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Contents

Fall 2015

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LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!

Essays, Art & Poetry

3 **Drug Alert: Pot, Porn, and Fox News.** By Randall Tremba
11 **ARTWORKS Two Wonderful Women of Willowdale.** By Eleanor Hanold
14 **POETRY Keegan Abernathy**
15 **EARTHBEAT In Defense of the Liberal Arts.** By Mark Madison

People, Places & Things

4 **The Great Sign Project.** By Wendy Sykes Mopsik
5 **Shepherdstown's Backyard Chickens.** By Stephen Altman
6 **Exit: Dr. Suzanne Shipley.** By John Case
7 **If These Walls Could Talk.** By Sue Kennedy
10 **Jeni Peterson Spreads Love With Flowers.** By Hannah Cohen
16 **My Two Grandmothers.** By Isabella Snyder
17 **Books for Babies.** By Monica Grabowska
18 **Welcome to Cymru.** By Claire Stuart and Stephen Willingham
20 **Reclaiming Appalachia.** By Brandon Dennison

Faith, Hope & Charity

21 **Religious Communities**
22 **Donors**
23 **Business & Service Directory**

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Gary Bergel is a multidisciplinary Eastern Panhandle artist and teacher. Building on training in research science, photography, and studio arts, he is drawn to solitude and "seeing," exploring and capturing the "isness" of things—light, layers, occurrence, nuance, silence, mystery, faith, beauty.

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Drug Alert

Pot, Porn, and Fox News

Randall Tremba

Be careful how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. —Ephesians 5:15–16

Are these evil days?

Parents think so.

Pot, heroin, and pornography are readily available everywhere.

Every parent I know is worried.

And it's not just children and youth that are vulnerable. We all are.

But as dangerous and destructive as drugs and porn can be, there is another evil out and about that is hurting our people and our nation. It's called "fear mongering," and it, too, is *a highly intoxicating, addictive, dangerous, and destructive drug.*

And it's readily available on Fox News. If you don't think the world is evil, just watch Fox and you'll see.

When I tell my friends that I watch Fox News they cringe, because "friends don't let friends watch that network." But I watch it anyway, because I want to understand how others see the world. I want to know why they think the way they do. Maybe they know something I don't. It doesn't hurt to be humble.

And so I watch and listen. I want to be open—but that doesn't mean I surrender my values or convictions.

For the past several years I have watched Fox News religiously, and boy oh boy, talk about evil—four of the five pundits on "The Five" at 5 o'clock see evil everywhere *all the time*. And from what I've heard, the prime-time pundits are not much different. The world in their eyes is a grim and scary place.

For example, they see our president's deal with Iran as leading Israelis to the "oven doors." And if that ain't evil, what is?

They see a despicable criminal, a "traitor" to our nation about to become the Democratic presidential nominee. And if that ain't evil, what is?

They see the "Black Lives Matter" movement as a ploy to stir up racial animosity in this country, where racism hardly even exists anymore.

They see gay rights as infringing on religious freedoms.

They see Planned Parenthood auctioning off fetal parts for profit.

They see illegal immigrants hauling drugs and diseases into our country and raping our daughters.

And they see radical Islamic terrorist cells in nearly every American city about to attack a mall, a school, or a church near you, and they think our president is too wimpy, too spineless, and too un-American to name or confront that threat.

Be afraid, people. Be very, very afraid.

Yes, these pundits are scary but they are not evil. In fact, they can be civil, rational, kind, and even humorous at times. But then it's right back to doom and gloom, fear and more fear.

These are smart and sincere people. But smart and sincere is not enough.

One fear is a gateway to another and another.

In case you hadn't heard, fearful people will turn on each other, surrender rights, and gleefully applaud the death of enemies. And if that ain't evil, what is?

If I didn't know better or didn't have other sources of information, I'd be terrified and angry all the time. I'd want to take this country back! *Please, somebody, anybody, get rid of all this evil and make America great again!*

If I didn't know better, I'd want us to bomb Iran *right now*—and possibly half of Syria and northern Iraq on the way over. And I'd not rule out nuclear weapons, *if that's what it takes to destroy ISIS*.

If I didn't know better, I'd get a gun and be ready to shoot any suspicious-looking Muslim or Mexican.

If I didn't know better, I'd think white men were the real victims in our society.

Be afraid, white people. Be very, very afraid.

Many people watch and listen. Many think they're getting fair and balanced reporting. But what they're really getting is hooked. One fear is a gateway to another and another and another. Fear, after all, is a rush, a kind of high.

Many good and decent people see all this differently. But what I see is this: a well-funded, mean-spirited, concerted effort—from Fox News and other sources in our nation—to misrepresent reality in order to undermine the great American vision, the great experiment of unity with great diversity (*e pluribus unum*); to forsake the way of cooperation for the way of belligerence; to forsake democracy for oligarchy.

These are smart and sincere people. But smart and sincere is not enough.

As we learned to say after the catastrophic invasion of Iraq in 2003: *So much intelligence; so little wisdom*.

Just because you're smart doesn't mean you're wise.

To be wise, in part, means to listen to people we disagree with, to give them the benefit of the doubt we'd like for ourselves. And so I have, religiously, for more than two years. And I've learned again and again: We don't all see the world the same way.

Some see evil and terror around every corner. Others see goodness and grace. Some foment fear and hate. Others promote hope and love. In fact, sometimes I'm one sort; sometimes I'm another.

These are troubling times—troubling times for our youth tempted by drugs and troubling times for our nation and others tempted to buy the seductive drugs of fear and violence.

We don't have to resign ourselves to fatalism or succumb to fear. We can seek wisdom and courage—wisdom to understand the way of love and courage to undertake it with all our hearts.

Yes, there is much grim news in the world. But there is also great joy.

Take joy.

The Great Sign Project

Wendy Sykes Mopsik

Small towns throughout the country extend their greeting to visitors in a variety of ways. Banners are strung across the main street, small flags are mounted on poles placed along the road or, most commonly, entrance signs are erected to inform newcomers of their exact whereabouts. Although Shepherdstown is often described as a *vortex* or *more like a feeling than a place*, it does occupy a physical space and does have specific boundaries.

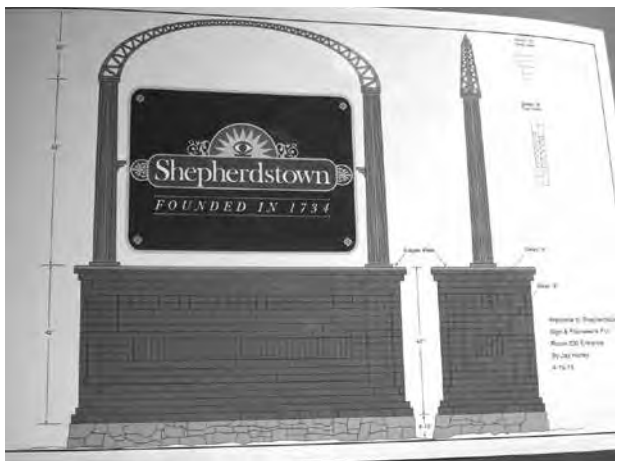
When the 250th anniversary was approaching in 2012, members of Shepherdstown Rotary Club were struck by the lack of originality of the West Virginia Department of Highways uniform green signage denoting the entrance to town. Seizing the opportunity that only comes with momentous occasions like the semi-quincentennial, the Community Service Committee began to search for ways to reflect a feeling of pride and uniqueness into the new design.

The obvious first location for this creative venture was the northernmost entrance where visitors from Maryland cross the James Rumsey Bridge. The Bavarian Inn, on whose property the sign is positioned, graciously collaborated with the Town Council, West Virginia Division of Highways, local citizens and businesses, Shepherd University students, and Rotary to provide financial and community support for the project. Dedicated in the fall of 2013, the stone base topped with the new sign motif meshes perfectly with the Bavarian Inn's stone walls and overall sign design.

Shepherdstown's second sign location is also a natural. For many years Jay Hurley, proprietor of O'Hurley's General Store, had been thinking about ways to incorporate local history into signage. On road trips he noted how towns even smaller than his made an effort to depict a place's character through its welcome sign. He hoped to pitch the idea that, in fact, each part of town had something unique in its past that could be shown through symbols, materials, or design.

In preparation for his presentation to Rotary, Hurley gathered the necessary people while refreshing his knowledge of pertinent facts associated with his section of town. Bob Shelley, organic farmer, percussionist, and graphic artist, was a key player. From Hurley's overall design for the second sign, Shelley added the "all-seeing eye," the town name, and establishment date—all elements to be part of each entrance marker. The rendering also included a brick base, iron columns, and a dramatic arch. When its elements are grouped, the composition and its physical manifestation, would tell the history of the people who worked and lived on the east end.

After the Rotarians approved the drawing and concept, Shepherdstown Town Council members recorded their agreement, and from there it traveled to the Shepherdstown Historic Landmarks Commission for approval. Finally, the Shepherdstown Planning Commission endorsement gave Hurley permission to begin the project.



PHOTOS BY WENDY SYKES MOPSIK

Shepherdstown's second redesigned welcome sign will be located at the eastern end of town.

Jay Hurley displays some of the tools that he fashioned while constructing the new sign.

Among the "treasures" spilling out of Hurley's workshop is an 1800s iron pillar that he found along the railroad tracks.

Most residents and many visitors are familiar with O'Hurley's General Store and its large array of "time-tested merchandise" displayed attractively over several rooms. But few know of the multitudinous workshops that lie behind the retail public space. That's where the magic happens. Found objects, rusty remnants, leftover pieces, unrepaired articles, handmade tools, and salvaged treasures can be found in this workman's paradise. When put together by Hurley's capable hands, beautiful creations, like a small airplane awaiting its maiden voyage, appear that bear little resemblance to their odd unrelated parts. And with this property literally teetering on the eastern edge of Shepherdstown off Rte. 230, the answer of where to place the second marker was obvious.

First the 8- to 10-inch stone bottom that comes up out of the ground has to be fabricated. As in Shepherdstown buildings in the 1880s, stone would anchor the sign and provide a solid foundation. On top will be erected an ornate four-foot base made from bricks that Hurley salvaged from around town. Allusions to the architectural heritage of the fire hall and the old St. Agnes Catholic Church are specifically incorporated into the plan. Bricklayer and historic restoration specialist Doug Claytor, builder of the Great Chimney in O'Hurley's Great Hall, was hired to make this portion of the design into a reality.

Rising from the brick are two cast iron pillars from the 1800s, found in a burnt-out mill south of town where they had resided in the rubble along the train tracks until Hurley spotted them. Unfortunately, a chunk of iron was missing from one pillar and would have been useless until the *magician* began to do his work. Hurley carved a pattern of the missing piece, sent it to an iron foundry for replication and welded the completed chunk back in place. He has also had to make several tools in order to adequately construct the sign where unusual angles and a demand for perfection don't correspond to conventional tools.

The final component of the sign is an intricate arch connecting the pillars. "This arch will bring a smile to any ironworker's face," declared Hurley. "Long-angle iron was forged to get just the right shape to meet the columns. I wanted the materials and design to symbolize the strength of the people and industrial nature of the east side." Ron Stocking, retired shop teacher and project volunteer, and Bill Simmons, a high-tech ironworker in Frederick who lives in Shepherdstown, have been a great source of help in completing this last and most time-consuming phase. Small LED strips in a copper housing will provide the low-profile lighting for the sign.

Hurley's goal has always been to tell the town's story. By indirectly recalling the ice plant, the grist mill near the railroad tracks, the orchards and apple packing houses, and later the power plant, bicycle manufacturing, and the feed store, he has done so strikingly while welcoming travelers at Shepherdstown's eastern border.

Shepherdstown Rotary Club invites anyone with interest in maintaining the existing welcome sign sites or in completing the re-signage in the western end on Rte. 45 and southern end on Rte. 480 to contact Paul Woods at pwoods25443@gmail.com. Contributions of time, money, and ideas are always appreciated.

Wendy Sykes Mopsik, *retired professional school counselor and practicing grandmother of nine, continues to be grateful for the opportunity to write about local people and places.*

Shepherdstown's Backyard Chickens

Stephen Altman

Shepherdstown is a place for pets. Dogs on leashes along German Street. Cats in the alleys or lounging on sofas. Chickens scratching in backyards. Chickens?

"Eggs," says Lori Robertson, "I wanted eggs."

Hence the chickens. The chicken population in Shepherdstown may not rival that of dogs and cats, but it isn't paltry. Half a dozen coops can be found in neighborhood backyards and gardens like Robertson's. Her two hens are named Thelma and Louise.

But are they legal, these chickens? Turns out that yes, they are. Chickens are covered under Title 4 of the Town Ordinances. Keep 'em tidy and don't keep more than 25. That's about it.

"You're not supposed to let them fly around town, just keep them in your yard," says Robertson, a therapeutic body worker, who is also recorder for the Corporation of Shepherdstown. In the garden Robertson tends on Princess Street, Thelma and Louise reside in a coop and a wire-mesh enclosure called a chicken run. But other chickens about town, even the ones that get the run of the backyard, pretty much tend to stay home. "Once in a while one gets loose," Robertson says, "but we all know who owns which ones, so if somebody runs into one that's strayed, they'll probably just pick it up and drop it back over the fence."

The town's best example of a free-roaming chicken may be Daisy, who didn't wander out of a backyard, but into one—the Schmitt family's, on German Street. "My daughter texted me at work," says Melinda Schmitt, a graphic designer at the National Park Service. "She said, 'Guess what's in our backyard?' She texted me a picture. And the chicken never left." No one knows where she came from.

That was February 2013. These days, Daisy has a nice perch against a tree near the family rabbit and a good playmate in Mary Lou, the family's 19-year-old outdoor cat. Schmitt says, "Daisy walks around the yard, she keeps an eye out for intruders on our behalf, and she eats bugs and whatever she can scavenge from the compost pile, plus chicken scratch for egg layers, and a protein pellet."

Daisy's past may be mysterious, but her current life is not atypical for a Shepherdstown chicken. "They hunt for food all day long," says Amy Childers, an occupational therapist who keeps seven hens on New Street. "The thing about them is, they're just hilarious. Everything they do is funny. They bring us great joy…and eggs."

And they produce something else as well. Maria Allen, who owns Maria's Taqueria, keeps chickens in her yard next-door to Childers. "Wherever they live, they scratch," Allen says, "so they're great for composting. You throw in leaves, grass clippings, kitchen scraps. They'll add to that their own waste and then you get really good compost for your garden."

For the chickens themselves, the good life carries some risk. Local cats like the way they taste. And in late fall and winter, when food is scarce, so do hawks and foxes and even possums. *Wild Kingdom* moments are not common, but they do happen.

Amy Childers feeds her chickens.

Lori Robertson and her chicken coop

Maria Allen and rooster

PHOTOS BY STEVE ALTMAN

The Schmitts' pet chicken, Daisy, spends her day in the catnip garden with family cat Mary Lou.

PHOTO BY JESSICA SCHMITT

Part of the fun of owning chickens appears to be naming them. Childers's chickens—named with the help of 10-year-old son Noah—are Big Black (a.k.a. Elvira), Rosie Roadrunner, Violet Fancypants, Maggie, Queenie, Squawker Fluffernutter, and Babycakes. Maria Allen's hens are Abigail, Betsy, Peach, Maple, Owl, and Predator. There's also a rooster named Hot Rod.

Wait. Roosters do not lay eggs. What's more, roosters will wake you up. Did someone acquire a rooster inadvertently? Actually, yes. "We had no intention of having a rooster," Allen says. "We got three chicks from a local feed store. They were supposed to be pullets, which means they've been identified as females but haven't started laying yet. As these three came into puberty, we noticed that one of them was crowing."

Allen has talked with the neighbors and says most seem OK with Hot Rod. "He usually starts crowing about 6:30 in the morning and goes on intermittently all day. Most folks say it's a better sound than the train." When trains do rumble along the tracks a couple of blocks away, Hot Rod crows to them.

Is there a chicken craze in Shepherdstown? "I'd say there's a chicken craze nationwide," Allen says. "The more the media expose commercial food practices, the more people want to see the connection between what they're eating and where it came from."

Robertson says much the same thing. "Keeping chickens, I'm never going to earn my investment back in eggs. But I do it because I want to know what I'm eating. It's worth it for that alone."

Eggs are one thing. But are these chickens really *pets*? Daisy, for one, does some petlike things. Out in the Schmitts' backyard, she comes to the kitchen door in the morning to rouse Melinda and calls for her till she appears. But Daisy's no cuddler. She doesn't want to be held. Melinda shrugs. "Maybe she wasn't held enough as a chick."

But other chicken keepers acknowledge that, when it comes to warmth, chickens are kind of, well, *limited.* Childers says, "They're definitely pets in that you have to take care of them and that you do grow fond of them. But they're not mammals. They don't want to snuggle with you."

Lori Robertson says, "These hens are not here for show; they're here for eggs. I love Thelma and Louise, but they're not pets. When they're done laying eggs, I won't keep them around just for the heck of it."

This may strike some outsiders as a tad unsentimental. But Robertson knows her chickens. "They hear your voice, they'll come running to you. But they're basically like dinosaurs. Did you see *Jurassic Park*? They have those same blank round eyes like a velociraptor. If they were 15 feet tall, we'd be gone."

New to Shepherdstown, **Stephen Altman** *has added backyard chickens to the list of things that amaze and delight him about his new home.*

Exit

Dr. Suzanne Shipley, President, Shepherd University

John Case

Unless there's bad weather, I take a few moments most weekday mornings around 7 a.m., just before my Shepherd University radio show, to sit with coffee and a book of poetry. On a bench, perched on a grassy balcony above the Town Run garden, in the shadow of the WSHC radio antenna, I take in the views, bouquets, and fragrances of the garden. By seasons, it is spread with the varied gospel lights of sunrise. Add to this cocktail the becalmed temperaments of the passersby, and there are few scenes more sustaining, gentle, humbling, and spectacular.

It is a good place to improve upon Thoreau's *Walden.* The garden's mask of tranquility and privacy conceals a thoroughfare of secret narratives: the rabbit, squirrel, sparrow, bunting, crow, raven and finch, even a fawn, flitter and tread amid the stillness. But chief among the characters passing my bench is Dr. Suzanne Shipley, departing president of Shepherd University, sometimes with, sometimes without her husband, but always walking, running with—or being walked and run by—her two liberated shelter dogs. The dogs are of indecipherable breeds. Both strain at their leashes and lead Dr. Shipley through and around the garden paths hoping to chase after the squirrels. Dr. Shipley is not quite as fast as the dogs but matches their endurance. She waits until she is sure the dogs will *not* actually catch the squirrels before giving them their wish, if only briefly. The squirrels make the nearest tree—but the dogs are ecstatic and pleased.

The scene is an easy metaphor for Dr. Shipley's college leadership style: inspire students and faculty to strive for their goals in a place of wonder and beauty—but be sober about constraints and avoid carnage!

After eight years as president, Dr. Shipley is returning to her native Texas to accept a position as president of Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls and to be near her aging mother. MSU, like Shepherd, is a member of the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges. Shipley is also the president of COPLAC. She singles out Shepherd's fully accredited acceptance into COPLAC as the achievement of which she is most proud. The council currently includes 29 U.S. colleges and universities.

During her tenure at Shepherd, Dr. Shipley saw the completion of the university's first comprehensive fundraising campaign: "Create the Future." It raised $26 million and was completed a year early. She brought into being the Martinsburg Center for expanded continuing education. The Wellness Center was completed; artificial turf for the football field greatly advanced the football program; a soccer complex, as well as new stands for the baseball and softball fields, and a student underpass linking the east and west campuses were finished. In addition, a new Center for Contemporary Arts was built upon Shepherdstown's growing renown in theater and film.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SHEPHERD UNIVERSITY

Shepherd University's former president Suzanne Shipley

Shipley credits the 1991 book *Getting to Yes*, by Roger Fisher, William L. Ury, and Bruce Patton for her approach to academic and public administration. Instead of having a win-lose mindset, she became a believer in continuing discussions, listening attentively, and taking creative approaches to come to a solution that provides a win for all involved. (OK—let's chase the squirrels; don't kill them.)

Dr. Shipley's outreach to the Shepherdstown community has been rare and extraordinary. Mayor Jim Auxer was emotional in reaction to her departure. "Suzanne will be hard to replace. She has been an asset to Shepherd and the community. We became friends and we formed a bond for a healthy town-gown relationship," he said. "She is my friend. I will miss her."

In her interview with me, I asked her to identify the biggest challenges ahead. She observed that cuts in the West Virginia higher education budget—amounting to over 20 percent in the past few years—have put tremendous pressure on Shepherd. It must trim costs without dramatic rises in historically low West Virginia student tuition rates that make college within reach for ordinary people.

"I think the state underestimates the tremendous growth potential of the Eastern Panhandle," she said. "It has all the requirements for huge returns on strategic investments—not least in higher education." She also pointed to the constraints of a one-size-fits-all tendency in state education policy and funding, since economic and other conditions vary so widely in different regions of the state.

Mark Rudolph, chairman of the Shepherd University Board of Governors, said Shipley "in a short eight-year tenure, has navigated progressive change during very difficult economic times. She has inspired a shared vision with a long-term comprehensive plan that will carry us well into the future as a leading COPLAC university.…I will miss her as a leader and friend. As an alum, I am proud to have been represented by her."

Dr. Shipley has appeared on my program at WSHC three times, and we have conversed, not infrequently, in the course of many transcendental mornings by the Town Run garden—to the extent her dogs would permit her to stand in one place! I share others' admiration for her getting-to-yes style and philosophy. Her deep training in linguistics and her tours of most every European country have instilled cultural breadth and openness and an insight into the meanings *beneath* words. Positions and postures can be peeled away, and common interests can rise to the top and reveal the treasures of civilization—to learn, to live together, and to seek truth.

John Case *is a retired software engineer and union representative. He hosts the* Winners and Losers *radio program on WSHC.*

If These Walls Could Talk

Sue Kennedy

In 1764, Thomas Shepherd conveyed Lot No. 33 in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, to Henry Cookus. Lot 33, at the corner of German and Princess Streets, was right in the middle of the little town.

Cookus then willed Lot 33 to his son Christian, who sold a portion of it to Philip Adam Entler Sr. Entler built a large brick house on his property. Cookus built a large two-story brick building on his and sold the rest of the land to Daniel Bedinger, on which Bedinger built a three-story brick building. It was a large lot.

Time moved on. James Brown leased the building from Bedinger, and then he bought it. In 1809 the Globe Tavern started operating in what is now the museum building. This was the first indication of a tavern offering lodging, a saloon with a kitchen in the cellar, and a dining room on the main floor.

Over the next years, there was a series of sales and leases between the parties. In 1822 Daniel Entler, grandson of Philip, became the proprietor of the entire complex containing 24 rooms, 19 fireplaces, three cellars, and three kitchens. The complex was known as Daniel Entler's Hotel. From the 1820s until the Civil War, Daniel Entler's Hotel was *the* place for social Shepherdstown to be seen. The Globe Tavern was all about elegant parties and fine dining.

The Entler Hotel (the name was shortened in the 1850s) had a heyday for almost 40 years, and then came the war. The Battles of Antietam and Shepherdstown turned the entire town into hospitals and morgues, with the exception of Trinity Episcopal Church. The people needed a place to pray. The Entler Hotel served as a hospital and as a Union billet for the remainder of the war.

Along with the entire area, the Entler fell on hard times, and the beginning of the end began. Daniel Entler moved away. The family still owned the property but was no longer involved in the operation of the business. The shops closed. Ten years went by and the Entler house burned down. The hotel property was sold at public auction.

PHOTOS BY JESSICA SCHMITT

Eleanor Finn (left) and Vicki Smith, current and past presidents of the Historic Shepherdstown Commission

Vicki and Eleanor clean and prepare the Shepherdstown Red Sox baseball team uniform, glove and mitt for display.

New owners restored the building and opened a new hotel. That endeavor failed. Finally all the buildings on Lot 33 were turned into rental units. For the next 50 years, the property served as Shepherd College men's dormitories, quarters for Navy and Air Force cadets studying at Shepherd, Shepherd faculty apartments, and finally a storage warehouse.

In 1972 the State of West Virginia, now the property owner, targeted the buildings for demolition. Shoddy and run-down as it was then, the once majestic Entler Hotel had significant historic value to the people. They organized the Historic Shepherdstown Commission to lobby the state and prevent the demolition. First though, they got the property placed on the National Registry of Historic Places. They bought the property back from the state for a dollar and resurrected the name: Entler Hotel. That was the easy part. Then the people of Shepherdstown, led by the historic commission, got to work restoring a repository of living history.

Enormous amounts of effort and money were contributed, thousands of man and woman hours of labor were volunteered, and priceless artifacts and documents from the citizens' private collections were donated. The herculean task of many years resulted in the historical museum at home today on Lot 33.

The Historic Shepherdstown Commission has had enthusiastic and committed leadership from the beginning. Townspeople dedicated to keeping the historic legacy vibrant have served as board members, docents, advisers, and presidents. Eleanor Finn is the president of the HSC today. She was passed the reigns by the indefatigable Vicki Smith a year ago.

Finn, from New York via Connecticut, came to live in Jefferson County 10 years ago. Armed with two degrees in history and master's degree in business, the former teacher and businesswoman moved south to be closer to her now grown sons, Alexander and David. Alexander and his wife Jane live in Fairfax, Virginia, with little Isobel and Luke; David, Nancy, and five-year-old

Delaine live in Mooresville, West Virginia.

First settling in Martinsburg, Finn dedicated her time and efforts to the League of Women Voters board as observer of the county commission and to the Berkeley-Jefferson Extension Master Gardeners. After exploring the countryside, she fell in love with Shepherdstown and bought a home in Maddox Farm, about a mile from the home of her sister, Elizabeth Starro.

"John Schley suggested I join the HSC when he discovered how interested I was in the history of the area, and I took his advice," said Finn.

The historic commission provides stewardship of the landmark Entler Hotel and Museum, so Finn became a docent at the museum; then as a board member she managed the docent membership. Vicki Smith was the commission's president at the time and couldn't have been more helpful. When Finn was voted in as president, Smith volunteered to take over as her First Lady of Docents.

"Being a docent is a modest time commitment, but it's also important to the success of the museum. You don't have to be an expert to be a docent, just friendly and helpful. That's the key," said Smith.

PHOTOS BY JESSICA SCHMITT

Civil War exhibit, designed by Shepherd University students

Vintage quilts, a spinning wheel, and gun display

Shepherdstown's mail wagon

A model of Snyder's Boat, one of many interesting items at the museum

PHOTOS BY JESSICA SCHMITT

Chesapeake & Ohio Canal barge scale model, made by Charles Miller

Twenty-five docents volunteer time today but there is an ongoing need for more.

Finn readily admits that Smith is a hard act to follow, and they both agree that the commission should extend efforts for more community outreach, especially to the children. There is no better way to preserve Shepherdstown's proud heritage than instill it in the minds of our young. Renovation of the Shepherd Cemetery, to honor the many ancestors of local families, founders of the town, is also a major project. One more project Finn calls "wishful thinking" is the availability of audio tours of the museum, for visitors to hear the history of the treasures within from those who know it best.

All the work of the commission is important, but the top priority of this president is to tell the story of Shepherdstown's black community. "There is really nothing on the black community in the museum, and I think that should be fixed."

Many agree. Jim Schmitt has already loaned his Shepherdstown Red Socks (a black baseball team from the 1930s to the '50s) memorabilia to the museum. Clarence Branson, Charles Hunter, and Eugene Roman played for the Socks. Shepherd University's oral history expert, Keith Alexander, along with George Rutherford of the NAACP, are working on interviews for the project. Shepherdstown's Brothers of Harmony were a well-known singing group of that era in D.C., Philadelphia, and New York. Alexander and his students are researching baseball and music of the 1970s and '80s, but that is not all. So many stories are waiting to be told, and they will be.

Sue Kennedy *is an Entler Museum docent and enjoys the opportunity.*

Westvirjeni

Jeni Peterson Spreads Love With Flowers

Hannah Cohen

Stemming from summer heat, blossoms shoot upward into rays of sunlight. Like fireworks they explode into colors: coneflowers, sunflowers, zinnias, flowering sage, calendula, snapdragons, delphinium, daffodils, tulips, lilac, and hosta. When cut and arranged and delivered, flowers integrate the natural with the material world. Their beauty adorns a physical space, a person, a table. Those who arrange flowers offer something pleasing to the eye and the heart. They are artists who bring the natural world from its harmonious place of creation into our living spaces, where its brightness catches our eye, holds our attention.

PHOTOS BY PANG TUBHIRUN, PANGTOGRAPHY

Earthly with an unencumbered spirit, designer Jeni Peterson brings those same qualities to her floral arrangements. Her business, Westvirjeni, which began as a hobby, has grown over the years to become particularly successful. Many of the flowers she uses are cut from the gardens surrounding her house just outside Shepherdstown. As her small business has grown, so has the size and diversity of her gardens, currently winding from the left side of her house well into her backyard. A collective sharing of inspirations and ideas among clients and other floral artists widens the variety of flowers Peterson grows each season.

Weddings make up the bulk of Peterson's current work, with the summer months keeping her as busy as the bees that buzz in her gardens. The roots of her business were seeded at a friend's wedding a few years ago, but requests for floral arrangements have expanded as the local community seeks her talents.

Even as a child, Peterson always cared for a flower garden, learning alongside her mother. In her first apartment and each house along the way, she planted a garden. Prior to graduating with a degree in business, Peterson studied art in college. Now, her medium is flowers. She translated her artistry to floral arrangements, gradually developing her own style as she arranged flowers for friends' weddings over the years. The first bouquet she assembled was one that she carried as a bridesmaid. Peterson can trace her first *event* to a close friend's wedding in Tennessee. Her friend considered forgoing flowers, but Peterson instead arranged wildflowers foraged in the surrounding area.

The types of flowers and other natural elements that Peterson includes in her work have not changed drastically over time. Some of Peterson's favorites are blue globe thistle, sunflowers, zinnias, celosia, dahlias, and any kind of David Austin roses. Though she grows many of the flowers and succulents herself—over 40 kinds of flowers bloom in her gardens, typically from April through October or the first frost—she also forages, calling upon nature to provide her with seasonal contents. (If you ever see a woman with long blond hair wandering through a field picking up feathers, clipping branches from bushes, cutting wildflowers, that's Peterson—in her element.) As a result, her floral arrangements are seasonally poignant and the colors could not be more vibrant. When working to create arrangements for a scheduled event, Peterson will also order flowers to get a particular color so that a statement or concept can be realized.

As an artist, Peterson wants to know the event's theme, inspiration, and color scheme. From there, she crafts freely, having absorbed the given ideas and collected her inspirations for the space and the person. Peterson glows when she says her favorite part of a wedding is hearing the bride exuding gratitude for her work. She describes what she does as "spreading love with flowers."

Westvirjeni officially came into being in 2014. Peterson credits Tara Sanders Lowe, of Tara Sanders Lowe Event Planning and Promotion, with much of her initial support as a fledgling Westvirjeni grew wings. Recently, Peterson has been expanding her work into "eventscapes"—floral adornment of an entire venue, not just chosen elements of the venue (traditionally centerpieces, bouquets, and such). She also has regular accounts, including providing arrangements weekly for churches and local businesses.

On top of a full-time job during the regular workweek, running all aspects of a small business has proved challenging to Peterson without an extra set of hands. So this summer Peterson hired Ashley Wertman to help with Westvirjeni during the intensity of the summer months. They are doing up to two weddings a day. More recently, Peterson has worked to produce a styled shoot with Shepherdstown photographer Pang Tubhirun, of Pangtography (www.pangtography.com). For her future, Peterson hopes to become more involved in crafting eventscapes. She also anticipates that someone will ask her to provide floral arrangements for a winter wedding: She has done arrangements for three of the four seasons thus far and has visions of evergreen and winter berries.

In conversing with her, it's obvious that Peterson's natural ease and energy are the reason that such beauty is evident in her arrangements—flowers extending their beauty through her touch.

For more information about **Westvirjeni**, contact Jeni Peterson at (304) 886-7543 or westvirjeni@gmail.com, or visit www.facebook.com/wvjeni.

Hannah Cohen *is thankful for Jeni, Ashley, and Pang's support in writing this article. And for flowers, for being so beautiful.*

Two Wonderful Women of Willowdale

Eleanor Hanold

Soon after moving to Willowdale two years ago, I learned that the subdivision is resplendent with artists who give one another tips and validation. Two of those artists are Marlene Mayman and Judith Pharr.

Mayman attended Washington College in Chestertown, Maryland. Earning a bachelor's degree in art, she focused on drawing and painting. With a love of light and color, she was drawn to impressionists and romantics, her principal medium being pastel.

An adventurous sort, Mayman after college worked as a mate on a fishing charter; a seller of fine art at McBride Gallery in Annapolis; a picture framer on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C.; and then, from 1995 to 2006, as a website and graphic designer. Throughout this period, art was not a primary focus, yet she was involved in the Annapolis art scene and studied with a well-known artist, John Ebersburger. She also dabbled in sculpture, taking portrait classes that included building the head from the inside out.

In 2004 Mayman became involved with Burning Man, a counterculture arts festival involving huge pieces of art. She was exposed to a new art form and cutting-edge light installations. Burning Man became a big part of her life and got Mayman's art juices flowing again. In 2006 she began attending local Burning Man events throughout the mid-Atlantic and was invited to do a couple of art grant pieces. A 10-foot seahorse effigy made from driftwood gathered along the Potomac was one of the works. With Burning Man, she also became a fire spinner, a live art form.

In 2006 Mayman returned to school to study massage therapy. She moved to Willowdale in 2012 and opened her Frederick Massage Therapy practice in 2013. She now also sees clients in Virginia and West Virginia. Her focus is lessening pain and mobility issues through orthopedic massage, among other techniques. It helps that Mayman can visualize what a muscle looks like, complementing her study of anatomy. As an artist, she is curious about human structure, posture, and what people's body language communicates.

Currently Mayman displays her art in her Frederick office. Her goal is to have a rotating exhibit that features local talent. She has been involved in the Friday Painters at Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church, displayed at the Devonshire Arms, and was in Artomatic in Charles Town in 2013.

Knowing since she was very young that she was adopted, it was only six years ago that Mayman signed on to an online adoption registry with her birth parents' names. Just this March the German sister of her natural father contacted Mayman. It was because of the adoption registry and the art Mayman posted on Facebook that her aunt reached out to her, informing Mayman that her natural father was an artist, as was her paternal uncle. This uncle, a well-respected German surrealist known as Ulli Mudi, used watercolor and pen and ink as his media of choice. His work has been collected by Gucci and other New York collectors.

The discovery of her artist lineage has motivated Mayman to return to art in a more focused way. She is moving away from her "representational (realism) approach to allow more serendipity without references," what she calls "playing loosely." Learning her uncle was a surrealist has her pushing the envelope, embracing whimsy and allowing mistakes to take her to places she might not otherwise go. She wants to do more sculpture and work in clay and cast in bronze. She would enjoy collaborative work and some ambitious pieces that are either large or detailed. The supportive nature of Willowdale artists and living in a park-like setting, she believes, enhance her artistic sensibility.

Pharr moved to Willowdale from Martinsburg seven years ago. She comes from a musical family drawn to education and the fine arts. A person of many interests, Pharr has dabbled in art from the time she was in elementary school. Her drawing of a pelican, using finger paints and watercolor, was displayed in the Zanesville Art Museum. Another picture she drew as a young girl was of her father sitting in the living room. Her father held on to the painting throughout his life.

Pharr's first real job was directing a church choir. She taught fifth grade after earning a BS in Elementary Education from Ohio University. Later she earned a BFA from Shepherd College. While attending classes, she taught voice at the Inwood Performing Arts Studio in Martinsburg. Eventually she opened a studio in her home. Besides substituting and teaching music, Pharr occasionally helped out at the family business in Martinsburg. When her daughter was grown and married, she added being a licensed realtor to her teaching.

Then a friend called to inquire if she wanted to take a painting class, and Pharr was hooked! She has taken various art classes since, starting with watercolors, moving to oils, and then on to acrylics. She suggests that with watercolor, mistakes aren't forgiving; with oils needing to dry, it takes too much time; but with acrylics that will dry faster and where mistakes might be corrected, she has found her medium. Pharr enjoys "painting the beauty, capturing the light, and creating an uplifting feeling that people can relate to." She would never want to paint anything ugly or that would make people feel depressed.

As a minister in the Eckankar Church, the religion of "the light and sound of God," Pharr believes that "we can see God in everything" which fits well with another interest, photography. She is constantly thinking, "Oh that would make a good picture or a good painting." The photograph *A Cool Drink* is an example. She snapped a picture of a fawn cooling off in the waterfall in her backyard, entered the photo in the West Virginia Strawberry Festival in Buckhannon, West Virginia, and received a People's Choice Award.

PHOTO BY ELEANOR HANOLD

Judith Pharr (left) and Marlene Mayman

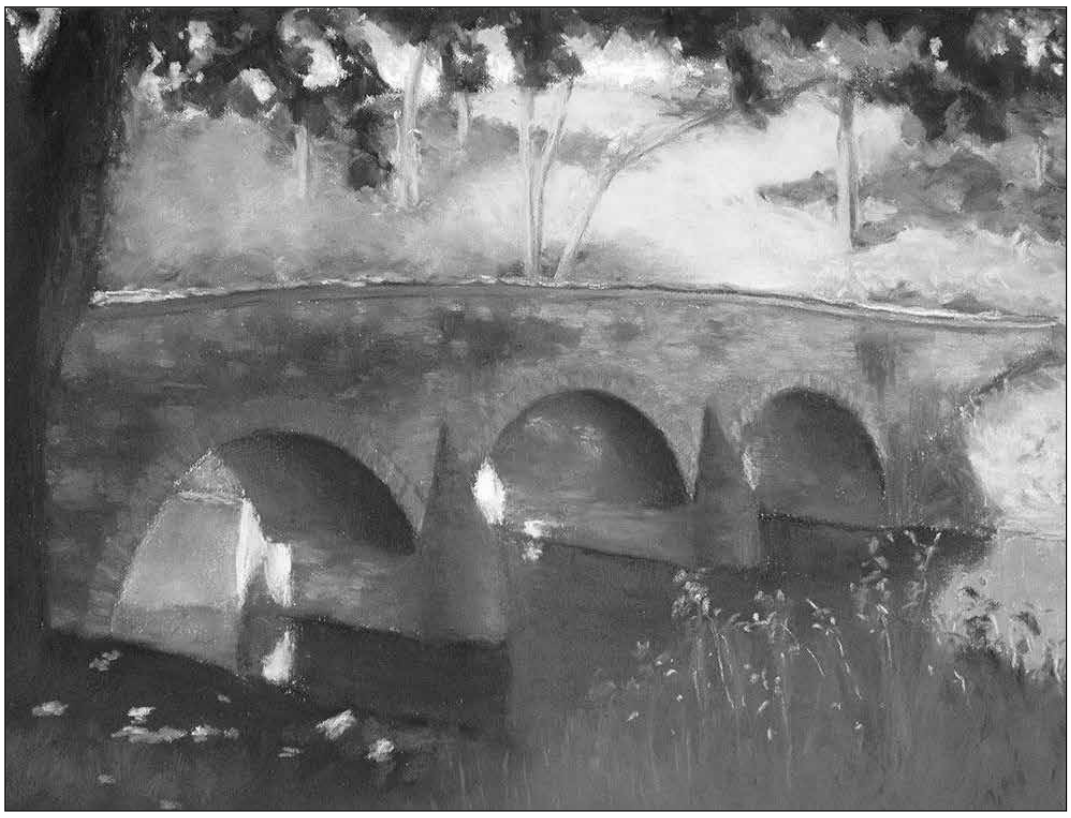
Although active with church and as co-director of the Jefferson County Community Choir, Pharr plans to take art classes and continue to paint for special people in her life. She paints individual Christmas cards and bookmarks; and she is dabbling in triptych, a Christian art style with three sections or panels that make one picture. She also experiments with modern art abstracts, "using layers of color hinting of something not clearly defined." Her ultimate goal is to create 100 really wonderful pictures.

Reflecting on how much remains to be learned, Pharr recollects a teacher who instructed the class to draw a circle. "What is inside," he said, "one knows. What is outside the circle is what still is to be learned." She appreciates how living in a community of artists provides a constant source of feedback, encouragement, and inspiration and suggests that residing in Willowdale is "the icing on the cake of an interesting life."

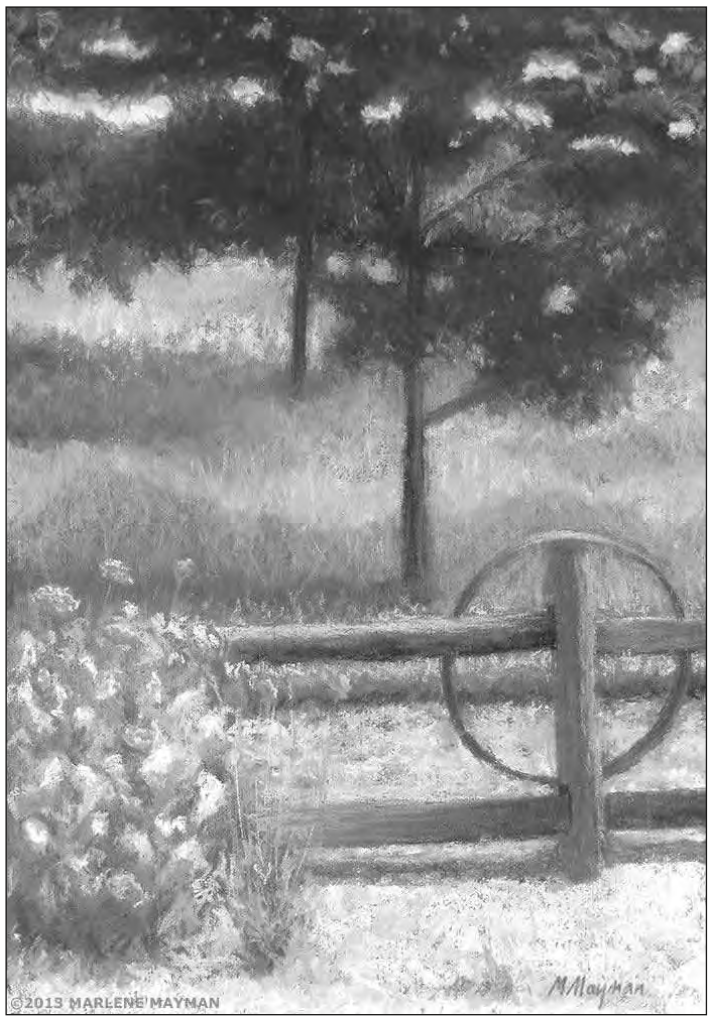
ARTWORK →

Eleanor Hanold *loves the beauty in people and the beauty they create.*

MARLENE MAYMAN



Burnside Bridge



Top right, *Seahorse Effigy*; above, *Green Apples*; left, *Mary's Poppies*

JUDITH PHARR

Clockwise from top: *A Cool Drink*; *Tulips*; *Cove*; *Midnight*

PHOTOS SUPPLIED BY MARLENE MAYMAN AND ELEANOR HANOLD

See artworks in color at shepherdstowngoodnewspaper.org

‘If I had a secret for myself…’

Keegan Abernethy

Light House
There is a lighthouse on my windowsill.
The wick inside is kept oiled and light
By a silent voice.

The voice directs this light atop the tower
Through the tiny window in my chest.

The heart light illuminates a great sea
Swirling beyond the glass window.

This heart is but one star
Hovering over the oceanic soul.

We come together like this
Tiny pinhole souls
In the black tapestry of night

One light is behind the dark canvas
Swirling in echo beams.

The midnight sky clears to pure light
When we see ourselves empty.
Spark into nothingness, turn free.

Absorption of Essence
When you walk by a human being
Along the shore late at night
All you see is shadow, no face
Just an absorption of essence
In the dark.

All you have to go by are the stars
And the reflection of the moon oceanside.

See the moon essence
Of the brother, of the sister
In your chest.

Be the one wave rolling in
That tugs on the bottom of your foot
And makes the sand you walk
Soft and wet.

This water surge is longing in motion
Reaching and pulling
Contracting back and forth
Into the great vast empty.

I dip my toes barely in the water
But I am already under.

A Deep Bow
I close this evening in a deep bow
To my friend, the sun, who fell
And set behind the sound

I find myself walking back to the place
Where I wanted to lean in
But was too shy

I stand on a shore between two worlds:
Your freshness, my saltiness

The yielder of orange has dropped behind his waters
And the sight beckons my heart
That is where I want to be

That is where the soul is
Just hovering
Above the sound

If I live out tomorrow, morning breath
And evening death, when I see you out
There in swirling center, let’s smile
And bow at one another

Surely the day’s dance was one of grace
Worthy of a kiss

Mindful Motion
Summer’s wind sends seismic shivers
Down my spine, your spine
A shared sensation retrieved from sunshine

Giggles glide goose bumps across our sides
Galloping cackles guide us
Back to gracious ground

True, time, it tick-tocks
But we tinker not with turning
Think-thoughts

This is a perfect play day we punctuate
Personalities pour into a pool
Palpitating in patient potential

We move moment to moment
Meandering mindfully
To moonlight motion

Here, waves whisper a welcome
Washed in wonder waking us
Where what is unseen waits

Beloved Child
At the bottom of every man
There is a child
Who sings in the springs of life.

Watch a grown man when he sleeps
Transform into that sweetness.

War boys turn to children
Stacked in quiet barracks
Like newborns bunked in a nursery.

Swaddle yourself
You child are a true human being.
You are not deficient.
You are nothing less.

Open your throat
Let wail the natural cry of longing.

There is no need to stuff yourself in trousers
And choke yourself on collars.

Cry like an infant wanting mother’s milk.
Coo as the mourning dove does
Calling for dawn.

Hear the truth trickle down your spine
With thickness of tree sap.

Then laugh like a child
Who giggles in delight
Of her own company.

Children laugh just to be heard!
Hear yourself.
All you are is a beloved child.

Keegan Abernethy *grew up across the bridge from Shepherdstown in Sharpsburg, Maryland. As a kid he explored the local mountains and creeks with his friends. In 2014 he graduated from Towson University with a bachelor’s degree in psychology. He began writing poetry recently after hearing Coleman Bark’s spoken translations of Persian poet Rumi (1207–1273). Keegan is completing yoga teacher training at Jala Yoga in Shepherdstown, attending grad school, and volunteering for hospice.*

In Defense of the Liberal Arts

Mark Madison

This is the season when we pack up our college students and send them off to new environments and desperately hope they find their niche. There are a wide variety of educational options, all of them preferable to the alternative—ignorance. However, in recent years there has been a distinct prejudice against studying the liberal arts in favor of the misnamed "practical fields." All areas of learning are important, but as someone who has taught in the liberal arts for 25 years, I would like to defend them on educational, social, and environmental grounds.

Contrary to popular belief, the purpose of education is not to get a job, but to be educated. This seems an obvious logical proposition (the study of logic being one of the traditional liberal arts) that is all too often ignored. If education were only a means to employment, we would teach kindergarteners to run cash registers and drive trucks.

The idea that free citizens need a broad education goes back to the Ancient World. The term liberal arts derives from the Latin word for free, *liber*, the same origin point for liberty—no coincidence there. Ancient Greeks and Romans wanted their citizens to actively participate in civic life, so they promoted this broad area of learning to make their elites better-educated citizens. In the Middle Ages the university was born as an institution designed to actively promulgate the liberal arts—described in that era as seven fields: music, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, grammar, logic, and rhetoric.

In the Renaissance, modern languages, ethics, and history were added to the curriculum, allowing me to earn a living as an itinerant historian. Today the liberal arts degree can include any of the humanities, social sciences, and many sciences. As such a broad category, it is perhaps most easily defined by what it is not: specifically it is not a professional, technical, or vocational education.

So what do the liberal arts teach versus a more clearly defined program leading to a certification or profession? When taught properly by the best educators, a liberal arts undergraduate degree should teach students both oral and written communication, critical thinking skills, and the tools and perspectives in a wide array of disciplines ranging from art history to zoology. The idea being that the motivated student will emerge with a broad toolkit for human life, including both quantifiable skills in, say, math or sciences, and a sense of their history, ethical guidelines, and a lifelong curiosity about other cultures and fields. This educational goal was recognized as valuable for two centuries in American higher education, and the preponderance of small liberal arts campuses speaks to its persistent legacy.

Beloit College students on Model T Ford (circa 1920)

Rachel Carson (top row, second from right) on college field hockey team in 1928

Educationally, it is hard to argue against a curriculum that expands a student's intellectual horizons to the broadest degree possible while, hopefully, giving them the tools to succeed professionally.

Socially, the value of liberal arts has been recognized for 2,500 years. The ancient Greeks and Romans wanted citizens who could engage productively in social life; the Medievals sought to preserve learning for future generations; the Renaissance scholars wanted to rediscover the best learning of the past and expand it with current new discoveries; and eventually American universities sought to create an educated citizenry capable of helping their nation progress and grow. The liberal arts have always claimed that in a democracy, improving the intellect, tolerance, and critical skills of the citizens improves the society as a whole over time. If we lived in a society where dictators or computers made all our decisions for us, perhaps we could risk a less critically attuned public. But considering we all live with the consequences of our decisions, a sane and ethical citizen of a democracy would always prefer the best-educated decisions be made on a wide variety of topics, rather than on ignorance or prejudice. A properly educated, well-rounded graduate would at a minimum know: the Civil War was about slavery; evolution is the foundation for the biological sciences; and other cultures have their own unique perspectives and aspirations.

Criticism of the liberal arts is most often voiced in the platitudinous question, "What are you going to do with a degree in [*fill in the blank*]?" Although seemingly a fair question, it is actually the wrong question to be asking. The correct question is, "How do we prepare our youths for a world in which 30 percent of the jobs that they will be working in do not yet exist and where only 27 percent of college graduates have a job closely related to their major?"

If we honestly admit we cannot predict the future nor do we want to limit it, then perhaps the best bet is a well-rounded education that can provide the fundamental skills to learn new jobs and master an evolving workplace. The growing emphasis on narrow specialization and career training in the world of higher education may provide some type of placebo effect for students and bankrupt parents, but it does little to enrich our youths or our economy.

Finally, broad-based grounding in the liberal arts may secure the future of the environment. Our environmental crises are changing from decade to decade. When Rachel Carson wrote *Silent Spring* in 1962, she never imagined climate change, global invasive species epidemics, or an increasingly urbanized, technologically oriented youth disconnected from nature.

As our environmental problems change, we need creative and critical problem solvers to address them. These future environmentalists will need to discover new solutions to new problems, compromise without surrendering, and behave in a manner that is ethical both to the human and nonhuman species directly impacted. These skills are not easily broken down into one discipline or technical skill. But they may be some of the skills that future Rachel Carsons will develop with a broad-based education in the liberal arts. In fact, Rachel Carson graduated from a small liberal arts college in Pennsylvania, where she studied both English and biology, synthesizing these skills in a book that changed our world!

Mark Madison *teaches environmental ethics, environmental film, and environmental history at Shepherd University. His daughter will be a first-year student at Beloit College—Wisconsin's oldest liberal arts college.*

My Two Grandmothers

Isabella Snyder

My grandmothers come from countries with different cultures, languages, and traditions. Growing up, I've had the privilege of experiencing both of these different cultures through them. Each of my grandmothers has a nickname. My grandmother on my mom's side, Sara, I call Nona, which is Italian for grandmother. My grandmother on my dad's side, Jane, I call Key, a nickname one of my cousins chose for her. While Nona comes from a family that includes Spanish aristocrats as well as Criollos (children of Spaniards living abroad), Key has British ancestors going back to the Revolutionary War. In fact, she is a Daughter of the American Revolution.

Nona was born and raised in Bogota, Colombia. Her mother knew how to sew, sing, and play the guitar, and her father was an entrepreneur who engaged in different activities, including emerald trading and tourism. He founded El Dorado Turismo, the first tourism company in Colombia. When Nona was young, her father sent her to study in the United States. She attended Brenau Academy, a prep school in Georgia, and then enrolled at the University of Alabama. In Alabama, my grandmother won a beauty contest and met Bob, my grandfather. Of Scottish origin, he had blue eyes and was tall, especially compared to Nona. They moved to Colombia and had two children, my mother, Hope, and my uncle, Michael.

Key was born and raised in Martinsburg, West Virginia. Her mother grew up on a plantation in Tennessee but spent her summers at Boydville, her family home in Martinsburg, where she met her husband. During the Civil War, President Lincoln spared Boydville from being burned down after receiving a telegram from Key's great-great grandmother. You see, Key's great-great grandfather, Charles James Faulkner, was minister to France at the time. His portrait still hangs in the American Embassy in Paris.

A music lover and singer, Key attended Wilson College, in Pennsylvania, on a piano scholarship and completed her studies at Shepherd. During a card game in Martinsburg, she met my grandfather, Bill, a third-generation editor and publisher of the *Shepherdstown Register*. Key and Bill had three children, including my dad, John; my aunt, Martha Jane; and my uncle Billy, who died at a young age.

PHOTO BY HOPE MAXWELL SNYDER

Isabella Snyder (center) with grandmothers Jane Snyder (left) and Sara Maxwell.

The only two things my grandmothers have in common are their grandchildren and Shepherdstown. Whereas Nona moved from Colombia to the United States, Key has spent her whole life in West Virginia. Nona speaks Spanish and English, and for years she worked in social services in the state of Maryland. Throughout her life, Key has focused on singing and music. While Nona was raised Catholic and is a dog lover, Key was raised Presbyterian and is a cat lover.

I admire them for many reasons. They always look nice. Nona loves to travel, and throughout her life she's traveled throughout Europe and South America. Key has been to Japan, Europe, and Israel. Four summers ago, my family went to Bogotá with Nona. Visiting Colombia was interesting, because I saw where my grandmother and my mom came from. Another thing I admire about Nona is her storytelling. Nona tells stories with so much enthusiasm that it makes you feel like you were there when it happened. I admire Key's passion for music and her dedication to practicing. She has performed in many musicals and operas.

I've learned something from both of them. Nona taught me how to make *arepas* (Colombian pancakes filled with cheese), lentils, Colombian hot chocolate, and how to be frugal with my money. Nona also insists that I never go to bed with my hair wet, and that I take a sweater everywhere I go. From Key, I've learned how to knit and how to bake brownies and pound cake.

Years ago, Key and Nona traveled to England with us. We visited Buckingham Palace, the Tower of London, the British Museum (where I got to see the Rosetta Stone), and Harrods.

In their driving history and habits, you can see how different my two grandmothers are. I have some funny stories to share about both of them. Nona, who has never enjoyed driving, learned as an adult. While living in Bogotá, she didn't need to drive because my grandfather had drivers. When Nona eventually took her driver's test, she almost ran over a policeman. In the United States, Nona became a very cautious driver, so cautious that one time she was stopped on the highway for driving too slowly.

One time when Key was driving me and my brother William home from school, we heard a beep. William asked Key about it, and she responded, "Oh, that's nothing; the car beeps when I go over 80." Many years ago, when Key was on her way to a performance of *The Sound of Music* in my grandfather's Mercedes, she was pulled over for speeding. When the officer saw her, dressed as a nun and wearing a lot of makeup, he decided to let her go with a warning. While Nona has had the same car for years, Key puts so many miles on her cars that she has to replace them often.

One afternoon, Dad, Key, William, and I were playing basketball. Key took the ball and fell down. We were all terrified, but she hopped right back up and yelled, "I'm OK!"

Once when Nona accompanied a friend to a doctor's appointment, she felt faint and asked to be taken to the emergency room. After the doctor examined her, his diagnosis was that she had overheated because she had too many sweaters on.

Even though I never got the chance to meet my grandfathers, I am grateful that my grandmothers are present in my life. Every year, they come to our house to celebrate Thanksgiving, birthdays, and Christmas. I've grown up with my dad and Key speaking English at one end of the table, while at the other end, Nona and my mom speak Spanish; that is to say, I've grown up being exposed to the two different cultures and languages represented by my grandmothers.

Isabella Snyder *is a sophomore at Saint Maria Goretti High School. This past summer she traveled to France for the first time. Unfortunately, she didn't get to see the portrait of Ambassador Faulkner at the American Embassy in Paris, but she plans to return there one day and hopes to see it then. She is a sixth-generation Shepherdstonian who loves to ride her bike on the towpath.*

Books for Babies

Monica Grabowska

Charlotte Porter is a talker. Ask her friends, and they will agree that she easily engages in conversations on myriad topics and, like most octogenarians, Porter has a wealth of experience to draw on.

Before settling in Shepherdstown, she and her husband, Fred, moved 23 times and lived in six different states during his career with the Department of the Army. Porter can reminisce about rationing during World War II and school desegregation in the 1960s; she can describe the stifling heat of Alabama's Gulf Coast and the subzero bite of winter in the Central Plains. She can also tell you about the West Virginia roots of Abraham Lincoln's mother and the squirrel migrations witnessed by the Lewis and Clark expedition. Of course, her 83 years do not reach back *that* far, but a lifetime of reading does.

PHOTO BY MONICA GRABOWSKA

Charlotte Porter (right) presents a special certificate in June to Tessa Belsterling and baby Hope to commemorate the fact that Hope was the 2,000th baby to receive a book from First Books for Babies when she was born at Jefferson Medical Center on March 12, 2015. The First Books Committee also presented Porter with a special gift to honor her "vision, leadership, and tenacity" in founding the literacy program.

Porter will gladly share the fascinating stories and intriguing facts she has gleaned from the books she has read recently—ask her what she is reading and she will list two or three titles—but more than stories, she wants to pass along the love of reading. As a retired teacher and school librarian, she understands that a lifetime of literacy begins at the beginning. To that end, she founded First Books for Babies in 2007.

Officially, First Books for Babies is a project of the Shepherdstown Public Library and the Jefferson County Reading Council, but in truth it was Porter and her dogged persistence that created an organization, which over the past eight years, has presented a book to every baby born at Jefferson Medical Center in Ranson. That is a book for each of more than two thousand babies!

Porter said the idea for the program came from neighboring Washington County, Maryland. She read a news story about a partnership between the hospital, the public library, and the school system called Books for Babies.

"I wanted to see us [West Virginia] get off the bottom of the lists for education and literacy," said Porter, "and this seemed like a good way to start."

She contacted the coordinators of the Washington County program to learn the ins and outs of launching a similar project. With that roadmap, Porter set out to find sponsoring organizations, funders, and a cadre of like-minded people to serve on a committee to manage the project. She presented the idea to friends and strangers, businesses and government organizations. The Shepherdstown Public Library signed on as the parent organization, a quasi-governmental entity that would allow the project to more easily raise funds. The Jefferson County Reading Council joined as a funding partner; the hospital's auxiliary and the Jefferson County Commission each gave startup grants of $1,000; and First Books for Babies was born.

Porter stepped down as the official project leader after seven years but still devotes many hours to First Books for Babies, whether coaxing donations from local businesses (an ongoing effort and the group's most pressing need), acting as liaison between the committee and the maternity department, or meeting with the committee to prepare for the next little baby boom in the county.

The committee now relies on children's librarian Christy Hagerty to select and order the books they present, but Porter still loves perusing bookstore shelves for new baby books. It reminds her of the 13 years she spent as an elementary school librarian. Selecting new library books was one of the responsibilities Porter enjoyed most, but it was not for the thrill of finding a well-written or beautifully illustrated book, it was about finding the *right* books for her particular students: the one book that might hook a reluctant reader, inspire a budding writer, or help a lonely student feel connected.

"Those achievements mean more to me than anything else in my career," she said.

Like reading, gardening has been a lifelong passion for Porter. She still tends extensive flowerbeds along her backyard patio in Shepherdstown's Willowdale subdivision. Take a tour of those gardens with Porter and you will soon find yourself walking back in time and west to the ridges and valleys of Allegany County, Maryland, where she grew up. She will not sugarcoat the toil and sweat required to plant, weed, and harvest the two-acre vegetable garden of her childhood, but it is soon evident that the memory is laced with a mother's love and tied with the powerful strands of prose and poetry.

"After weeding, or while we were snapping beans, Mom would read to us. If she didn't have a book—we didn't have easy access to a library—she would recite poetry, sing songs, or tell us stories. She was a great storyteller."

As her voice trails off and you return to the here and now, you see what the First Books for Babies Project means to Porter even before she sums it up: "I strongly believe that every child should have a book to begin with. It might be the only book they ever get."

Literacy Begins on Day One

The research is in and the evidence is strong: Reading to babies has lasting benefits for their cognitive, social, and emotional development. Librarians know it and offer programs geared specifically to babies and their parents.

Doctors know it too. In 2014 the American Academy of Pediatrics released a policy statement recommending that its physicians talk to parents about reading to their babies during their very first pediatric visit; they had previously recommended this for the 6-month checkup.

Educators like Charlotte Porter and the First Books for Babies committee also know it. Their hope is to make sure that every baby born at Jefferson Medical Center begins life with a book and a parent who also understands the importance of reading to their newborn.

Each book and information packet provided by First Books for Babies costs almost $8. With 20 to 25 babies born at Jefferson Medical Center each month, the project needs a steady stream of income. It welcomes donations from individuals, organizations, businesses—anyone who wants to impact literacy in our community. Donations can be made with a check to the Shepherdstown Public Library and a note on the memo line directing it to First Books for Babies.

Monica Grabowska *is a fourth grade teacher and occasional freelance writer who was tapped by Charlotte Porter four years ago to join the First Books for Babies committee.*

Welcome to Cymru

Claire Stuart and Stephen Willingham

Part 1
Claire's Mini Travelogue

We wanted to see mountains and castles, so we visited northern Wales. Cymru (Kum-ri) is what Welsh people call their country, and it is shown on buses, trains, and official buildings. The Welsh are very serious about keeping their language alive. It is a compulsory subject for public school students until age 16, but "Welsh medium" schools teach exclusively in Welsh. An entire education, through college, can be earned in Welsh.

Every sign we saw was bilingual, as were bus schedules, menus, and even coasters in pubs! We heard a lot of Welsh spoken, especially on buses between small towns where drivers and passengers obviously knew each other.

We headquartered in Conwy, a few minutes walk from Conwy Castle. The castle looms over Conwy, the entire old section of the town enclosed by the castle walls. Vehicles must enter through ancient arched stone gates, and buses squeeze through literally by inches, attesting to drivers' skill. Access to the top of the walls is free for a stroll above the city (and a peek down into people's backyards).

The castle rises from solid rock, with eight huge towers and a maze of courtyards, passageways, and living quarters. Ropes attached to the walls help visitors navigate the narrow, circular staircases to the tops of the towers for spectacular views.

Serious walkers with their dogs were everywhere, and Conwy Mountain was full of them. The mountain is covered with purple heather and golden gorse, with patches of towering magenta foxgloves, a flower I had never before seen growing wild. Sheep marked in colors for identification wander freely, and the summit offers panoramic views of nearby towns and the Irish Sea.

South of Conwy is Bodnant Garden, 80 acres of terraces, water features, flower-filled woodlands, and the famous 180-foot archway of laburnums—small trees with clusters of dangling golden flowers. Founded in 1874 by a wealthy industrialist, it was expanded by succeeding generations and given to the National Trust in 1949.

Bodnant is known for its rhododendron, camellia, and magnolia collections, as well as trees and shrubs from around the world brought back by 19th-century *plant explorers*. Flowers are in bloom every season, and masses of roses welcomed us.

Mt. Snowdon, the highest mountain in Wales, is stark and bare, with great expanses of rocks left by glaciers. At Llamberis, we hiked to the ruin of the Welsh castle Dolbadarn, where there is no admission fee, guards or docents. The countryside is dotted with stone huts and crisscrossed by stone fences and walls. Slate is mined here, leaving scarred hills resembling West Virginia strip mines.

We visited two more of King Richard's castles, Caernarfon, a massive fortress with polygonal towers, and Beaumaris on the island of Anglesey, the most beautiful, complete with a moat and swans.

Wherever we wandered, people were helpful and friendly. A standout was an older gent we encountered as we left a bus. He pointed us to our destination and a public restroom and offered us 20 pence for the pay toilet in case we didn't have change!

Conwy street and castle

Conwy Castle latrines for king's workers empty outside

Bodnant Garden

Beaumaris moat with swans

Conwy mountain trail

Conwy Castle

Caernarfon Castle

Dolbardarn Castle

Beaumaris Castle

PHOTOS BY CLAIRE STUART AND STEPHEN WILLINGHAM

Part 2
Steve's Castles and Politics

Today, tourists from around the world flock to see the "steel ring" of castles created by the English King Edward I, in Northern Wales. These stone fortresses are inspirational architectural marvels, several of which, Conwy, Caernarfon, Harlach, and Beaumaris, are now included on the World Heritage List for their historical and cultural value.

Following a second Welsh war of independence led by Prince Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, who was killed in a skirmish in 1282, Edward began construction on a castle and accompanying town walls at Conwy in 1283. During Edward's administration, 17 castles were either constructed or remodeled from previously existing forts, including reworked Welsh castles.

As might be expected, many Welsh natives entertained a different view when it came to an English king's insistence that Wales submit to English rule. To buttress his claim on Wales, Edward began to import English settlers into the region. These new residents needed defensive fortifications as quickly as possible, since life outside of the walls would have been short.

Conwy castle and walls were completed in only four years.

While building at Conwy, Edward simultaneously commenced raising castles at Caernarfon and Harlech. These undertakings were expensive. Conwy alone was estimated to have cost £15,000, approximately £45 million today, and to have employed 1,500 craftsmen and laborers. While costly, these fortifications, and subsequent occupations, were seen as a wiser expenditure than returning to war every few years.

Edward apparently had intended for Conwy to become the seat for his newly conquered territory, because he went to considerable effort to relocate a Cistercian abbey to make way for his castle, at what was then known as Aberconwy. Here Gwynedd Prince Llywelyn ap Iorwerth, also known as Llywelyn Fawr (the Great), and his sons were buried. This fact was no doubt a symbolic coup for Edward, although the seat of power would eventually shift to Caernarfon, after the region was divided into three counties.

Llywelyn Fawr was responsible for building one of the best examples of a Welsh castle. Located at Llanberis, Dolbadarn Castle overlooks Lake Llyn Padarn and was designed to block any movement by an enemy force through that part of Snowdonia. Only a single tower and accompanying foundations remain of a fortress that continues to attest to the reach and influence of Llwelyn Fawr.

Following the labor and expense of building castles with royal quarters, chapels, and rooms for the king and queen's combined entourage of over 700 people, it might be assumed that Edward would have spent more time in his new palace. History reports him only staying once at Conwy, during the winter of 1294–1295, while besieged by a Welsh army. Here he passed a miserable Christmas. During the siege, Edward is reported to have shared a barrel of wine, which was being saved exclusively for him, with his troops. Magnanimously, he declared that everyone was equal on this particular occasion, considering the circumstances. The Welsh rebellion ultimately failed.

To quell an endless stream of uprisings, since the "steel ring" had the feisty Welsh bottled up in their Snowdonian stronghold, Edward somehow got them to agree to his eldest son being designated as "the Prince of Wales." In 1284, a son was born at Caernarfon to Edward and his queen, Eleanor of Castile. The terms of the agreement were that the Welsh would accept a child born in Wales, who spoke not a word of English.

However, it wouldn't be until 1301 that Edward of Caernarfon was officially anointed with this title. He would reign as King Edward II upon his father's death in 1307. Since then, two other reigning heirs to the British throne have been invested at Caernarfon, Prince Edward in 1911, eventually crowned Edward VIII, and Prince Charles, the current heir, in 1969. There have been at least 21 Welsh princes of Wales.

The castle at Beaumaris, on the island of Anglesey, would remain unfinished, as would the most elaborate of them all, Caernarfon. Trouble with the pesky Scots to the north would soon engage Edward's time, money, and attention.

Claire Stuart *writes for various area publications. She enjoys visiting beautiful gardens and old structures.* **Stephen Willingham** *wants to know the history of every place he sees. He teaches senior English at Washington High School.*

Reclaiming Appalachia

One Place and One Person at a Time

Brandon Dennison

The prompt for this reflection was: *How did I get inspired to found Coalfield Development?* In trying to answer this question, I think of three special places in Shepherdstown: Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church, White Hall, and the Rumsey Monument. Before I explain why, here is a little background: Coalfield Development is a not-for-profit organization working in southern West Virginia to diversify the economy *one place and one person at a time*. Our newest work is centered on Reclaim Appalachia, LLC. Reclaim will be a social enterprise that creates opportunities for young adults by combining training in traditional Appalachian artisan trades with community-college education and life-skills mentorship. Trainees make furnishings out of reclaimed materials, which are then sold to support their education. The initial seeds of the idea were planted during my time as a Shepherd student from 2004 to 2008.

Any good idea is based on ideas that came before. We're never quite as original as we think we are. Our prayers begin where those of our ancestors left off. History teaches us this, and it serves as a wise guide for any aspiring change agent. At Shepherd, whether it was Dr. Thomas singing to us, Dr. Henrickson joking at us in Russian, or Dr. Brasher enthusiastically debating with us, we history students were well taught, with passion and gusto. White Hall still had the feel of 1970. The desks creaked, and the chalkboards screeched (the science, technology, engineering, and math students had white boards, or even SMART boards), but we learned how to think critically and within context.

When people asked me, "What's your major?" most of them inevitably responded to my answer with, "What can you do with a history degree?" I didn't have a good answer then. I simply said, "I just like history." But today I could answer with a full essay. What I learned in White Hall is this: To really solve problems (as opposed to applying band-aids), you've got to go back in time. The hardest societal problems are generational. This is especially true in Appalachia, where we face the complexity of generational (rather than circumstantial) poverty compounded by the many harms of a coal economy. Solving a generational problem can only be achieved within the context of a historical understanding. The sins of our fathers shape us still. The dreams of our mothers define our hopes still.

So it is that while Reclaim Appalachia seeks to address generational problems (poverty, low educational attainment, damaged environment, negative mindsets), we are not trying to change Appalachia into something it is not. Our philosophy is that many of our problems here are a result of getting away from who we really are as Appalachian people—whether that's becoming dependent on a coal company or the government. We know through our history that this has been a place of enterprising, creative, close-to-the-land people. And we seek now to reclaim this identity, to reclaim who we really are as Appalachian people.

We can only really keep an idea going if we are part of community. First, we need family and friends. I'm abundantly blessed with both, and especially with a strong, smart wife who supports and strengthens my work. But we need to live beyond the walls of our home, too. We need people who pray with us and for us. We need people who challenge us to be real. We need people who push us forward in the march for justice, kindness, and mercy. The people who did this for me were the incredible congregation of Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church. Here, Ethel Hornbeck taught me how to really pray. Here, Randy Tremba took a chance on me, tasking me with the role of youth director even though I was only 18. I learned the value of mentorship, the power of a more experienced person taking the time to share experience with a younger lad, like what we do through Reclaim Appalachia today. Here, I accepted God's call to justice as we were inspired by the homeless in inner city D.C., migrants at the orchards, and native people on reservations.

In my experience, truly good ideas, ideas that can last and matter, come from quiet reflection and prayer. We need community, yes, but we also need secret encounters with the Holy. These moments in solitude strengthen our inner core so that when our ideas inevitably meet resistance, we can persevere. These quiet moments keep us humble, aware of our limitations and our reliance on God. No place put me in a better frame of mind for prayer than the Rumsey Monument. The peace of the place, the way the water slowly meandered by and the birds sang happily, strengthened me.

Peace permeates Shepherdstown. That's actually my first memory of the town: coming to visit the campus and seeing the PEACE signs in three different languages, left over from the Middle East Peace Talks President Clinton hosted. There is space in this little town to think and envision and reflect, just as the Potomac reflects in its lazy waters the bridge beams above it. As I sat journaling at the base of the monument with a little world on top, I felt a deep urge to make better my own little world in my home state of West Virginia. Reading back through these journals, I see now that my visions were grand, naive, and incomplete. Yet that's how ideas start, and the ignorance of youth has been a continual blessing to me.

PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY BRANDON DENNISON

In action, at the Shepherdstown deconstruction project

Group meeting with congressional delegates in Washington, DC, here with Senator Joe Manchin

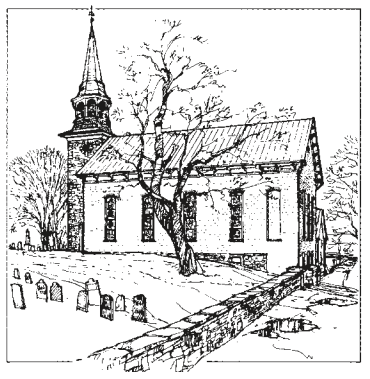
Later, in the early days of Coalfield Development, when my grand ideas to sow justice in my home community of southern West Virginia were struggling to gain traction, it was the SPC community that rallied around me and helped raise the start-up funds for what has today become Reclaim Appalachia. At the end of the day, it is our family, our faith, and the community of the faithful that keep our deepest hopes alive. For as Appalachia reclaims what it really is as a region, we each need to be reclaiming who we really are as people. We are people born into an eternal covenant to be loved by God and, in turn, to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength and to love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

Brandon Dennison *was born and raised in Ona, West Virginia. He earned bachelor's degrees in history and political science from Shepherd and a master's degree in public affairs from Indiana University. He served as youth director at Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church from 2004 to 2009. He can be reached at bdennison@coalfield-development.org.*

Reclaim Appalachia is a social enterprise, created by the nonprofit Coalfield Development Corporation, that reclaims building materials from deconstruction sites—so far preventing over 250,000 square feet of building material from entering landfills. But more important, it reclaims opportunity for young adults in southern West Virginia. You can support Reclaim Appalachia by purchasing products trainees have upcycled from reclaimed building material. Custom builds are available upon request. Visit www.reclaimappalachia.com for more information. Coalfield Development's mission is quality homes, quality jobs, and quality lives for the communities of southern West Virginia. You can support its work by sending a tax deductible donation to P.O. Box 1133 Wayne, WV 25570. Info: www.coalfield-development.org.

Religious Worship and Education Schedules

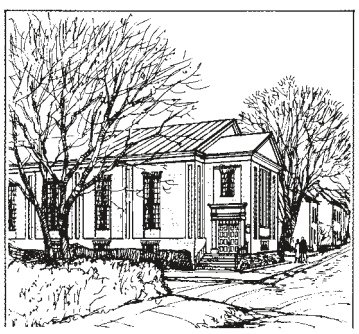
Asbury Church
4257 Kearneysville Pike
Rev. Rudolph Monsio Bropleh, Pastor
Telephone: (304) 876-3112
Sunday Worship: 8 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.
Mid-Week Mingle: Wednesday, 6:30–8:00 p.m.
Real Recognize Real Teen:
Sunday, 2:00–3:30 p.m.
E-mail: info@4pillarchurch.org
www.4pillarchurch.org



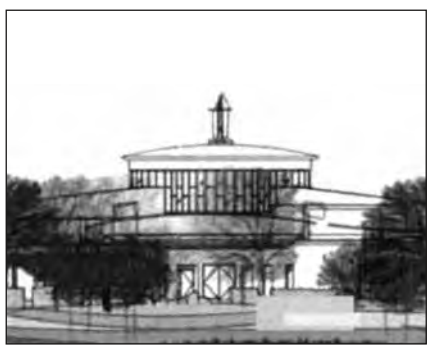
Christ Reformed, United Church of Christ
304 East German Street
Sunday Worship: 11:00 a.m.
www.christreformedshepherdstown.org

Christian Science Society
Entler Hotel—German & Princess Streets
Sunday Worship & Sunday School: 10 a.m.
Thanksgiving Day service: 10:00 a.m.
Reading Room is in Entler Rm. 210,
open before and after the service and
by appointment. Call to confirm Sunday
school and child care: (304) 261-9024
All are welcome.

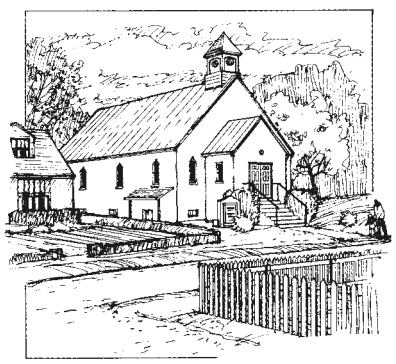
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
Shepherdstown Monthly Meeting
for Worship and First Day School
Sundays at 10:00 a.m.
Shepherdstown Railroad Station,
Audrey Egle Drive
Contact Clerk, Elizabeth Hostler, (304) 582-8090,
elizhostler@gmail.com
http://shepherdstownfriends.org



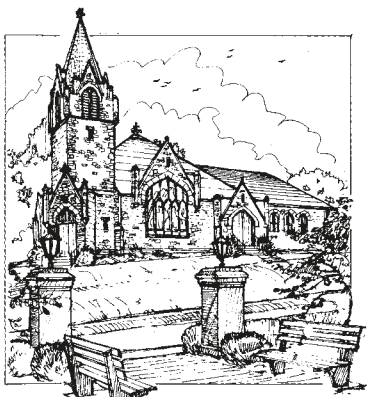
New Street United Methodist
Church & New Streets
Dee-Ann Dixon, Pastor
Telephone: (304) 876-2362
Sunday Worship: 10:00 a.m.
Sunday School: 10:00 a.m.
Youth Faith Class: 10:00 a.m.
nsumc@frontiernet.net
www.newstreetumc.com



St. Agnes Catholic Parish
106 South Duke Street
Father Mathew Rowgh
Telephone: (304) 876-6436
Sunday Eucharist: 8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
Saturday Eucharist: 5:30 p.m.
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.
www.StAgnesShepherdstown.org



St. John's Baptist
West German Street
Rev. Cornell Herbert, Pastor-Elect
Telephone: (304) 876-3856
Sunday Worship: 11:00 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.
Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.



St. Peter's Lutheran
King & High Streets
Karen Erskine-Valentine, Vacancy Pastor
Telephone: (304) 876-6771
Sunday Worship: 11:00 a.m.
Children/Adult Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.
(located in grey house adjacent church)
www.Shepherdstownlutheranparish.org

Shepherdstown Presbyterian
100 W. Washington Street
Randall W. Tremba, Pastor
Telephone: (304) 876-6466
Sunday Worship: 8:15 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.
Sunday School: 10:45 a.m.
Nursery year-round
www.shepherdstownpresbyterian.org

Trinity Episcopal
Corner of Church & German Streets
The Rev. G. T. Schramm, Rector
The Rev. Frank Coe, Priest Associate
Telephone: (304) 876-6990
Sunday Worship: 8:00 a.m. & 10:00 a.m.
Sunday School: 10:00 a.m.
www.trinityshepherdstown.org

St. James' Lutheran Church, Uvilla
Rt. 230 Uvilla
Karen Erskine-Valentine, Vacancy Pastor
Telephone: (304) 876-6771
Sunday Worship: 9:00 a.m.
Children's Sunday School 1st Sunday of month

GOOD NEWS PAPER RADIO HOUR!

Second Saturdays at 11:00 a.m. | Shepherd University Radio
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The basic format of the show is to have a conversation with interesting people in this area who do good things. If you know someone who you think fits this description, send the suggestion to: mzaudiology@yahoo.com.

For guests and topics, go to
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