahead for the CVB and the local tourism industry, looking at the upcoming holiday season and into 2024?

Gavin Bates: We have some exciting times ahead and let's start with the holidays. In November, we will kick off our "Find Your Joy in Jefferson County," holiday campaign for a second year, based on such positive feedback last year. A scavenger hunt, and emphasis on retailers with an overall message of shop local. We will overlap and roll into our winter festival "Frostyfest" at the end of January with ice skating, comedy, movie showings, and this year, maybe even an ice sculpture event. Restaurant week is scheduled for the first full week of March.

If you're a local business and curious about how to tap into the tourism market, we'll be hosting our annual Tourism Summit in April at the Bavarian Inn. We bring together local business

owners, state and local leaders and have lots of presentations and discussions to help identify opportunities and provide tips on marketing and promoting your business to visitors.

A big (and exciting) project for 2024 will be the partnership with the town of Shepherdstown to renovate the 200 year-old Market House building in the center of downtown. Now that the public library has a new home, we'll be working with the town to

turn the historic building into a Shepherdstown Welcome Center, complete with accessible restrooms!

The CVB currently operates three welcome centers in Jefferson County, at the outskirts of Bolivar & Harpers Ferry, in downtown Charles Town, and in downtown Shepherdstown. The website for the Jefferson County Convention and Visitors Bureau is WhereAlmostHeavenBegins.com.

ROUTE 340 PROJECT BRINGS HEAVY TRAFFIC

THE WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT of Highways made several adjustments to traffic signal timing along the detour through Virginia during the first week of the Route 340 project. Still, commuters posting in a newly-formed social media group continue to report significant delays in traveling through the intersection of Route 9 and Harpers Ferry Road in Loudoun County. Many commuters report better success with using Routes 340 and Routes 7 to travel to and from Northern Virginia. The highway departments in West Virginia, Virginia, and Maryland have also added signage to encourage truck traffic to stay on the Interstate highways.

Some of the evening commuters that would normally drive south across the Potomac River at Harpers Ferry have shifted to cross the bridge at Shepherdstown, resulting in 20 to 30 minute backups from the stop signs at the intersection of Routes 230, 45, and 480 (image on page 1).

Jefferson County Sheriff Tom Hansen reports that his deputies have been stationed at several intersections in Bolivar and Harpers Ferry during rush hour to enforce turn restrictions. So far he's not

seen significant issues on the West Virginia side. Jefferson County Emergency Services Director Mike Sine has been monitoring the situation closely and reports that so far he's not seen any response delays affecting the communities in Bolivar, Harpers Ferry, or on the mountain.

Visit WeAreTheObserver.com for ongoing coverage of the project.



The Route 340 project has dislodged a large amount of loose rock so far.



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// COMMUNITY

SHEPHERDSTOWN DAY CARE CELEBRATES 50 YEARS

Staffing & Funding Limits Keep Operations Below Capacity



Back in 1972, two young moms, Anne Thompson and Annette Van Hilst, along with a retired friend, Caroline Landreau, came up with the idea to start a child care program in Shepherdstown. The Eastside school, which Jefferson County Public Schools operated as a segregated school for black students between 1948 and 1965, was vacant and the women struck a deal to lease the building for \$1 a year. They opened the doors of the new Shepherdstown Day Care Center (SDC) in September 1973. The non-profit purchased the building in 1978, making many updates and expansions over the past 50 years. What started as a program serving 20 children is now licensed to serve 100 children (although with current

staffing the school is not able to operate at full capacity). *The Observer* asked Melissa Holman, the current director of SDC to explain what the center does and what challenges it faces. 📍

Observer: *SDC describes itself as a “child development center” – Can you explain what that means?*

Holman: SDC programming is based on the Creative Curriculum, a child-centered approach to teaching based on the most current research on how young children learn. Both structured and unstructured experiences are designed to support development of the whole child. We focus on language development, creativity, social interaction, problem solving, and peaceful conflict resolution throughout the curricular areas. Our teaching staff creates learning centers to stimulate development of early literacy, mathematics, language, social and physical skills and the arts and sciences.

The goal of our staff is to help the children develop self-control, social skills, and a sense of responsibility for their own actions. SDC is committed to providing educational experiences in a child-centered, nurturing environment. We help children develop the social skills and empathy necessary to get

along with others, to feel accepted in a group, to communicate their thoughts and feelings, and to develop a sense of independence.

We provide a balance of individual, small, and large group experiences in a play-based curriculum designed to stimulate development and learning and to give the children opportunities to develop specific skills, problem solve, and become independent learners.

Observer: *Can you give a brief description of what services SDC provides?*

Holman: SDC provides quality care for children aged twelve weeks through fifth grade. Our goal is to provide a nurturing, stimulating environment that allows for individualized education to meet the needs of each child. We offer Pre-K for four-year olds in collaboration with Jefferson County Schools.

SDC offers a before and after school program for children in kindergarten through fifth grade. The program includes homework support and a variety of experiences to engage children independently or in small groups. All children enrolled are served home cooked breakfasts, lunches, and snacks that are prepared by our chefs under the USDA CACFP food program.

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The Pre-K students explore family life in the housekeeping learning center.

Observer: How has child care in general and the SDC program changed over the past 50 years?

Holman: In general, child care has become more in demand to meet the ever growing needs and dynamics of today's family units. As we have learned through research, a child's early years are the foundation for his or her future development, providing a strong base for lifelong learning and learning abilities, including cognitive and social development. We have been witness to more families working outside of the home making child care an important staple of early childhood education.

When SDC began fifty years ago, the center was licensed for only twenty children. Today, that number has grown to 100 children. SDC has achieved and maintained a Tier II credential through the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources. Our building has had quite a face lift with the addition of the Ruth D. Brown Infant and Toddler Wing.

Observer: You have a sliding scale tuition program, correct? How does it work and how do you sustain that model?

Holman: Yes, SDC offers a sliding scale tuition program for our families. Because we know that quality child care is essential for working families, Shepherdstown Day Care Center's tuition payments for the two, three and four year old groups are based on a sliding scale that is adjusted on family income. We are the only center in the Eastern Panhandle that uses a sliding scale in determining tuition.

Tuition assistance is available to eligible parents and guardians through Mountain Heart, a West Virginia state-funded subsidy program. Mountain Heart assists eligible parents who work, attend training, or attend school with financial assistance that allows for children to attend quality educational centers. In order to sustain that model, SDC's Board of Directors must fundraise all year long to bridge the financial gap with accepting Mountain Heart families.

Observer: September 30 marks the end of the Child Care Stabilization Program. Will that affect SDC?

Holman: In 2021, we received some surprising news that we would be receiving funding from the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources. Recognizing that child care centers were faced with financial hardships caused by the pandemic, the Child Care Stabilization Program was created.

As a way to provide some economic relief to our families, the SDC Board Members decided to reduce tuition payments by 20 percent for parents on the sliding scale and waive co-pays for parents receiving Mountain Heart funding. As stated, the program will end on September 30th and so will the reduction in tuition for our families on the sliding scale. For those families who utilize Mountain Heart services, copays will be reinstated. In addition, SDC will implement a 3% tuition increase.

Observer: What challenges do you see ahead for SDC?

Holman: A challenge that we are currently facing and that we project will continue in the future is being short staffed. This has been an issue for several years and is not improving. Being short staffed means that we are not able to meet the demand of families seeking child care, which creates a very lengthy waiting list. We want to give as many children the opportunity for educational experiences that we can.

Observer: What advice would you give to parents thinking about child care options?

Holman: The first advice that I would give to parents considering child care is to get on a wait list immediately. We receive multiple phone calls a day from parents seeking child care and unfortunately, we have to explain that we have a long waiting list.

Parents should schedule a tour to measure the quality of child care by whether there is a warm, positive relationship between the child and the caregiver and whether there is a safe, healthy and stimulating learning environment. They need to ask questions. Questions that ask how a child is comforted or what curriculum is used in their program. Above all, trust their intuition.

For more information on programs, events, and how to support SDC, visit:
ShepherdstownDayCare.org



JEFFERSON COUNTY ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

NOTICE OF FILINGS DUE

ASSESSMENT INFO as of JULY 1, 2023

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—

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// COMMUNITY

LOCAL WOMAN COMPETES IN INTERNATIONAL SOCCER

American Amputee Soccer Team Takes The Field In Poland



Tracy Danzey (back row, left) poses with her teammates before the game in Poland. WAFF games are played on a ¾ length field, with 6 field players and a goalie on each side. All field players use two crutches for mobility. Goalies have the use of only 1 arm. Photo Credit: Nigeldpresents.

SHEPHERDSTOWN RESIDENT TRACY DANZEY recently competed with the US Women’s Amputee Soccer Team, as part of the Amp Futbol Cup tournament held in Warsaw, Poland. Like many of her teammates, her path to Poland has been quite a journey.

Danzey was a competitive athlete in high school, swimming and running track. Although she did not compete in organized sports while she

studied nursing at Shepherd University, she kept up an active lifestyle with hiking and kayaking, even after she started her first job, working in intensive care at City Hospital in Martinsburg. She still remembers vividly the day she was out running and her hip snapped. “I’m 25. This is not normal.” she recalled thinking. The cancer diagnosis soon followed.

“After the first 4 rounds of chemo, I just wanted the cancer out of my body. I wasn’t afraid of the amputation, I just wanted this thing that had invaded me to be gone.” Twelve more rounds of chemo followed the surgery to remove her leg and part of her pelvis. Afterwards, Danzey recalls encountering fear and doubt — not from herself so much as from everyone around her, worried about what she couldn’t do or how she might get hurt. “I asked the doctors if I could speak with anyone who was living a functional life after this type of surgery. They couldn’t tell me of anyone.”

“At the time, there was no community for this specific disability, but there was this new thing called Facebook, so I started a group online. That was 15 years ago and it’s still going strong. We focused on looking for life solutions — how to do everyday tasks.” Danzey noted that it’s not so much about how to get around on one leg, but “with two crutches, you don’t have any hands free to do things.”

The organizing body for this sport is the World Amputee Football Federation (WAFF). They are looking to expand the global participation in amputee football (soccer) and one of their goals is to get it included in the Paralympics by 2032. Danzey explained “WAFF recruited one of the younger members of our group to start an American women’s team and she in turn convinced the rest of us that we could do this. I didn’t realize how serious we would all end up being about it, and I didn’t expect to love it this much. But it’s really got me thinking about my health, how I can strengthen myself.”

Danzey talked about what it was like to line up on the field in Warsaw. “When I heard our anthem being played, it was motivating. I felt I was representing not just me, I was representing America.” Once we started playing, my mind was focused on my mark, setting up to push the other team away from our goal, realizing I could do this. If you enjoy competing, it’s a wonderful thing to be able to do it on a level playing field. I haven’t had that feeling since my disability.”

“That’s why adaptive sports are important.... It’s so much better than a support group. You get to show up with people who are already finding solutions, who are moving forward.”

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PERSPECTIVE // NATURE

THE EMOTIONAL BENEFITS OF FISHING

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.

PICTURE A PAVILION ON THE SHORE of a beautiful pond. An osprey passes overhead against a bright blue sky while half a dozen volunteer fishing guides cast baited lines into the water. When a fish grabs the bait, the skilled guide jerks the line to set the hook and then deftly hands the rod to a waiting guest. The excited guest reels in the fish. Just as the snagged fish reaches the shore, the guide scoops it into a specially coated net and shows it to the beaming guest. Carefully disconnected from its line, the fish is then released back into its watery habitat.

This scene was repeated over and over on a recent morning at the Eastern Ecological Science Center in Leetown. The guests were senior citizens and staff from two local nursing homes. I was there as a staff recreation assistant. We spent a wonderful morning sharing smiles and laughter.

Joseph "Frank" Roach, Fishing Area Coordinator, has led this fishing program for over 20 years. Now retired from the US Geological Survey, Frank and his cadre of volunteer fishing guides started out working with groups of residents of nursing homes and disabled veterans from the local Veterans Administration Hospital. The volunteers also support an annual Fishing Derby for Special Needs Children from schools in Jefferson County, sponsored by the Charles Town Kiwanis Club. An organization called Healing Waters conducts fly-fishing classes for veterans



Golden rainbow trout, a stunningly beautiful mutation of the rainbow trout, was first bred in West Virginia hatcheries and has been a prized game fish here since the 1960s. This one was caught by a senior guest at the Leetown Science Center's fishing pond (photo D. Pifer)

with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and just completed a day of fishing at the pond.

Frank, a Marine Corps veteran, is dedicated to maintaining the fishing pond as a first class recreational and educational facility. A wheelchair accessible pier allows guests more access to the pond and a large pavilion next to the shore offers shade and shelter to recreational anglers young and old.

Frank says the best part is "watching seniors and veterans relax and enjoy themselves. Maybe it brings back memories of childhood or a past fishing trip. Even if you've never gone fishing before, just being there is good for the soul. Yesterday I watched a couple of veterans who came here just riding around the pond in their wheelchairs."

I watched a smile brighten a nursing home resident's face as a volunteer carefully netted her catch. After watching her fish's release, she turned to me and said, "This is just the most wonderful experience." Guests feel they found a real treasure if they catch a rare golden rainbow trout, a bright yellow mutation of the rainbow trout that was bred and first introduced in West Virginia in 1962.

The pond was built on a parcel of land purchased by the federal government. Under the direction of Senator Robert Byrd, the site was designed specifically for recreational use by nursing home residents, veterans, and special needs groups. All these groups need to do is schedule a trip and show up. The fishing volunteer program furnishes all the tackle, equipment, and bait. Stocked fish in the pond are provided by the US Department of Agriculture's Cold and Cool Water Fish Hatchery located nearby. They include rainbow trout, brook trout, largemouth bass, bluegill, and crappie. A pavilion with restrooms, picnic tables, and grill are available to fishing groups who want to include a cook-out. Frank says he enjoys the full support of Tom O'Connell, Director of the US Geological Survey Science Center.

The woods and meadows around the fishing pond support abundant wildlife. The morning I was there, Frank told me he just saw a bald eagle standing on the ground beside the pond eating a fish. Volunteers regularly glimpse otters, herons, kingfishers, mink, and various waterfowl that frequent the area. The Potomac Valley Audubon Society conducts monthly bird walks at the center, accompanied by USGS staff.

Frank said he hosts a special day each year to honor and thank his fishing guides and volunteers for their time spent working with these groups and maintaining the pristine grounds of the facility. "We volunteers enjoy it as much as our visitors do."

Izaak Walton, author of "The Compleat Angler," said, "God never did make a more calm, quiet, innocent recreation than angling."

PERSPECTIVE // GOVERNMENT

COMMENT ON FUTURE LAND USE IN JEFFERSON COUNTY

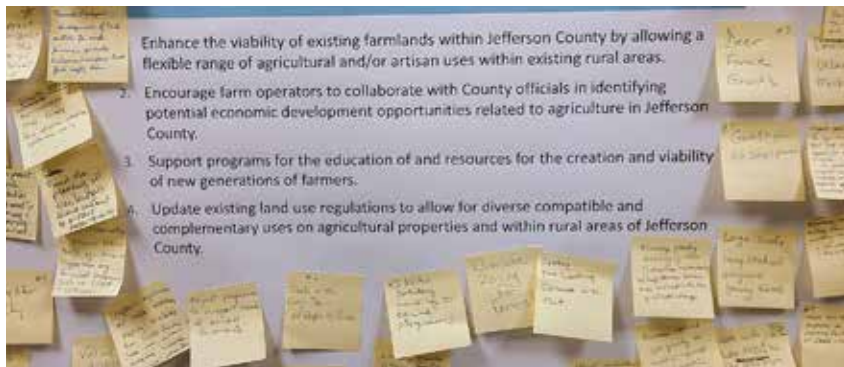


THE JEFFERSON COUNTY Planning Commission continues to work on updating the Jefferson County Comprehensive Plan and hosted two public input sessions in August. The Agricultural input session on August 13 attracted almost 60 residents and highlighted a variety of perspectives on how to sustain agriculture in Jefferson County.

The general input session on August 18 gave residents an opportunity to comment on goals identified by the Commission staff.

During the agriculture meeting, participants noted that it's not enough just to protect farmland — farmers need help to keep farming to ensure that the land remains in agricultural use. The comments participants placed on the various boards indicate the variety of opinions heard during the session. The general session attracted a similar diversity of comments.

The Commission staff will be compiling and analyzing the comments in the next few months. During October, the Commission will also conduct an online survey on future land use. *Scan the QR code to the right for a link to the Comprehensive Plan page on the Commission's website (the survey link will be activated later in the month).*



COMMENT ON AIR PERMIT FOR ROCKWOOL FACTORY



THE WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (WVDEP) has released a draft of the modified air permit for the Rockwool factory in Ranson. **The window for public comment has been extended to October 23.** Residents can send comments via email to Steven.R.Pursley@WV.gov or by mail to Steven R. Pursley, PE, WV Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Air Quality, 601 57th Street SE, Charleston, WV 25304.

The WVDEP held a public forum in Charles Town on September 19 to present a summary of the modifications. Some of the key elements of the modified permit are based around the company's decision to use natural gas exclusively for the furnaces. The best practices mandated by federal regulations require lower emissions for natural gas facilities than they do for coal, so the permissible limits in the modified permit are lower than they were in the initial air permit. Another significant change is the requirement to use actual monitoring data at the point of emission (including the visible stacks of the factory) in place of modeled data based on regional measurements.

Dr. Chrissy Wimer, president of the Jefferson County Foundation, a local non-profit focused on supporting sustainable development and protecting the local environment, offered several specific requests to the WVDEP representatives, many of which were acknowledged and verbally accepted. The Foundation has assembled links to the proposed permit documents and a summary of questions and recommendations on its website (JeffersonCountyFoundation.org) — *Scan the QR code to the right for a direct link.*



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PERSPECTIVE // GOVERNMENT

TWO COMMISSIONERS REFUSE TO MEET

A Coordinated Absence To Block A Quorum



Commissioners Jackson (left) and Krouse (right) previously threatened to walk out at the August 17 meeting.

The Jefferson County Commission failed to convene to conduct business at its regularly scheduled meeting on September 21. Three out of five chairs at the head table were empty — only Commissioners Steve Stolipher and Jane Tabb showed up for the meeting. Commissioners Tricia Jackson and Jennifer Krouse made themselves absent. The final seat has been vacant for 3 months following the resignation of Clare Ath.

Both Jackson and Krouse posted statements on social media shortly after the meeting started, claiming their coordinated decision to be absent was a “protest” against the “abuse of power” by Stolipher, who the Commission as a body had previously voted to be its President during this term.

According to the statements of Jackson and Krouse, the putative “abuse” was Stolipher’s decision not to include a few requested items on

the Commission’s recent meeting agendas. *The Observer* researched the specifics of the items that were not accepted for discussion — one involved a topic that has in fact been discussed at great length at several previous Commission meetings and the other two were related to issues that typically need staff and legal review before being presented to the Commission.

Jackson acknowledged that her action was “drastic” and both Jackson and Krouse called upon Stolipher to resign. Yet nothing in the official record seems to support the self-described drastic action or justifies the overturning of a lawful vote.

Looking back to the Commission’s August 17 regular meeting, Krouse stood up during that session and threatened to walk out (image above), with Jackson indicating that she would do the same. The issue at that time was the appointment of a commissioner to fill the seat left empty by Clare Ath’s resignation. Krouse, contradicting the advice of the Commission’s attorney, claimed the Commission could not vote, as one of the potential candidates on a list of three submitted by the Republican Executive Committee was not legally eligible and that therefore the list did not fulfill the lawful requirements. Stolipher agreed to defer the vote so that the August 17 meeting could continue. It later turned out that Krause’s claims were unsubstantiated and that there was no eligibility issue with the candidate or the list. As a result, the Commission failed to appoint an interim commissioner in accordance with state statute.

With the Commission down to four members, votes can deadlock. When two commissioners fail to show up, the County’s regular operations bog down. Not just the approval of new hires, but the authorizations required to pay the county’s bills and approve payroll for law enforcement, public safety, maintenance, and other critical staff roles. 🗳️



Commissioner Jackson expressed no concerns when a citizen’s request to place a statement against racism on the agenda was repeatedly ignored in 2022.



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EXPLORE // EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

SEP 30 (SAT) – High School Band Spectacular – 10 local high school bands competing, along with exhibition performance by the Shepherd University Ram Band. Gates open 3 pm, competition begins 5 pm. Martinsburg High School, David Walker Stadium, 150 Bulldog Blvd, Martinsburg. \$10/adult, \$5 student/senior. Web: MHSBulldogBand.com

SEP 30 & OCT 1 (SAT & SUN) – Robin Young, Watercolor Artist – Local artist will have 80 watercolor & oil paintings for sale. Sat 11 am - 7 pm, Sun 11 am - 3 pm. Evolve, 106 West German St, Shepherdstown. FB: Evolve Shepherdstown

OCT 5 - 15 (daily) – Giant Book Sale – Fundraising event for Shepherdstown Community Club. See ad below for hours. War Memorial Building, 102 East German St, Shepherdstown. FB: Shepherdstown Community Club

OCT 6 - 15 (multiple shows) – The Anvil – Dramatic recreation of abolitionist John Brown's 1859 trial in Charles Town. [See article on page 14 for details.](#)

OCT 7 & 8 (SAT & SUN) – Art League of Germantown – Local artists group will exhibit original paintings, photography and fiber art. Sat 11 am - 7 pm, Sun 11 am - 3 pm. Evolve, 106 West German St, Shepherdstown. FB: Evolve Shepherdstown

OCT 7 (SAT) – Freedom's Run Race Series – Full Marathon, 1/2 Marathon, 10K, 5K & 1 mile kids fun run. Various courses starting at Shepherd University and running along the C&O Canal (fun run in downtown Shepherdstown). Advance registration required. Volunteers welcome – email FreedomsRunRD@gmail.com. Web: FreedomsRun.org.

OCT 7 (SAT) – Tabler Farm Open House – Faculty & students will have tours and discussions about the Shepherd University research farm & projects. 1- 4 pm. 482 Billmyer Mill Rd, Shepherdstown. FREE (RSVP encouraged) Web: Shepherd.edu/tabler-farm-open-house

OCT 7 (SAT) – Highland Games of Harpers Ferry – Competitions, exhibitions (including birds of prey), vendors and food. 8 am - 8 pm. Sam Michaels Park, 235 Sam Michaels Lane, Harpers Ferry. \$20 at the gate (\$15 in advance), kids under 12 free. Web: HFCCS.org

OCT 7 (SAT) – Old Opera House Autumn Auction – Silent & live auction fundraiser, run by OOH performers. Silent auction begins at 1 pm (free admission); Social hour & live auction opens at 6 pm (\$40 ticket, includes light reception). 204 North George St, Charles Town WV. Web: OldOperaHouse.org.

OCT 7 & 8 (SAT & SUN) – Poulenc Trio – Chamber music concert presented by Friends of Music. Sat 7:30, Sun 3:00. See story page 15 for locations and ticket details. Web: FriendsWV.org

OCT 8 (SUN) – Appalachian Parlor Concert – Audrey Pride & Danielle Wiebe Burke perform dance variations in music past and present. 1:00 pm. Happy Retreat, 600 Mordington Ave, Charles Town. \$30. Web: HappyRetreat.org


OCT 10 & 11 (TUE & WED) – Lyn Ford, Storyteller – Presented by Speak Story Series. 7:30 pm (both nights). Tue show at Reynolds Hall, 109 North King St, Shepherdstown; Wed show at Shepherdstown Train Station, 111 Audrey Eagle Dr, Shepherdstown. \$15 (at the door only). Web: SpeakStorySeries.com.

OCT 13 - 22 (multiple shows) – You're A Good Man Charlie Brown – Performance by Black Box Youth Playhouse. Friday shows at 7 pm, Sat & Sun shows at 2 pm. 113 South Princess St, Shepherdstown. Tickets \$12. Web: BlackBoxYouth.org

OCT 15 (SUN) – Yard Sale at the Library – Fundraiser for Shepherdstown Public Library. 10 am - 3 pm. 145 Higbee Ln, Shepherdstown. FREE admission (To sell, reserve a 6' table for \$25 by Oct 7). Web: FOSLWV.org.

OCT 20 - 29 (multiple shows) – The Addams Family – Live musical comedy performance at the Old Opera House. Friday & Saturday shows at 8:00 pm, Sunday shows at 2:30 pm. 204 North George St, Charles Town WV. \$22 adult, \$15 youth (under 18), \$19 senior (over 65), military, student. Web: OldOperaHouse.org.

OCT 21 (SAT) – Book Launch Party – Local writer and photographer Michael Chalmers introduces his new book, "This is Shepherdstown," a photographic exploration of the town & nearby locales. 5 - 9 pm. Evolve, 106 West German St, Shepherdstown. FB: This is Shepherdstown

OCT 21 (SAT) – Walk in the Park – Volunteers will lead a family-friendly hike through Sam Michaels Park to showcase recently-completed projects focused on protecting drinking water and improving the park ecosystem, 10 am. Sam Michaels Park, 235 Sam Michaels Lane, Harpers Ferry. FREE, pre-registration requested (use QR code to right for link). 

OCT 28 & 29 (SAT & SUN) – Art Heist! – Silent auction and art for sale to benefit Happy Retreat. Sat Noon - 6 pm, Sun Noon - 4 pm. Happy Retreat, 600 Mordington Ave, Charles Town. Web: HappyRetreat.org

NOV 2 (THU) – History Alive! Mother Jones – A program of the West Virginia Humanities Council. Storyteller and actress Karen Vuranch recreates the fire and energy that was Mother Jones as she organized and spoke at rallies for the United Mine Workers in West Virginia. During the performance, the audience is encouraged to participate and play the role of workers, as Jones cajoles and exhorts them to work together for the cause of the union. Shepherdstown Public Library. 6:30 pm. 145 Higbee Ln, Shepherdstown. FREE admission. Web: ShepLibrary.org.



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\$20 entry fee (free for SCC members)

Sale Continues
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9 am to 7 pm
Free Admission

Final Day
Sunday, Oct 15, 9 am - 4 pm
Maximum Discount Day - \$5/box!

at the War Memorial Building
102 East German Street, Shepherdstown

EXPLORE // ARTS & CULTURE

IMAGINARY HORRIBLES — AN ARTIST’S PERSPECTIVE



BARBARA CHAPMAN DESCRIBES HERSELF as both an emotional visual journalist and a doom scrolling cartoonist. Her artistic style is too fine to be folk art and too folk to be fine art. Her work is a playful contradiction to motherhood, nature, politics, and the human condition. The Bridge Gallery in Shepherdstown will be hosting a retrospective of 40 years of Chapman’s paintings. Titled “Imaginary Horribles,” the exhibit will open October 7 and run through November 18. Annette Gloomis, who is curating the exhibit in Shepherdstown, describes Chapman’s work as “beautiful, timely, difficult, and extremely important. One may be drawn in by her gloriously vibrant colors at first glance, only to be face to face with the trials and ongoing horrors that continue to smother our entire existence.”

Chapman has lived in West Virginia for most of her life. She studied art at West Virginia University in Morgantown, WV, and taught printmaking at Shepherd University. For personal reasons, Barbara paints in solitude and has not often presented her work in organized exhibits or galleries. Nonetheless, her work has been acquired and presented on permanent display in prominent museums around the country, including The National Museum of Women in the Arts (Washington, DC) and The American Visionary Art Museum (Baltimore, MD).

Rebecca Hoffburger, Founder, Primary Curator & Director Emerita of The American Visionary Art Museum remarked, “Barbara Chapman is a deep thinker who makes beautiful and important art for which I am way thankful. In our American Visionary Art Museum’s year-long exhibition, “ALL FAITHS BEAUTIFUL: From Atheism to Zoroastrianism, Respect For Diversity of Belief,” Chapman shared her passionate disappointment in humanity and its penchant for endless war, alongside her own exquisite appreciation for a humanistic Atheism.”

Annette Gloomis shared her feelings about Chapman’s art: “I am honored to present to the public, a viewing of such a personal account. This is a woman, a mother, an artist, a human being, whose level of honesty in her depiction of her feelings is unparalleled.”

The opening reception will be held on Saturday, October 7 from 5 to 7 pm, located at The Bridge Gallery, 8566 Shepherdstown Pike, Shepherdstown. All are welcome. For more information about the artist and the exhibit, visit BridgeGalleryAndFraming.com or contact gallery owner Kathryn Burns at 304-876-2300 or curator Annette Gloomis at 727-204-5773.

Animal Welfare Society of Jefferson County

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Paws & Claws • Dinner & Auction

Friday,
October 27, 2023

5:30

Hollywood Casino
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Charles Town

\$65 per person

Details: AWSJC.org/events

HALLOWEEN EVENTS >>> PAGE 16

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EXPLORE // ARTS & CULTURE

LOCAL RESIDENTS STAGE PLAY AT THE COURTHOUSE



IN OCTOBER 1859, THE NEWS REPORTERS of the nation descended upon the Jefferson County Courthouse in Charles Town (then within the borders of Virginia). John Brown was about to go on trial for his raid on the armory in Harpers Ferry. Following his arrest and incarceration in the jail across the street from the courthouse, Brown was called variously a terrorist, liberator, American hero, despised villain — and his trial captured the attention of a country that was struggling to reconcile the political forces that were pulling it apart over the question of slavery.

During two weekends in October, a contingent of local residents will be performing “The Anvil,” a play written by Julia Davis that presents a dramatic synthesis of these 1859 events. The play will take place at the site of the trial inside of the Jefferson County Courthouse in Charles Town. The play will take the audience through the actual trial and inside Brown’s jail cell, where he argues that slavery is “contrary to the teachings of Christ!” but that his own deadly actions are “wielding the Sword of the Spirit.” The audience will meet Brown’s wife Mary,

mother of 13 of his 20 children, as well as Mahala Doyle, the woman whose husband and two sons were “murdered in my hearing” during an attack led by Brown during “Bleeding Kansas.”

The play is produced and directed by Joe Yates of Shepherdstown and includes a large cast of Jefferson and Berkeley County residents. Costumes have been designed and created by Susie Sayre. Art Wermers is the Technical Director. The cast includes Sandy Andrews, Katherine Bonner, Leo Bonner, Charles Devine, John Doyle, James Eros, John Griffith, David Hammer, Daniel Hayes, D. Frank Hill III, David Hippchen, Michael Hippchen, Thomas Ruhf, Matthew Ryan, Jim Schmitt, Jack Shaw, Stacey Shaw, Homer Speaker, John Spears, Emily Wanger, Charity Ward, Joe Yates, and Richard Yates.

Performances will be Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, October 6, 7, 8 and 13, 14, 15. For the Friday and Saturday shows, doors open at 7:00 pm and the show begins at 8:00 pm. For the Sunday shows, doors open at 1:00 pm and the show begins at 2:00 pm. Seating is limited. Reservations are encouraged, and can be made by texting the date, name and number of tickets to 304-676-8059, or by emailing AnvilTickets@gmail.com. Tickets are \$15; \$10 for youth (under 20) or seniors (over 60).

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BARBARA CHAPMAN
IMAGINARY HORRIBLES

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EXHIBITION DATES

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OPENING RECEPTION:

OCTOBER 7TH, 5-7PM

EXPLORE // ARTS & CULTURE

FRIENDS OF MUSIC WILL PRESENT 5 CONCERTS THIS SEASON

TO OPEN ITS 2023-24 SEASON, the Friends of Music are presenting the Poulenc Trio for two performances in October. The performance on Saturday, October 7 will be at the Shipley Recital Hall in Shepherd University's Frank Center (260 University Drive, Shepherdstown); the concert begins at 7:30 pm. The performance on Sunday, October 8 will be at the Zion Episcopal Church in Charles Town; the concert begins at 3:00 pm.

The Poulenc Trio consists of Irina Kaplan Lande on piano, Alexander Vvedenskiy on oboe, and Bryan Young on bassoon. The Trio has been performing for 20 years, presenting works from many periods but emphasizes commissioning, performing, and recording new works from contemporary composers. *The Washington Post* has praised the Trio for its "convincing elegance and "near effortless lightness and grace."

The program for the October performances will include works by one 19th century composer (Gioachino Rossini), four 20th century composers (Jean Françaix, Francis Poulenc, André Previn, and Dimitri Shostakovich), and one 21st century composer (a young Vietnamese-American named Viet Cuong).

Tickets for the October Poulenc Trio performances and the Wind Quintet concert are \$35; tickets for the Chamber Orchestra concerts are \$40. Season memberships are also available for sale for \$175, which includes a single admission to all 5 concerts. Advance tickets are available for purchase online at FriendsWV.org (tickets are also available at the door, if seats are still available). For more information, contact the Friends of Music by email (info@FriendsWV.org) or phone (304-786-5765).



The Friends of Music will present four other concerts through next May:

Two Rivers Chamber Orchestra will play on Saturday, November 4 (7:30 pm) and Sunday, November 5 (3:00 pm), performing works from the 18th and 19th centuries by Joseph Bologne, Camille Saint-Saëns, Ciprian Porumbescu, and Ludwig van Beethoven. The concert will be at the Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church (location may change).

Two Rivers Wind Quintet will play on Saturday, February 17 (7:30 pm), performing works from the 18th to 21st centuries by György Ligeti, Malcolm Arnold, Darius Milhaud, Alexandra Molnar-Suhajda, William Grant Still, and Franz Danzi. The concert will be at Trinity Episcopal Church, Shepherdstown.

Two Rivers Chamber Orchestra will play on Saturday, March 23 (7:30 pm) and 3:00 p.m. Sunday, March 24 (3:00 pm), performing an all-Johann Sebastian Bach program, featuring his 3rd, 4th, and 5th Brandenburg concertos. Concert location to be announced.

Two Rivers Chamber Orchestra will play on Saturday, May 18 (7:30 pm) in the Shipley Recital Hall at Shepherd University's Frank Arts Center in Shepherdstown, and on Sunday, May 19 (3:00 pm) in Charles Town's Zion Episcopal Church, performing works from the 19th and early 20th centuries by Ottorino Respighi and Franz Schubert.

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ENGAGE // HALLOWEEN FUN

OCT 13 (FRI) – Friday Night Frights – Spooky movies at the Shepherdstown Opera House. 7:30 pm. 131 West German St, Shepherdstown. Also Oct 20. See website for details: OperaHouseLive.com.

OCT 14 (SAT) – Fall Carnival at Shepherdstown Library – Games, haunted walk, performers. 11 am - 2 pm. 145 Higbee Ln, Shepherdstown. FREE. FB: Halloween in Shepherdstown.

OCT 15 (SUN) – Autumn Market – Vendors & kid's activities. 10 am - 3 pm. North King Street (in front of Town Hall), Shepherdstown. FREE. FB: Halloween in Shepherdstown.

OCT 21 (SAT) – Candy Drop at Sam Michaels Park – Organized by Jefferson County Parks and Recreation. 1:00 - 3:00 pm. AMP field, 235 Sam Michaels Ln, Harpers Ferry. \$10 per child. Web: JCPRC.org.

OCT 21 (SAT) – Trick or Treat in Downtown Charles Town – Merchants and restaurants will welcome the wee ones with candy and treats. 5 - 7 pm. Downtown Charles Town (street closures). FREE. FB: Charles Town Now.

OCT 21 (SAT) – The Rocky Horror Picture Show – Movie accompanied by live shadow cast, audience dress up and participation encouraged. Midnight (doors open 11 pm). Under 17 must be accompanied by adult guardian. ID required. Apollo Civic Theater, 128 East Martin St, Martinsburg. Tickets \$20, participation pack \$5. Web: ApolloCivicTheater.org (Apolloween). Also on Oct 28.

OCT 24 (TUE) – Sensory-Friendly Trunk Or Treat – Organized by Jefferson County Schools. Low-key event designed for neurodiverse children. 6:00 - 7:30 pm. Charles Town Middle School, 193 High St, Charles Town. FREE. Web: JCSWV.org.

OCT 25 (WED) – Shep Or Treat Children's Carnival – Organized by Shepherd University Students. Games, contests & candy. Costumes encouraged (for kids & adults). 6:00 - 8:00 pm. Parking lot G (in front of Frank Center) 260 University Dr, Shepherdstown. FREE. FB: Halloween in Shepherdstown.

OCT 27 (FRI) – Vampire Ball – Organized by Shepherdstown Community Club. Energetic dance party, costumes encouraged. 9:00 - midnight. 21 & older. War Memorial Building, 102 East German St, Shepherdstown. Tickets at the door (cash only), \$6/singles, \$10/couples. FB: Halloween in Shepherdstown.

OCT 28 & 29 (SAT & SUN) – Haunted Hallway – Organized by Shepherdstown Community Club. Spooky adventure for kids. See FB for hours. War Memorial Building, 102 East German St, Shepherdstown. FREE. FB: Halloween in Shepherdstown.

OCT 29 (SUN) – Paw Parade – Organized by Wishmakers on Campus. Costume parade for you & canine companions. See FB for time. Midway field, 301 N King St, Shepherdstown. \$10 donation per dog (\$5 for each additional dog). FB: Halloween in Shepherdstown.

OCT 29 (SUN) – Enchanted Tea – Organized by Shepherdstown Community Club. A classy tea, with readings and a costume contest. 2 - 4 pm. War Memorial Building, 102 East German St, Shepherdstown. \$10 (cash only). FB: Halloween in Shepherdstown.

OCT 29 (SUN) – Halloween Market – Vendors & kids activities. 10 am - 3 pm. North King Street (in front of Town Hall), Shepherdstown. FREE. FB: Halloween in Shepherdstown.

OCT 30 (MON) – War of The Worlds – Recreation of the 1938 live radio broadcast performance by Black Box Youth Playhouse players. Costumes encouraged (prizes & reception after performance). 7:00 pm. 113 South Princess St, Shepherdstown. Donation requested, reservations recommended. Web: BlackBoxYouth.org.

OCT 31 (TUE) – Trunk Or Treat Events – Morgan's Grove Park (2:30 - 3:30). Shepherdstown Volunteer Fire Dept. (5:00 - 6:00).

OCT 31 (TUE) – Community Trick Or Treat Events – Bolivar (6-8); Harpers Ferry (6-8), Charles Town (6-8), Ranson (6-8), Shepherdstown (6-8). In Shepherdstown, German Street will be closed to traffic between Duke Street (Route 480) and Princess Street.

NOV 4 (SAT) – Great Pumpkin Roll Competition – Organized by Harpers Ferry Parks & Recreation. Bring your own pumpkin, pay entry fee, compete for prizes. 2 - 4:30 pm. Town Park, 575 Washington St, Harpers Ferry. FB: Corporation of Harpers Ferry.



Show your Ram spirit!
HOMECOMING

SAVE THE DATE!
OCTOBER 18-21

October is Homecoming at Shepherd University!

It's time to reunite with the Ram Fam, cheer on our Rams, and celebrate all things Shepherd. Show us your Ram Spirit during these events:

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18

1 p.m.—Women's Soccer vs. Millersville, Shepherd Soccer Complex

4-7 p.m.—Homecoming Field Day, Midway Lawn

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20

7 a.m.—32nd Annual Alumni Golf Tournament, The Club at Cress Creek

3 p.m.—Founder's Day Parade, McMurrin Hall to Potomac Place

5-7 p.m.—College of Business Annual Reunion Dinner, Storer Ballroom

6:30 p.m.—Shepherd University Athletic Club Homecoming Party, Jefferson Security Bank Pavilion

7-9 p.m.—Homecoming Lip Sync, Reynolds Hall Auditorium

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21

9 a.m.—Complimentary Alumni Breakfast (No RSVP required!), McMurrin Lawn

10 a.m.—Homecoming Parade, German Street

Noon—Football vs. West Chester, Ram Stadium

1 p.m.—Men's Soccer vs. Lock Haven, Shepherd Soccer Complex

2 p.m.—Men's and Women's Tennis vs. Salem

After the Football Game—Alumni Association Post-Game Party, Great American Brewing Co., Sharpsburg, MD

For more information about our Homecoming events!



www.shepherd.edu/homecoming2023



The WV Independent Observer writes about community news, local events, and feature stories of interest to the people who live, work, and visit Jefferson County, West Virginia. For more of our stories, visit WEARETHEOBSERVER.COM

