SUMMER 2005

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Cover Artist

Our cover artist for 2005 is Ellen Burgoyne. Ellen Burgoyne loves to see people smile. She reaches out to quell sadness through her art, and hopes that she can provide moments of quiet pleasure sparkling with fantasy and mystery. Burgoyne cites Robert Frost's little poem "The Secret Sits" as especially inspirational for her:

We dance round in a ring and suppose, But the Secret sits in the middle and knows.

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In Life and Death
Awakening to Love

By Randall Tremba

When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping, and those who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus began to weep.
— John 11:32

* * *

My brother Jerry died April 4 at age 65. After the tears there was time to ponder life and death. The heart, it seems, goes further than the mind.

In February, tests had revealed fourth-stage liver cancer. Inoperable. Untreatable. Even though he was a teetotaler all his life, his liver was riddled with cancer. Other things took their toll.

The liver is an awesome organ. It filters toxins from the blood and transforms many otherwise harmful substances into useful ones. It works quietly and diligently on our behalf day and night. It never sleeps or slumbers. But it can't work forever.

Like everything else in our body and in this world, the liver has a limit. Its main function is conversion; conversion of bad stuff into good stuff. Or, we might say, transformation.

The liver. What a piece of work!

Oh, the things we take for granted until they're nearly gone!

We could spend a year praising human physiology — lungs, heart, eyes, knees, pituitary gland, autonomic nervous system, and on and on — and never exhaust the subject. And to think we are but one species in this stupendous web of life, five billion years in the making.

As far as we can tell, everything has always been around in one form or another. Nobody or nothing is going too far away for too long. Or we can put it this way: *in life and in death we belong to God*.

We belong to God and not merely to ourselves. We don't need the Bible or creeds to tell us that. We can see it for ourselves if we just look around and pay attention. We don't possess our lives; we live our lives as gifts — or should, as long as we have breath.

And just where did that come from? According to the mythic story in Genesis, God fashioned humankind from the humus, from soil. Then God "breathed" into our nostrils and we became *inspirited*. We carry God's breath in our lungs.

In life and in death we belong to the Spirit. We belong to God not *as slaves belong to masters*, but *as children belong to a family*. We have a home not of our own making.

In life and in death we belong to the earth. From the earth we have come; to the earth we shall return. We belong to the earth, which itself belongs to God. Ecology and theology belong together.

According to a certain gospel story, Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, was dying and *Jesus did nothing to prevent it*. There are many ways to read that gospel and many insights to be found. It's thick with possibilities. But there's just one I want to emphasize.

"Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep," said Jesus, "but I am going there to awaken him." The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right." Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead."

Jesus did not keep Lazarus from dying. He called death a "sleeping," as if to say we shall awaken from death someday, somehow.

Awaken to what? Awaken to whom?

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

Death, it seems, is full of possibilities.

If Jesus is "the Resurrection and the Life," my guess is that our awakening is always to Love in one form or another.

I've seen a few clues.

A few months ago, I spent some time with a young man whose intended bride had been killed in an auto accident two months before their wedding date. He wept when he spoke of her. We sat in silence. (What else can you do?) And then he spoke of the expansive and engulfing love he had received from family and friends in the wake of her death. And he wept again. We sat in silence for a long while.

Where does such love come from? What awakens it? It happens time and time again — after sudden deaths and during slow ones.

What shall we make of such a thing, this revelation of love *unknown* until death brings it to life? I'm not exactly sure what it means. But I have seen death *unbind* love in a way that nothing else can. I saw it the Sunday before Easter this year. That evening, my brother's long-estranged daughter reached out to him in the nick of time.

I don't mean to rationalize death or the unspeakable pain that comes with it. Death is not a riddle to solve. It's a mystery to fear — to fear with reverence and hope. In our living and in our dying we belong to God. We belong to love.

Kids Page

This Kids Page offering features a meditative piece inspired by an exchange of information between generations. The young author compares what she learns about another person's life many decades in the past with how she lives in the present — and contemplates what her life may mean for those in the future.

The Secrets in My House

By Eliza Wallace

Photos by Karene Motivans

John Schley examines part of a tin train set that he had as a boy while the author, Eliza Wallace, looks on.

The basement in my house is spooky, dark, cobwebby, and cold. But there is a secret there, a special secret that comforts me. It's in the very floor of our basement. A footprint in the concrete, a child's foot with her name carved underneath it. Mary. Mary Stockton Schley. She grew up in my house long before I was born with her younger brothers and sisters. They knew my house when it was young and the gardens were full of hollyhocks and iris. I know my house as an old man, over one hundred years old, full of fireplaces and secret cupboards. The Schleys' world was very different from mine, but we share the same special secrets that belong to this house.

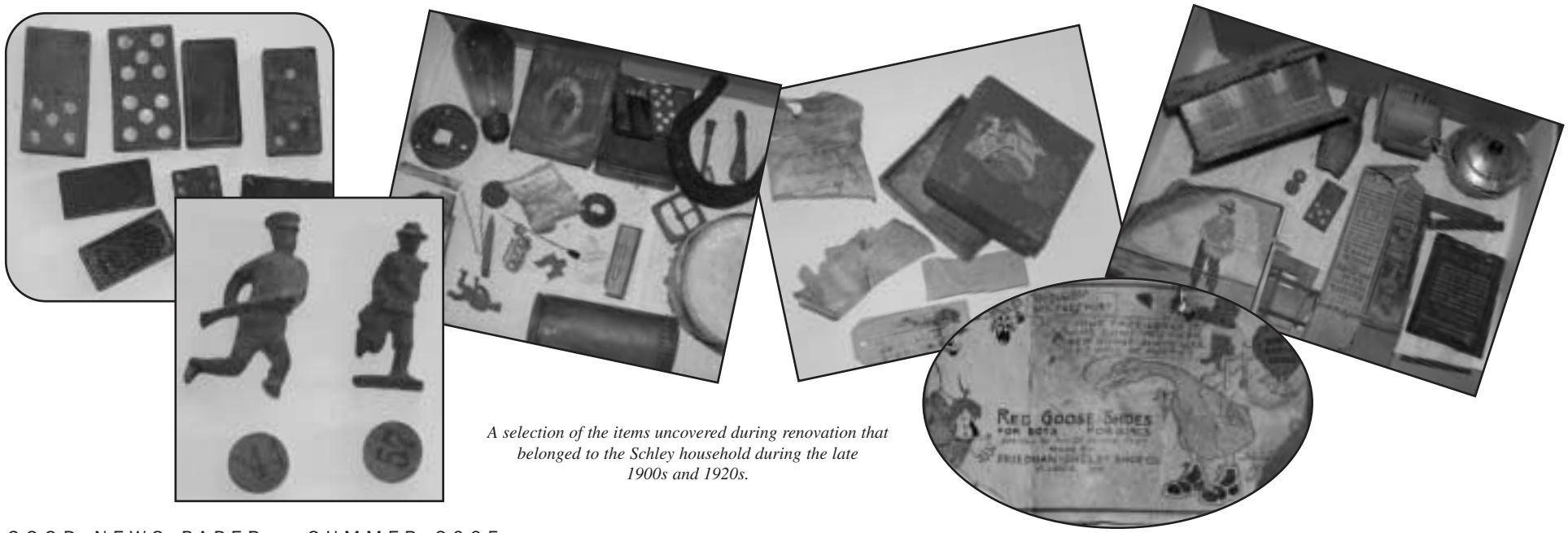
Mary Stockton, Ben, Becky and John were the four Schley children. Mary was eldest and John was the youngest. John — now Captain John Schley — is the only living sibling, and he often comes to visit his old house. My parents are renovating it, and on the weekends, they sometimes tear into a wall or a floorboard and find artifacts from the Schley family. We know that Mrs. Schley subscribed to the Ladies Home Journal in 1921 and that Mr. Schley, not knowing what to do with his extra life insurance calendars, used them to insulate a wall. My parents have carefully lined up the medicine bottles, tins, and even a cannonball on a table so we can examine these hints to the past.

We show Captain Schley all the artifacts, and he dredges up memories of his childhood in the 1920s for us. One item we found was an old box, and written on it in red was "Red Goose Shoes for boys for girls . . . they are half the fun of having feet." Captain Schley examines it, smiling. "Uncle Pinkney used to sell these shoes in his grocery store where the Shepherdstown Bakery is now," he explains. He also sees a tiny Christmas tag that says, "To Mother, From Becky," and tells me that Becky was his favorite in the family. I show him a little box with handwritten tags piled in it. Each tag is numbered, and on each one is written, "Reckless driving." Could these have been citations from his mother? Captain Schley thinks about it; "I don't think these were meant for me."

We show him lead soldiers, and he remembers how he played with them on summer days on the back porch. Captain Schley holds one up and tells me, "This one is a Confederate for sure." We show him a building and some bent tracks from a tin train set, and he thinks he remembers it. Then he tells me about taking Red Cross swimming lessons in the river and going canoeing and playing cowboys and Indians in the yard. I find that I can relate to his wild summers with his brother and sisters, going canoeing and kayaking on the Potomac, swimming, and playing perhaps not cowboys and Indians but certainly princesses and unicorns. I used to play on the back porch just like he did. My sister and I store our games in the same wooden bench that he did. My sister writes crazy notes in her spelling book just like Mary Stockton wrote in hers, which we found behind a baseboard.

I love having secrets in my house to discover and like to think that some day, long into the future, someone may find my old toys that have sprinkled their way down into the walls from the wobbly boxes up in the attic.

***Eliza Wallace**, age 12 and a student at Shepherdstown Middle School, lives on High Street with her family and wants to become a writer someday.*



A selection of the items uncovered during renovation that belonged to the Schley household during the late 1900s and 1920s.

Hoppy Kercheval

By Jim Laise

Photo supplied by Hoppy Kercheval

This story continues the series on Jefferson High School (JHS) alumni who have succeeded in their jobs and careers. JHS, a consolidation of Charles Town, Harpers Ferry and Shepherdstown high schools, opened in 1973.

Hoppy Kercheval is all West Virginia all the time, which makes his morning drive-time radio show on Martinsburg's 1340, the state's most popular.

"He is an Eastern Panhandle guy and he's always been an Eastern Panhandle guy," said Dale Miller, Kercheval's boss for almost 30 years at the West Virginia Radio Corp. "At the same time, he's a state native who knows 'You can do better, we can do better.' And he makes no excuses. He's protective of his home turf, but not afraid to challenge those in the state who are not pulling their weight."

From his early days as a 14-year-old doing weather for Charles Town radio station WXVA, Kercheval, 50, has been talking about West Virginians with West Virginians for more than 35 years. Today, he's "kingmaker": West Virginia Radio Corp. owns some 15 radio stations, and its subsidiary, WVMetroNews, syndicates Kercheval's "Talkline" to some 60 stations statewide. Yet this Jefferson County native and longtime Morgantown resident never forgot where he came from, nor does he make excuses for it.

"The show is based on how I was raised," Kercheval said from WAJR studios in the University City of his call-in/news program. "My parents . . . are very decent people to their neighbors and to strangers; the fruit doesn't fall far from the tree."

The name Kercheval has been synonymous with the Shenandoah Valley for centuries. Samuel Kercheval wrote "A History of the Valley of Virginia" generations ago. Hoppy's retired farming father, Harvey, learned his skills in storytelling here. His mom, Pat, has used her communication skills in countless Jefferson County civic activities.

"I feel like I'm a West Virginian through and through. I don't think of West Virginia necessarily as a state as much as it's a small town. Either you know someone or know somebody who knows them," Kercheval said.

Every workday at 10 a.m., Kercheval sits down with the state's powerbrokers, politicians, business leaders, industry dynamos or labor chiefs and just talks folks. The best part of the show is the callers, who come from all over the state — and now the nation, online.

Kercheval "doesn't browbeat you," said Miller, who first knew Kercheval when he became WAJR news director in 1976. "He will ask you the tough questions . . . The person answering the question might try to avoid it . . . he's got a high respect for his listeners. He knows that everybody just got the fact that the guy tried to sidestep the issue. He has ultimate respect for the listeners at home . . . he's one of them."

Kercheval is a Summit Point native. His family owned the farm that became Summit Point Speedway. They moved to Charles Town, where he and his brother attended Charles Town Middle School and Charles Town High School. Kercheval's was the first class (1973) to graduate from Jefferson High School.

In his early teens, Kercheval met Steve Cooper of WXVA, "who allowed me to come down, hang out, maybe read the weather, although I was terrible at it. My voice hadn't changed yet, and I sounded like a child." Kercheval sequestered himself in the station and honed his presentation skills. He brings the same ethic to his current job; he reads state codebooks at night to research the next day's show.

Eventually, WXVA owner John Luce hired Kercheval, a Shepherd College freshman, to produce Sunday morning religious programming, and finally to host the 4 to 10 p.m. country music slot. He also volunteered at Shepherd University student-run WSHC.

Kercheval transferred to WVU to study journalism, graduating with honors three years later. For the student-run Daily Athenaeum, he wrote "Hopalong U," a Hunter Thompsonesque weekly column. But his heart was set on radio. His senior year he worked for WAJR, and he teamed up with Miller, who became operations manager in 1977.

WAJR was owned by West Virginia Radio Corp., and Miller and Kercheval started MetroNews in 1985. MetroNews distributes Kercheval's shows to stations like WEPM, and also employs nine full-time reporters out of Morganttown and Charleston.

Leaving the state has rarely passed through Kercheval's well-read mind. "Hoppy could do anything he wants to," said Miller. "He could be anchoring weekends for one of the networks on TV. We're fortunate to keep him. If it makes sense for us to syndicate (nationally), we would. But the show is about this state. He has the compassion, distrust and curiosity to make it work in West Virginia."

Kercheval became embroiled in the McGraw reelection race last fall because it was so close to him. A longtime colleague of the former West Virginia Supreme Court justice, Kercheval gave McGraw carte blanche because he always had something to say and they made good radio partners. It bothered Kercheval that one of the groups that fought McGraw was funded by coal people. He wasn't afraid to call them on it.

McGraw, a populist from southern West Virginia, never feared going after the state's big coal operators on behalf of the little man. He saw Kercheval as a hardline conservative, however, because his corporation, West Virginia Radio Corp., is run by the Raese family of Morgantown. They're on the owners' end of the mineral industry and heavily involved in Republican causes.

At one point, Kercheval's show ran anti-McGraw campaign commercials, one right as Kercheval interviewed McGraw on air. "Justice McGraw was furious because he thought I had set him up; sandbagged him . . . but he hung in there. Off the air I tried to assure him that politicians of all stripes were airing paid spots throughout the day. This one just came up at an inopportune time."

"I liken him to Tim Russert," said Miller. Russert moderates NBC's "Meet the Press." "He never ambushes [the interviewee], but he will bring your own quotes out and say, 'Now you said here that you believed in such and such. How do you explain that?'"

"Talkline's" popular "Steam Release" segment airs at 11:30 a.m. Fridays. "Part of that is to let them take shots at me," Kercheval said. "Why not? I've talked all week to them. It's not fair for me to be a pontificator, and never ask for a response."

Kercheval and his wife, Karin, will see their son, Ben, graduate from high school this month. "I turned 50 on February 28, and at this stage of my career, with the creative freedom they have allowed me, I can't think of a better situation. I wouldn't want to be at the national networks . . . I never want to leave."

You can be sure he'll keep angering WVU and Marshall, Democrats and Republicans, big industry and unions, because each thinks he's for the other guy. Across the mighty Mountain State, men and women, Ph.D.s and blue collars, young and old, feel like they're drawing up a chair in the kitchen, pouring a cup of coffee, and just talking with an old friend. Which, in effect, Hoppy is.

* * *

Jim Laise *has been writing for most of his life since he could find nothing else to do. While his background is sports, he has worked the news side for several dailies, taking down writing honors from the Associated Press Managing Editors, Quill & Scroll and others.*

Mary Valentine

Sacred Art as Windows to Heaven

By Nan Broadhurst

Mary Valentine

Mary Valentine's passion is to give people an opportunity to connect to the creativity (sometimes lying dormant) in all of us, and to allow this force to manifest as an expression of our own sacredness. She has witnessed how sacred art impacts artists' lives and the lives of those around them. The processes become a spiritual practice of prayer, and thus it is the discipline of mindfully performing each step that allows us to learn and absorb the benefits. There is a profound peace that results when our creativity and spirituality meet, and this peace leads to a deeper understanding and a better grasp of life.

Sacred art can take many forms and be expressed in any medium. Mary coordinates several intensive one-week Spiritual Expressions Workshops (*"e" expressions*) once a year, which offer a variety of techniques for all skill levels. She brings in master teachers to the Priestfield Pastoral Center, and each class participant leaves with a finished work of art done in the old master techniques. Classes include Early Christian Icon Writing, Eastern European Egg Painting (Pyzansky), Manuscript Illumination and Gilding, Gregorian Chant, Fresco, Stained Glass and Painting on Glass, and Woodcarving in Relief. Mary also teaches a one-day workshop called "Creativity and Spirituality: A Work in Progress" held the last Saturday in August. It is a lecture with hands-on experience, where the participants explore their creativity and connect it to their spiritual life.

Mary describes herself as a city person, having lived most of her life in Baltimore. But she is slowly becoming fond of rural living in her house perched on a hill overlooking the river. Mary's husband, Joe, and son, Dominic, who lives next door, built their house six years ago. The house is remarkable, since it rests on two enormous steel beams that support the house over a ravine — the spot with the best view. Mary describes the house construction as a Project of Confidence.

Mary ran an assisted living home for the elderly in Baltimore for 12 years, but she always wanted to be a visual artist. To this end, she studied in the evenings at the Maryland Institute of Art, and was attracted to many different mediums. However, to learn egg tempera she needed to look elsewhere, so she took a two-week intensive class in creating icons from Vladislov Andreyev, a Russian iconographer who owns and runs the Prosopon School of Iconology in upstate New York. She was hooked. That class sparked an intense interest in sacred art, and in 1998 she co-founded The St. Michael's Institute of Sacred Art on Enders Island, Mystic, Connecticut with Sister Jeannette Serra. Mary spent three years starting up the school, obtaining the needed regional approvals, and developing the curriculum. Subsequently, she directed St. Michael's for three years, all the while commuting from Baltimore by train.

Mary retired from both the assisted living business and St. Michael's Institute when she moved to Shepherdstown. Her interest in sacred art persisted, and it pushed her to offer classes in West Virginia. She is a perpetual student, having taken a couple of classes at Shepherd University and also attending most of the classes that she brings to Priestfield. Her home is full of examples of her own icons, stained glass, woodcarving, frescoes, and paintings.

The process of writing an icon is a complex and fascinating one. It is called "writing" instead of "painting" because it is considered to be depicting the Word of God in image — making the Word visible. An icon is compared to a carefully constructed poem. All of the images used originate in the Eastern Orthodoxy rite's divine liturgy, and the aim of producing an icon is to reveal and venerate what is holy.

Every detail of an icon from the preparation of the wood, to the images, materials, and colors has a liturgical significance. Only the highest quality materials are used, to reflect the respect and importance of the eternal ideas and people depicted in the images. Non-resinous wood panels (symbolizing the tree of life and knowledge) are carefully prepared by routing out an internal (heaven) and external (earth) plane, covering with heated animal glue and linen, and many layers of gesso. Each of these time-consuming steps has levels of symbolic meaning.

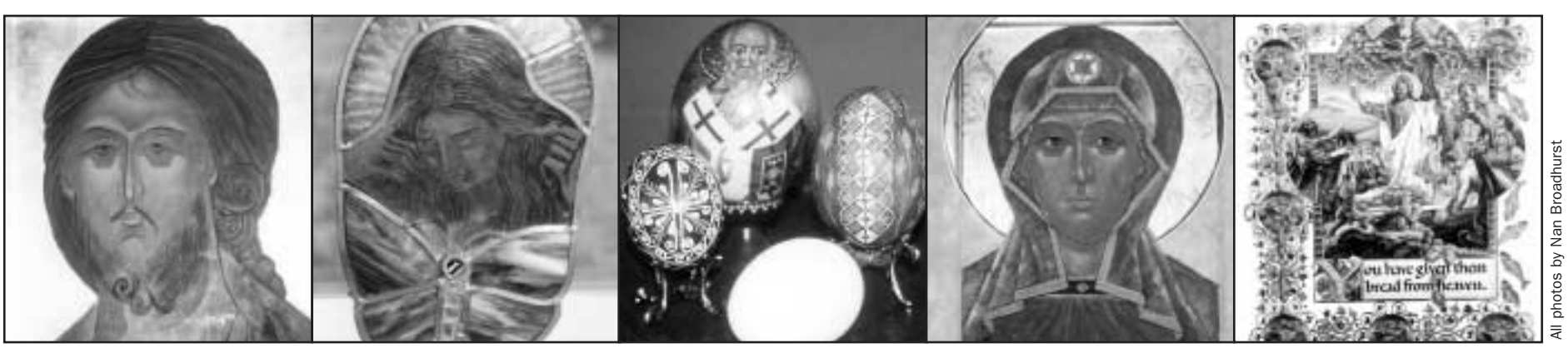
The artist is also bound in the composition, drawing, and colors by the meaning of the images. The image is traced from traditional sources from a particular school or region. Mary follows the Russian traditions for the icons in her classes. Each tradition has its particular colors and technical applications. The first step after the image is transferred to the prepared panel is the application of gold leaf (heaven). Red clay (Adam, earth) is mixed with glue and refined as a paste, and applied to certain areas as a bed for the gold. Small areas are warmed with the breath (created life) to receive the fragile leaves of gold. Then the painting begins with thin layers of egg tempera, made from the yolk of an egg mixed with natural pigments derived from plants, minerals and the earth. After several months, the final step of writing an icon can be completed. It is called the Olifa, which is the application of a warm linseed oil mixture, which penetrates all the layers making them translucent and unified. This last step is considered to be a blessing and baptism of the image. If all the steps are completed correctly, the icon is considered to be a liturgical object, not to be hung as a picture, but used as an object of prayer and veneration.

Manuscript illumination is a technique from the Middle Ages, applying luminous pigments made from gold and ground jewels and calligraphic penwork to depict biblical scenes on parchment. It also includes the rare art of gilding on paper. Creating these manuscripts is also considered to be a form of devotional practice. Eastern European Egg Painting (Pyzansky) is a technique from the Ukraine, using the pure white surface of a blown egg as a canvas for traditional and elaborate miniatures, using methods of wax resist (batik) and cold water dyes. The egg is poetically referred to as the "icon of the universe."

Future *"e" expressions* workshop dates are: Manuscript Illumination, June 25–July 1, 2005; Creativity and Spirituality, August 27, 2005; Gregorian Chant, Jan. 27–29, 2006 and Sept. 1–3, 2006; Woodcarving, Jan. 13–19, 2006; Eastern European Egg Painting, March 17–19, 2006. For workshop information or registration, contact Priestfield Pastoral Center at (304) 725-1435. Mary Valentine is also available for Sacred Art presentations, and can be reached at (304) 876-3843.

* * *

***Nan Broadhurst** is a graphic designer and artist living in Shepherdstown, and learning to be grateful for all life's lessons.*



All photos by Nan Broadhurst

Icon: Savior of Zvenigord (Peacemaker) *Stained Glass: Rebirth* *Eastern European Eggs* *Icon: Rachel (from Old Testament)* *New Testament Illuminated Manuscript*

Meeting Farzad Mahootian

By Thomas Harding

Photos by Thomas Harding

Question: *What do you get if you cross a NASA educator, a Shepherd University fund-raiser and an Iranian philosopher?* ***Answer****: Farzad Mahootian.*

Last week I was out of town in Pittsburgh. I was becoming an American Citizen after more than ten years of trying. We stood up one by one as the immigration officer, called out our names along with our country of origin: "Ukraine, Mexico, Russia, Poland, Pakistan…" and then finally my country, "United Kingdom." For many of those in the room, this day really did mean new-found liberty and freedoms. We raised our right hands and swore allegiance as one. The officer pushed a videotape into the player and President Bush appeared on the television screen. He welcomed us and congratulated us on our new citizenship. Even though the immigration officer has seen this hundreds of times, she wiped a tear away from her eye.

When I returned home I saw that I had an e-mail from the editor of the GOOD NEWS PAPER. I'm late again with my article; they need a profile "like yesterday!" I call my friend Farzad and ask him if he would be interested. "Sure," he said, "Anything to help a fellow American!"

When I put the phone down I decide to Google "Farzad." Here is what I found: Farzad has a doctorate in philosophy from Fordham University and a master's in chemistry from Georgetown. He has worked for NASA and for the University of Alaska as an environmental educator. He currently raises funds for Shepherd University and sits on the boards of the American Conservation Film Festival and Shepherd University Friends of Music. For good measure, he sits on an advisory board for the United States Antarctica Program.

Two days later, I'm sipping Turkish coffee at Shepherdstown's Middle Eastern oasis, Shaharazade's. Opposite me, Farzad — short, crazy, grey Einstein hair, huge smile, shining Robin Williams eyes — is telling me that he grew up in Iran but at age fifteen moved to the United States. His father was president of one of the country's top schools, the Free University in Tehran. His parents moved to America shortly after the revolution. "Do you feel more Iranian or American?" I ask him.

"It's a tough one," he says. "I don't feel either or both. Socially I feel American. I love the freedoms we have. It is very easy to live here, it is very comfortable, there is no day-to-day living anxiety. But emotionally I am lost somewhere in between. I've never really *arrived* anywhere I've been, and I've been to some lovely places — Alaska, Boston, California, and now Shepherdstown. It is like being a chameleon: you adapt to your environment."

"Would you go back to Iran?" I ask. "Only to visit," he says. "Since the revolution things would be hard for my wife and kids. It is still very conservative there." Farzad has lived in the United States far longer than I have. And yet, he tells me, he still goes to the local supermarket and feels disoriented. "It just isn't how food should be sold. You can't smell it. It's dead. Dead food. I like to buy food from a market where my nose decides. It just doesn't feel right to me." He has lived in this country for over forty years. I guess come year 2045, I will probably be complaining about not getting milk in my tea and my beer being too cold.

I ask him how he came to Shepherdstown. "We were living in Boston and not very happy with the place. We were looking for something smaller, somewhere with a sense of community; a good place for our three kids to grow up. I heard about Shepherdstown, and came for a look-see. It was great — full of people who really enjoy living here. It is so rare to find that these days. Most people are always saying they want to live somewhere else. I loved the parades where they celebrate life and have a great time. And I love the Farmers' Market in Shepherdstown."

Farzad takes a nibble of his golden honeyed baklava and moves onto to his pet project, "Nexus of Science and Spirit," a series of lectures he is hosting at the University over the next three years. He is now in full professor mode. "You know, the word 'religion' comes from the Latin, *religio*, which means tying back, binding together, or reconnecting, to the Source, God, Spirit." He raises his eyebrow, "You know religion is all about a quest, finding the path, the way."

And what about his quest? Does he have one? "My quest is to understand nature. When I was a child, I wanted to invent something, something that would change people's lives for the better. Something small, but with a big impact. Like the transistor. This became my dominant myth. As I got older this became more about ideas."

"For my doctoral thesis, my big idea was that every society has a different grasp on the world, and from this comes their technology, art and their sense of value." I'm totally entranced, my tiny coffee cup hovering in front of me, waiting for him to finish, transfixed by his honey-dipped ideas and dilated eyes.

"And guess what? This is exactly what happens. Look how medical science is different in China with acupuncture and herbal medicines. The reason American culture is so dominant is that it is the flower of a 400-year-old European synthesis of science, technology, and banking. America holds the economic power right now. But if we have learned anything from history and science it is that nature is multivalent, it is responsive to our ideas, it can be different than what we think it is, and what we have made of it. I mean really different . . . ."

I can tell he is getting excited, his eyes are now darting back and forth, his arms as animated as the "Lost in Space" robot. "Things will change, and then suddenly someone will grasp parts of the world we never suspected could exist, and the science that we hold as self-evident will become 'just another belief system' that seemed so right in its heyday!"

Wow. No wonder our politicians want to keep hold of their economic power for as long as possible. No wonder they worry about China becoming an economic superpower. It's not only jobs at stake, according to Farzad's theory, it's the entire American sense of reality. I make a note to go to the next lecture that Farzad is going to present at the University. I also make a note to invest in some security stocks.

We finish our coffees and sweets. As we are leaving I ask Farzad about his name. "Oh," he says smiling, "Farzad means 'radiance-born' in Persian and Mahootian means 'wool merchant' or 'wool gatherer.' I guess that makes me a radiant wool gatherer in the town of Shepherds!" He guffaws and I join him.

As I walk down German Street I think to myself, I *am* proud to be an American, with its melting pot of people and customs. And I'm proud to live in Shepherdstown as an American, full of exciting and diverse people like Farzad Mahootian and his brilliant flock of jokes and ideas.

To find out more about the Nexus series of lectures, visit www.shepherd.edu or e-mail fmahooti@shepherd.edu

* * *

Thomas Harding *has had a portfolio career including environmental activism, television production and most recently real estate sales with Greg Didden Associates. He lives in Shepherdstown with his wife and two children.*

Anne Murphy, Unity Minister

Unity: Seeing the good in all religions; helping people find Christ in themselves

By The Shepherdstown Unity Board

Just recently ordained a minister of the Unity faith and just recently named the pastor of Unity of Shepherdstown, Anne Murphy is the newest minister in town. She is the group's first ordained spiritual leader. A graduate of Unity Institute, her call to ministry came after a 30-year career in hospital and hospice nursing. As pointed out in the May–June 2005 issue of the AARP Magazine, Murphy is among the growing number of men and women coming to the ministry at midlife, often following years of successful business and professional careers.

Murphy is the mother of four grown children — two girls and two boys — and a three-year-old Tibetan terrier, Matty, who suffers from severe separation anxiety. Murphy has ten grandchildren.

This pixie-like, fun-loving blonde grew up in Oak Park, Ill., the hometown of novelist Ernest Hemingway. She graduated from the College of DuPage (the country's largest community college) in Glen Ellyn, Ill., received her B.S. from the College of St. Francis in Joliet, Ill., and lived and worked in LaGrange, a suburb of Chicago.

Raised and educated in a traditional Christian faith, Murphy began searching for answers to a number of personal issues — among them her divorce and a bout with cancer. She says she found answers in Unity.

That, in a nutshell, is Anne Murphy. But what is Unity?

"Unity is positive, practical Christianity," says Murphy. "We emphasize spirituality more than religion." She lists the five basic Unity principles:

1. God is all good and active in everything, everywhere.

2. I am naturally good because God's Divinity is in me and in everyone.

3. I create my experiences by what I choose to think and what I feel and believe.

4. Through affirmative prayer and meditation, I connect with God and bring out the good in my life.

5. I do and give my best by living the Truth I know. I make a difference!

"Unity teaches the practical application in everyday life of the principles of Truth taught and exemplified by Jesus Christ," says Murphy. "We believe that all people are created with sacred worth. Unity is a way of life that leads to health, prosperity, happiness and peace of mind. We believe there are many paths to God."

Charles and Myrtle Fillmore founded the Unity School of Christianity in the late 1800s. Unity grew out of teachings based on the conviction that God is readily accessible to all people at all times.

"No matter what an individual's personal circumstances are," says Murphy, "he or she can communicate with God directly and receive guidance from that personal connection." She explained that Unity was originally conceived not as a separate religion or denomination in the traditional sense but as an adjunct to existing religions using spiritual principles developed by Unity's founders. People were expected to apply those principles to their current life situations. Hence, Unity is often spoken of as "a way of life," as well as a religious movement. This basic philosophy has shaped the approach of Unity School of Christianity to this day.

Unity School publishes books, magazines, pamphlets and other materials that are distributed throughout the world to whomever wants them, regardless of faith. Unity's prayer ministry, Silent Unity, responds to calls and letters requesting prayers and never asks about the seeker's religious beliefs.

"Unity does not ask anyone to become a member and exacts no dues from its supporters," says Murphy. "Unity School is committed to serving the spiritual needs of all people who contact us, regardless of their other religious affiliations."

Today Unity churches exist throughout the United States and in many other countries, enough so that Unity currently fits the definition of a denomination. In the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico, Unity churches are served by the Association of Unity Churches. In other countries, they are served by Unity School.

Unity of Shepherdstown was organized as a study group affiliated with Unity Christ Church in Gaithersburg, Md. in 1997. The group was organized and developed through the efforts of Diana and Bill Eldridge, longtime students of Unity. When they moved to Shepherdstown from the Washington, D.C. area, says Murphy, they envisioned a Unity Church in their new hometown. Bill had been a leader in Unity and Diana was taking classes to complete her credentialing as a licensed Unity teacher. Initially they advertised in local newspapers and began meeting on Sundays at various locations around Shepherdstown. Unity met for several years at New Street Methodist Church. Later, the group moved to the Shepherdstown Train Station.

The group frequently had guest speakers, Unity ministers from the area as well as leaders from many of the major traditional faiths. Diana Eldridge was the first spiritual leader for Unity of Shepherdstown until her husband Bill experienced a serious health challenge and died in 2002. In 2003, Edna Fritz, a licensed Unity leader from Unity of Frederick, Md. assumed the role of spiritual leader.

When Fritz was accepted into the Ministerial Education program at Unity, the group decided it was time to recruit a permanent minister. They conducted a search and hired Anne Murphy as their first ordained minister in July of 2004. Murphy began her service as pastor in October of 2004.

The congregation, says Murphy, is most proud of thriving and growing against what seemed like insurmountable odds. The stress of dealing with a serious health challenge depleted the energy of Diana and Bill, however, other members stepped forward to assist with leadership.

The group is known in the area for its Circulation Days, a garage sale in which items are given away. Unity's prosperity consciousness promotes giving away useable but no longer needed items.

"It is an event that celebrates giving and receiving, and affirms there is no lack when we share," says Murphy. "Unity believes we are all members of one human family and sharing from our abundance is the most loving thing we can do for our brothers and sisters. As we give, we also receive an abundance of loving rewards." Unity of Shepherdstown will have a Circulation Day June 25 starting at 9 a.m. on Route 45 in front of Maddex offices.

This year Unity of Shepherdstown celebrated 64 Days of Peace for the Season of Nonviolence or SNV. It is a grassroots organization started by the grandchildren of Gandhi. It starts on January 30, the anniversary of the assassination of Gandhi and ends on April 4, the anniversary of Martin Luther King's assassination. For 64 days, Unity of Shepherdstown sent out messages to promote peace and nonviolence on its Yahoo site and each Sunday lesson taught aspects of peace and nonviolence. The ending celebration was held on April 3 as an interfaith service with prayer or participation from many other faiths including Jewish, Baha'i, Native American, Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim.

Photo by Al Henderson

Anne Murphy

Shepherdstown Unity's Sunday morning services are held at 11 a.m. at the Shepherdstown Train Station, between German and High streets. Membership is perhaps no larger than 40 or 50 congregants, some of whom, Murphy says, are "most generous" in their giving. The group is now working on creating bylaws and other vehicles necessary to receive full church status with the Association of Unity Churches. Unity of Shepherdstown is affiliated with the Association as an expansion ministry.

* * *

This article was written with the assistance of the GNP editorial staff.

Studio 105
Where Good Designs Flourish

By Hunter Barrat

Tom Conant, creative director of marketing and communications company Studio 105, recalls what Randy Tremba said at the office's opening in the summer of 1997: "You know, the life expectancy of new businesses in Shepherdstown is three years."

"We proved him wrong!" Conant gloats.

With partner Jared Scheerer, Studio 105's senior designer, Conant helms a team that totals six and specializes in print media, electronic media, and Web design. They work in the barn-red building at 105 Princess Street ("this way I can always remember both our name and our address," says Conant), the walls decorated with colorful samples of designs they've created for clients — logos, labels, ads, playbills, brochures. Also on view in various nooks and corners is their own art work — photographs, prints, drawings — as well as pieces they've created for the heck of it — fake magazine covers featuring their friends or coworkers, several years' worth of firm Christmas cards that incorporate their unofficial holiday trademark, a reindeer springing from the digits in their name. The results convey a sense of professionalism mixed with whimsy. These folks work hard, but they know how to have a good time.

Studio 105 does not court the town's retailers who just want a small job done, business card layout or logo design, for example, though Scheerer did create images for the Old Pharmacy Café and Dickinson and Wait. "That type of job doesn't fit our profile," explains Conant. "We are not a 'graphics to go'–type operation. We mainly work with small businesses in the $5- to $10-million range that have an ongoing need for marketing and creative services on a monthly basis. We create their advertising and promotions; design, set up, and maintain their Web sites; redesign logos or other marketing materials if a corporate-image update is necessary."

Though it's not necessarily intentional, many of their clients are local (depending on one's definition of local), such as The Woods Resort and Conference Center near Hedgesville; the Eastern Management Development Center, a federal facility on the outskirts of Shepherdstown; and Schonstedt Instrument Company, based in Kearneysville. At morning meetings, the staff goes through the client list and discusses tasks that need to be accomplished for as many as eight to 10 clients at a time. "Though it would be nice to be able to concentrate on just one or two clients, it's the nature of the business for us to juggle several," Conant says.

"And for better or worse," he continues, "we've been working with most of these companies for years. The key is to develop a level of trust and loyalty. We know these clients well, know how to anticipate their needs."

Scheerer says that they get most of their clients by word-of-mouth. "We haven't had to go out looking; people contact us and ask us to propose a plan," he explains. An example of this is a long-term job they do for the consumer products division of pharmaceutical giant Pfizer, maintaining Web sites for various over-the-counter medications and other products. "Their strategic marketing guru lives in Harpers Ferry. He saw our Web site and called us. He was looking for a company that was small enough to be 'agile'; Pfizer likes to dictate the schedule and needed a responsive company on a day-to-day, hour-to-hour basis," says Scheerer.

Adds Conant, "It's like that with a lot of our clients. It's a delicate balance, but it's become our hallmark to create high-quality work and turn it around quickly."

Studio 105 is in Shepherdstown because Conant and Scheerer live in the area, not because they plotted out Shepherdstown as a prime place to open a business. Scheerer is from Shepherdstown and graduated from Shepherd College with a bachelor of fine arts in graphic design. He began teaching design at Shepherd in 1991 and was the interim coordinator for the design program for five semesters. Conant grew up in the Washington, D.C. suburbs, and while he was in high school, he began working springs and summers with Blue Ridge Outfitters in Harpers Ferry. After he graduated from Middlebury College, in Vermont, with a B.A. in English, he moved to the area full time to be the general manager of Blue Ridge, also handling all its marketing and advertising. In the late 1980s, he founded On Site Services with longtime friend and Shepherdstown resident Bill Howard.

"Tom and I met when he needed a play poster designed for a client. He got in touch with me at Shepherd College, where I was a full-time design instructor," says Scheerer. "Shepherd College then found a full-time design instructor to take over the design program. I started working on a few other projects with Tom, and then we joined forces in 1993."

They set up shop in the James Burr House in Kearneysville and took the name Burr House Company: Encore Communications—another mnemonic moniker. "Frederick Brewing Company was our first big client," recalls Conant. "It was the heyday of microbreweries." The fruits of this relationship are apparent in the tantalizing array of beer and ale label samples that hang on Studio 105's walls. "We took it through its expansion project [when Frederick Brewing purchased Wild Goose and Brimstone] and did all its labels, packaging, advertising. In 1999, it was bought out [by Cleveland-based Snyder International Brewing Group], and we no longer worked for it. The new company ended up shutting it down."

Scheerer and Conant have been in the biz long enough to see incredible changes in graphics and computer technology. "It's a digital world now. Anything on a page is transferable to the Web, a CD, a DVD," Conant says. He and Scheerer are savvy about the latest technological trends, though he admits it can be a financial challenge to constantly upgrade their equipment and software. "It's not always necessary anyway," Scheerer says, showing just how savvy they really are. "The newest isn't always the best or doesn't always end up being the industry standard."

The GOOD NEWS PAPER has certainly benefited from Studio 105's expertise. "I have to take the blame," confesses Conant. "Randy invited me to a meeting, looking for advice on the next steps the paper needed to take to move to the digital age. The next thing I knew, I had agreed that Studio 105 would take over the production of the paper." Beginning with the winter issue of 1999, Scheerer took up the challenge, redesigning the masthead and using a desktop publishing program to lay out the pages. "Prior to that, Melinda [Schmitt] painstakingly pasted up the pages and photos by hand," he says. He figures he spent between 14 and 20 hours an issue, depending on if he had to do special graphics or photo manipulation. "Libby Howard has been integral to the process. She's the gatekeeper. She provided me with the files containing the text and images, and we would go back and forth. Nan Doss prepared the photos and then sent them to me. After I was done, we would send the files to the printer."

Photo supplied by Studio 105

Jared Scheerer

Note the past tense? Studio 105 relinquished the production privileges to a new source, HBP in Hagerstown, Md., with the summer 2005 issue. Scheerer has an extra 14 to 20 hours to kick around this month; a vacuum he has no doubt instantly filled with attention to his long list of satisfied clients.

Editor's note: *At the GOOD NEWS PAPER's 25th Anniversary Banquet last fall, the Executive Editor showered endless praise and gratitude on Tom Conant and Jared Scheerer for their five years of brilliant and gracious pro bono work on behalf of this sweet little community tabloid. They felt unworthy and consequently asked to be relieved.*

* * *

Hunter Barrat *is a freelance editor and writer who never fills her time vacuums by vacuuming.*

Poems by Ilona Popper

I Wanted You To Have Colors

for Martha Tabor

Now she was dying
they all said

I carried a vase with roses
to her bed
her blue eyes hot as white ash
in her fallen face her eyes
held mine

wow she whispered
that's over the top
and lifted her brows
clownish under the stocking cap
but now is the time
for going over the top

she took one rose
and held the flower to her nose
shut her eyes *good*
when she looked at it
I reached over to pull away dead
they smeared in my fingers

it was late in the day
when I climbed into bed with her
I thought I would rub her back
but she lay back
and I curled against her side
she put her arm around me
held me
stroking my back
like a mother smoothing
her hand sliding over and over
down my spine

I was the child
or she was the child
we were two children
put down to nap
in the afternoon
my face pressed against her ribs
her hand fingering my backbone
what a relief

you are a generous friend
I began
tears sluiced down my cheeks

we looked up through the big window
up into the sky
a rich clear blue
the ivory arms of the sycamore
reached up
chips of color in the lower bark
olive cream beige sand

look at the sky Martha I said
and the tree
those are your colors
in the tree
can you see it against the sky?

yes she said

the world is very beautiful

* * *

***Ilona Popper**'s first book of poems, "Break," was published in 2002 by The Bunny and the Crocodile Press. Her poems have appeared in The Beloit Poetry Journal, The Antietam Review, Weavings 2000: the Maryland Millennial Anthology, and other journals. Ilona has performed her poetry at The Writers Center in Bethesda, Md., in "Excavations: New Works in Language and Movement" in Washington D.C., on cable television, and on WPFW's "The Poet and the Poem." Recent work includes a poetry/dance collaboration of "Time Zone" with choreographers Therese Keegan and Lizard Walker-Keegan of Updraft.*

To order a copy of "Break: Poems by Ilona Popper" or to find out about upcoming performances, visit her Web page at http://ilonapopper.oldwillow.com

Talk of War

in front of my car in the night
a deer's trying to cross the road
its head pulling out then in
like a girl trying to time her jump
into the swinging rope
pale animal form swaying
in the moonlight
in the car's lights

everywhere there are the bodies
of animals this afternoon
I counted ten full grown deer
lying in the same dying position
their heads lifted back on their necks
as if calling to the moon
the sun
lying on the road

the animals
moving in a line creating dust in the
field
as a man walks behind them at dusk
herding them to the barn

dust rises
and it could be anything
the fallout from the first bombs
it could be chemicals
dropped from the sky
it could be fire
from a missile

it could be fire
there in the desert
where a shepherd
walks behind a
line of animals
docile plodding over

the earth at dusk
plumes smoking up behind their hooves
it could be simple
it could be dust

"Talk of War" first appeared on the Voices Against the War web site at www.voicesinwartime.org

Photo by Lars Wigren

ANNOUNCING

Softz Voce Poetry Festival

IN **SHEPHERDSTOWN** WV

October 14 and 15, 2005

Readings from Gerald Stern,
Winner of the National Book Award
for Poetry in 1998 and Rob Carney,
Winner of the 2005 Frank Cat Press
Annual Chapbook Competition.

Writers are invited to submit 1-3 poems.
No more than five pages total.

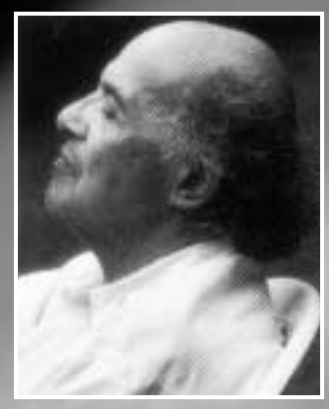
Deadline: **August 15, 2005**

Mail To:

Softz Voce Poetry Festival
P.O. Box 1690
Shepherdstown, WV 25443

Author's name, address and
telephone number and e-mail address should
appear on the cover page only.
Include a SASE for notification of selections.
Manuscripts will be not be returned.

Selected poems will be included in local readings. If chosen,
poets will be expected to participate in the festival.



Gerald Stern
This Time

Rob Carney
New Fables, Old Songs

Special thanks to the Shepherdstown Town Council and to Jefferson Security Bank, our community bank and corporate sponsor of the festival.

ARTWORKS

Chris Robinson

Join the Personal Revolution

By Nan Broadhurst

Photo by Nan Broadhurst

Chris Robinson

Coming into Chris Robinson's space is like entering a vortex of high-energy philosophical ideas and wild colors. He is an ardent proponent for his message to the world: "WAKE UP and join the Personal Revolution!" He believes freedom is doing the right thing even if no one else agrees with you, and his adrenaline level is high for protests of every ilk. His desire to reform a world gone wrong is passionate.

Robinson has spent his whole life here. He was born in Shannondale and moved across from the Mill in Shepherdstown when he was three years old. He now lives in the house on High Street that his family bought in 1987. He graduated Summa Cum Laude from Shepherd College in 2002 with a degree in sculpture and a minor in painting. He interned with Lee Badger in Hedgesville doing forging and welding, and has also learned much from Scott Cawood, a local sculptor.

In the summers, you'll find Robinson farming at Sunnyside Farm and Orchards and running Smith's Market on Rt. 340, between Charles Town and Rippon. This activity feeds his concerns about the loss of self-sustaining farms. His sculpture, The Last Barn Flower, is made of wood from the last self-sustaining farm in Jefferson County. But in winter, it's full time for his art, which he calls the most serious part of his life.

Robinson has a hunger to keep learning and growing. On Sunday nights, friends come over to share his bounty of arts paraphernalia — including a printing press, kiln, dark room, metal working equipment, stained glass supplies, airbrush tools and of course lots of paint and brushes. Robinson does it all and is deep into a self-directed, intense process to learn as much as he can so that some day he ca n do his "real" art. He envisions multi-media installations, using ceramics, glass, metal, paint, photographs, videos and anything else that gets across his point (VERY LOUDLY).

All this is in preparation for where he'd really like to be — building a town that has all the solutions to our crippled planet's problems securely in place. To this end, he is writing a book called "Saving the Village," about Shepherdstown, using Dungeons and Dragons metaphors to point out that Pogo was right — the enemy is us. Robinson believes that it is the job of artists everywhere to call attention to our culture's shortcomings in the way that captures the most attention, and to move the people to join in protest whenever it is called for.

Robinson is true to his ideals, and his shows reflect his burgeoning ideas. His graduate show was called Genetic Ascension and Other Short Cuts, pointing out the role of genetic manipulation in defining humans as worshippers or creators. A later exhibit at the Lost Dog was titled The Golden Fleece and Other Unseen Elephants, which was a collection of his current musings and prolific output. One of his ideas for a future show is images of Uncle Sam and Lady Liberty together protesting the deteriorating condition of our country. Lady Liberty's torch represents the part of America that's disappearing — "the Ideal over the Reality." Robinson also constructs slab furniture, and it is in learning this craft that he learned the true joy of hard work.

Robinson's work is evident throughout Shepherdstown. The transformation of the chairs at the Lost Dog is his work, and you may have noticed Robinson's large painting in the Blue Moon, called the Secret Garden. In case you were wondering, it represents a fertile womb giving birth to babies that don't know they can't fly because no one told them they couldn't. It is a treatise on the idea that the power of our imagination can make the world what we want it to be.

Robinson is an accomplished writer as well as a visual artist. In addition to the book mentioned above, he writes poetry and is producing an almanac with Dylan Kinnett, which will contain local stories, advice and anything that people want to submit. He describes it as a blending of Martha Stewart and Hunter S. Thompson. His inspirations are Thompson, Tom Robbins, and Richard Brautigan. He sees these three men as using words to expand our visions by removing conventional limits and restrictions. Words define and limit the world, but words can be used to reconstruct what has been broken down. Robinson contributed spirited essays to the GOOD NEWS PAPER regularly for a couple of years. He is beginning to explore the electronic world as another platform for his ideas, constructing a Web site called sinisterstudio.com.

Look for Robinson and his ideas in town. They will be everywhere . . .

After the Fall (New York City)

Justice

The Last Barn Flower

Jennifer

Landing

Black Bird

Slab Table

Rag Doll

Lullabye for George

Act 2

By Hope Maxwell Snyder

Editor's Note: *Assign parts. Read at home. Have fun.*

Last issue a macaw named George joined the Gutierrez family at their home in Rivertown. He became babysitter and cook for the family household along with Grandpa. The neighbors are unsettled by this moving talking parrot, but Lila and Miguel, Maria's children, enjoy having him around, since their mother works full time and is very busy with her job.

Artwork by Perk Hull

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Maria Gutierrez	single mother of 30, who works as a translator
Lila Gutierrez	Maria's daughter, 10 years old
Miguel Gutierrez	Maria's son, eight years old
Luis (Grandpa)	Maria's father and Lila's and Miguel's grandfather from Mexico
George	a macaw, middle-aged
Paul Thomas	Maria's boss, 37 years old
Vicki Smith	a retired neighbor
Marty Smith	Vicki's husband

ACT 2

Scene 1

George and Vicki are on Vicki's deck. He stands in front of her, muttering something; she repeats it over and over again. Lila watches for a while and then goes to talk to them.

LILA
What are you doing, George?

GEORGE
I'm hypnotizing Mrs. Vicki.

VICKI
Call me Vicki.

She continues to stare at the macaw for a few minutes before the spell is broken.

LILA
What for?

GEORGE
Freedom from smoking. She wants to quit.

LILA
Why?

GEORGE
It's bad for you, your health and your lungs.

LILA
Why do people smoke then?

GEORGE
Because people don't always do what's good for them. It's part of the human condition. They have the choice and the strength to change, though.

LILA
(To Vicki)
Can't your daughter help you? Isn't she a psychologist?

VICKI
Yes, darling, but she's busy working in the city. We tried hypnosis once. It didn't work.

LILA
George, aren't you supposed to be babysitting us?

GEORGE
I'll be right there.

MIGUEL
(Screams from the house)
George! I need help with my costume! Trick-or-treating starts in an hour.

GEORGE
Coming! Now, Vicki, remember to repeat every morning in front of the mirror, "I am free from smoke, I am free from smoke, it does not control me."

George and Lila cross the yard to their own house.

VICKI
(Yells)
Don't tell Marty I'm doing this, just in case it doesn't work.

GEORGE
No faith, no freedom; it's going to be hard for her.
(To Lila)
Now, what's this Halloween experience?

LILA
Kids get dressed in costumes and go around the neighborhood asking for candy. You get bag-loads to eat.

GEORGE
In one sitting? Sugar and chocolate? That's not good for anyone.

LILA
We can save it. Find a hiding place for it. We can't let Grandpa find it; he'll go wild, and it will make him sick.

GEORGE
Does Miguel like candy?

LILA
Not too much. He ate so much the day our father left, he was sick for three days.

GEORGE
You see? Overdoing it is the human condition. Balance is the only way.

MIGUEL
(Joins them)
Do you like candy, George?

GEORGE
I do! Chocolate is my favorite. I haven't had it in years.

MIGUEL
Don't worry. We'll share with you.

GEORGE
No bubble gum, though, it will glue my beak shut forever.

Scene 2

Later that night, George, Grandpa, Lila and Miguel sit at the kitchen table with mountains of candy in front of them. Miguel is dividing it into four piles. He's dressed as a pirate. Lila is a princess. George is keeping track of the four mounds of candy.

GEORGE
Hey, Miguel, you can't give yourself two pieces and me one! How are you doing in math?

MIGUEL
Not too good.

GEORGE
I'll help you. We'll use seeds.

GRANDPA
Just give me all the tootsie rolls. That's easier.

GEORGE
What about me? I want to try them.

LILA
They're too chewy for you, George. Besides, you got that whole piñata for best costume. It's full of candy. Are you going to share with us?

GEORGE
Perhaps.

GRANDPA
What were you supposed to be?

GEORGE
A young macaw.

Maria walks in with her briefcase and sees the candy on the table.

MARIA
What is this?

GRANDPA
Halloween candy. We got it tonight.

MIGUEL
Remember? You promised to get me a SpongeBob costume and to take us out trick-or-treating.

MARIA
I'm so sorry. I forgot. I'm working on this translation. . .

LILA
We know, mom. You're always working.

GRANDPA
No harm. We improvised. Do you like my shaman look?

MARIA
Where did you find the long hair?

GRANDPA
Lila let me borrow it.

MARIA
Oh no! Tell me you didn't let him have my hair piece!

LILA
You haven't worn it in a long time.

MARIA
And is this what we're having for dinner? Candy? Father, I thought you and George were in charge tonight.

MIGUEL
Let's order a pizza! Or Chinese.

GEORGE
Not on my night for cooking. That stuff is full of ingredients that can kill you.

MIGUEL
Really?

GEORGE
Eventually.

GRANDPA
We do all die eventually.

GEORGE
But better to die well fed. We're making a salad, frijoles and rice. I have a special recipe that takes two minutes. Children, put the candy in separate bags for all of us. Maybe my goddaughter would like a baggie?

MARIA
A small one. I'm trying to lose weight.

GRANDPA
I'll help you, George. Everyone out!

Scene 3
Maria is setting the kitchen table while George and Grandpa finish making dinner. The door bell rings twice. Lila and Miguel run into the kitchen. Maria freezes.

GRANDPA
Are we expecting company?

MARIA
I forgot. Paul is coming to dinner.

GEORGE
It's a good thing I made enough. You should never do that to the cook.

The doorbell rings again. Grandpa goes to answer it.

MIGUEL
Why is he coming to dinner? I hope he doesn't try to act really cool or something.

LILA
If he pretends he's our dad, I'll have to show him the dictionary.

GEORGE
Calm down, calm down. He's just a guy.

MIGUEL
Mom's boss.

GRANDPA *(To Maria)*
I didn't know he liked you.

GEORGE
She likes him too.

MARIA
It's none of your business. He gave me a really nice bonus, and I found out that today was his birthday and he didn't have any plans. Oh my, what is he going to think when he finds out a macaw lives in this house?

She looks at George imploringly.

GEORGE
What? You want me to retire to the basement? Someone will have to stir the beans.

MIGUEL
If George goes, I go.

LILA
Same here.

Paul enters the room escorted by Grandpa.

GRANDPA
The guy was turning into a statue out there. You all need hearing aids.

Paul lays a package on the table.

PAUL
Some candy for the kids.

Miguel and Lila look at each other.

GEORGE
(Under his breath)
Doesn't he know they just had Halloween?

(To Paul)
Did you get it half-price?

PAUL
And who are you? Still wearing your costume?

LILA
Meet George, the family macaw.

George bows. Paul stares.

MIGUEL
Every family should have one. He cooks, cleans, baby-sits and helps with homework.

George ruffles his feathers. Outside, it starts thundering.

GRANDPA
He's much more than that. He's like the family doctor, a family friend, a psychologist, a . . .

PAUL
A pet?

The thunder grows louder.

GEORGE
I'm Maria's godfather. I don't think a pet could do that.

MARIA
What would you like to drink, Paul? How about some special punch George made?

PAUL
No thanks, I have to work tonight. I'll have water.

MARIA
But it's your birthday!

PAUL
I have so much paperwork to complete. It never gets done if I don't do it.

GEORGE
Oh, so you're one of those?

PAUL
Pardon me?

GEORGE
One of those who hides under his paper work. A slave to papers and receipts.

PAUL
I wouldn't say that!

MARIA
What do you have in your hand?

PAUL
I almost forgot. It's for you.

Hands her a package. She opens it. It's a book of poetry.

MARIA
The latest translation of Pablo Neruda's poems! Thank you so much.

PAUL
You're welcome. Now, I didn't bring anything for your father or the bird.

GEORGE
We need no gifts from you.

Grandpa pours George's special punch in a glass for Paul and hands it to him. Paul takes a long gulp, then starts coughing.

PAUL
I thought I asked for water! What is this? It tastes like cough syrup.

GRANDPA
Just a little of George's special medicine. You'll see how good it makes you feel. Me, I'm a hundred and four, but a little bit of this potion every morning keeps me young.

PAUL
You're kidding! It burns.

GEORGE
That's only because you're a tough patient. Once you're cured, it stops burning.

PAUL
I didn't even know I was sick.

GEORGE
That's because you're blind.

PAUL
Thanks, doc. I'm afraid to ask what's for dinner. I thought you were going to cook, Maria.

MARIA
I don't have time to cook. Grandpa and George do all the cooking, and I have to confess they do a great job. Don't they, children?

MIGUEL
They're better cooks than laundry men. They shrink everything.

GRANDPA
We're learning.

GEORGE
Let's eat!

PAUL
(To Maria)
Is he sitting at the table with us?

GEORGE
What do you want me to do? Go to my tree house?

GRANDPA
George is part of our family.

GEORGE
Besides, I want to be here when my medicine starts taking effect.

PAUL
What do you mean?

LILA
It makes you tell the truth.

PAUL
I don't lie anyway.

GRANDPA
This should be interesting, then.

PAUL
Maria, are you having any?

MARIA
No way. I don't want to bare my heart out to all of you.

GEORGE
We already know how she feels.

. . . TO BE CONTINUED

ALL CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL

The "Lord God Bird" Back from the Dead

By Mark Madison

Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul. . .
— Emily Dickinson (1830–1886)

Today, like Lazarus, the ivory-billed woodpecker was resurrected from the dead. The largest surviving North American woodpecker had been assumed extinct for over 60 years, but today (April 28, 2005) it was announced in Science magazine that at least one ivory-billed woodpecker had been videotaped in the Big Woods ecosystem of eastern Arkansas. Scientifically this was akin to finding a passenger pigeon in Shepherdstown's Morgan's Grove Park. Until today the story of the ivory-billed woodpecker had been one of unmitigated tragedy.

The ivory-billed woodpecker (Campephilus principalis) went by many names. The Seminoles called it Tit-ka, many early European settlers called it King of the Woodpeckers, it was known locally as "Poule de Bois" in southern Louisiana, and as Kent in northern Louisiana. But the name that was most evocative for this largest of woodpeckers was the Lord God Bird, supposedly derived from startled bystanders who saw the enormous bird in flight and exclaimed "Lord God, what a bird!" Another possible derivation of this name is suggested by early ornithologist Alexander Wilson (1766–1813) who described it as a "majestic and formidable species" that might "impress upon the mind of the examiner the most reverential ideas of the Creator."

The ivory bill certainly was King of the Woodpeckers, its wings could be as long as three feet, it nested and fed in the tallest trees in the Southeastern forests, and it could live 30 years. Alas, the ivory bill's specialized habitat and lifestyle proved its doom. The ivory bill was beautiful, a slow-breeder, and a specialized feeder — all dangerous traits in a rapidly changing environment. The ivory bill's beautiful beak made it popular with collectors ranging from Native Americans to our first bird illustrators, who collected their bird subjects first with rifles and later on canvas. The birds bred slowly in the Southeastern hardwoods that provided their home. The ivory bill's preferred food sources were insects and larvae found in dead but not entirely rotten trees in old growth forests. As the forests receded, so did the ivory bills. Beginning in the 1880s they disappeared in the Carolinas; a decade later they were gone from Mississippi; eventually Texas, Arkansas and Alabama saw their birds disappear with the decline of contiguous old-growth forests. The ivory bills retreated to the southernmost gulf areas and finally made their last stand in northeastern Louisiana.

Alexander Wilson's drawing of ivory bills (upper right and lower middle) along with two pileated (far left) and a red-headed woodpecker (lower right).

On the Singer Tract, the last large uncut Southern swamp forest owned by the sewing machine company, some ivory bills remained. From 1937–39, Jim Tanner studied the birds in the Singer Tract, for the first time giving a complete life history of the ivory bill. Tanner determined that ivory bills needed much larger forest habitats than previously thought and he found that there were only 22 birds remaining in the entire Southeast, a mere six of these in the Singer Tract. Unfortunately the onset of World War II and corporate indifference led to the final destruction of this virgin forest. In one of those sad historical ironies, in 1980 parts of the Singer Tract became the new Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge, forty years after the ivory bill had run out of time and habitat.

The ivory bill's decline was doubly tragic in that the causes (and solutions) were known by the time of its greatest peril. The ivory bill was not being killed by new avian diseases, introduced species or invisible contaminants like DDT. Rather it was exclusive habitat destruction that was the cause of its decline and (prematurely reported) demise. The Louisiana ivory bills may well have been salvageable in the 1940s had the Singer Tract been protected. But in spite of lobbying by scientists and the National Audubon Society, the ivory bill was allowed to go extinct in the state. Actually "allowed" is too passive a term as the ivory bills were literally driven to extinction through habitat destruction. Following the inevitable decline of forests, the last confirmed ivory bill sighting was in 1944 — that was until today.

In February 2004, Gene Sparling claimed to see an unusually large woodpecker while kayaking in the Cache River National Wildlife Refuge. Tim Gallagher of Cornell University and Bobby Harrison of Oakwood College went to eastern Arkansas to investigate and were rewarded with the second sighting of the bird in 60 years. An avian search-and-rescue team was formed. Finally, on April 25, 2004, four seconds of video footage were captured of an ivory bill taking off from a tree. Predictably, in this media age, it was the video that proved most convincing. By doing frame-by-frame analysis, ornithologists were able to note the distinctive markings on the ivory bill's back and wings, important markers to distinguish ivory bills from the more common pileated woodpecker. Finally, the peer-reviewed article announcing the (re)discovery of the long-lost Lord God Bird occurred a full year after Sparling's quick identification aboard his kayak.

So what is one to make of this remarkable resurrection? At one level it is a useful reminder that habitat is as endangered as the species that inhabit it. Small enclaves of natural forest preserved on the accurately named "refuges" have once again provided vital lifeboats for endangered species. A promising partnership between The Nature Conservancy, the federal government, and the state of Arkansas is doing its best to restore large sections of Southeastern bottomland forest. The Big Woods Conservation Partnership's name evokes the need for large intact ecosystems to allow the King of Woodpeckers to stretch its three-foot wings. Yet this type of restoration is hardly the norm across the nation as more and more wildlife habitat is increasingly pressured by sprawl and the decline of agricultural lands. Those wildlife habitats that remain endure added pressure as islands within increasingly hostile seas of sprawl.

The Lord God Bird's name also speaks to the nearly miraculous rediscovery of a bird believed extinct for over 60 years. One might imagine missing an endangered parakeet, but how could such a mammoth woodpecker elude birders for so long? (Considering its treatment at the hands of humans perhaps its aloofness was a survival trait.) Birds seem to have resonated most strongly with many pioneering and contemporary conservationists. The idea that the avian obituary page might actually remove the ivory bill from the sad histories of passenger pigeons, heath hens and Carolina parakeets is nothing short of miraculous.

Yet environmental history teaches us to be cautious before declaring victory. Endangered species recovery is often a distressing numbers game. Noah's Ark notwithstanding, small numbers are not usually a good indicator for success in saving a species. Inbreeding, the inability to find mates and accidental deaths weigh more heavily on a small population than a more robust dispersed species. Although there have been multiple sightings of the ivory bills in the last year, they have all been single birds. There is, as yet, no conclusive evidence that there is more than one ivory bill in the area. One hopes its fate will not be the same as "Martha" the last passenger pigeon who died alone in 1914 in the Cincinnati zoo, the last symbol of her species and of human indifference. So far all the sightings have been of a male ivory bill precluding even the saving miracle of Immaculate Conception for the Lord God Bird. For hope to really persist, we need not only a second chance to view this magnificent species, but also a second, female bird to provide hope for their next generation and our next generation of, hopefully, more thoughtful humans.

* * *

Mark Madison *teaches environmental history at the National Conservation Training Center and Shepherd University.*

WARNING!
Grumbling Ahead

By Marge Dower

I am beginning to feel decidedly uncomfortable with the watering down of language. Notice how politically correct I am. I don't say that turning good strong words into custard makes me furious; that would be too direct. No, I must say, "I feel decidedly uncomfortable," as if it is *my* fault that the words have this effect.

For example, last week I heard a news commentator say, "Sometimes it takes *courage* to turn on the television these days because of all the horrors." *Courage*? *Courage* used to mean marching on into the unknown, keeping on when all seems lost. Courage is when one is so terrified one can hardly move but keeps on going, taking one more step into a dark unknown when one wants to run. Courage is "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead!" Courage is what it takes to disagree on principle with the majority of the attendees at a cocktail party when that might mean one would never be asked back.

Illustrations by Marge Dower

I find it difficult to equate courage with using a remote, which can, if I become even slightly uncomfortable viewing reality, immediately mute the screams, or switch the focus of my attention from devastation of a car bomb to another station that will plunge me into the manageable, predictable world of "Friends," "The Simpsons" or "SpongeBob Squarepants": a world wherein all conversations are set-ups for one-liners, or "nudge, nudge, wink, wink" comebacks; all problems are discovered, discerned and resolved in a half-hour time slot, less the time for the commercials, which are designed to make me want one more useless item that will help me escape the realities of life.

Certainly the word *hero* has been watered down to mean anyone doing their duty. I quote from a recent news broadcast: "The *heroes* were sitting in the mess hall when the bomb dropped." One isn't a hero just because one has the misfortune to be put in jeopardy while doing one's expected job. Heroism is putting oneself in jeopardy when one has an honorable option to avoid the danger. Heroism is an "over and beyond the call of duty" situation.

Elizabethan fence words have become so common in our every day life that they have lost their once-good, earthy shock value. It used to be effective when one or more of those words was injected into conversation. People sat up, noticed and really listened to find out what had occasioned such a strong response. No one really listens to anybody these days, except to pick up a possible play on words for a smart and usually vulgar retort. If we allow words to become watered down, what in heaven's name will we use when we really need an expletive? How will we define the hero who looks back, sees a child or comrade in trouble, and courageously goes to their aid without a thought for personal safety?

In the adult world, words are losing their power and there seems to be nothing taking their place.

The young know this: that is why youth constantly reinvents words to connote superlatives. When *good*, *nice* and *grand* got watered down, my mother's generation used *topping* and *wizard*. My World-War-II generation had *neat*, *hot* and *that really swings*. *Hot* gave way to *cool*. Then, somewhere in the change, *boss* and *fab* surfaced briefly, and in generational turn, gave way to *bad* and *awesome*. I notice that my college grandchildren are using *sweet* to mean great, i.e. a *sweet* score in a golf game. The answer to the question "Would you like two tickets to the Orioles game?" is "*Sweet*!" I really should say "was *sweet*." The language of youth changes as rapidly as one's newest gadget goes out of date. I don't mind their jargon. What I am objecting to is the inability of the adults to say clearly what they mean.

One has only to read the Martinsburg Journal Junction to find feeble attempts at sarcasm mixed with sincere sentiments. It is common to read, "I want to thank the person who ran over my cat and left it on the road to die." One wonders if that saved the writer from going to the trouble of running over the cat herself or himself. Another writer in the same issue said, "I want to thank the kind person who found my pocketbook at Martin's and turned it in to the office," yet in the very same comment added, "I want to thank the person who returned it without any of the money." Another comment was "I want to thank the person who stole the flowers from my front yard, I hope you are enjoying them." I hardly think that was the accurate sentiment, but who knows? Maybe the caller really was a saintly soul who wanted the miscreant to have pleasure.

As long as I am complaining about language, I will share (see, I'm still politically correct) my sense of unease with those bumper stickers that say, "Support our Troops." What does that mean? Frequently, "Support our Troops" means that one shouldn't criticize the government.

No one prays more sincerely for the safety of our military men and women than I, but one should remember that when young men or women enlist they give up all their rights of free speech and free action. No nation can have an army where there are individual rights. While I might sympathize with the young sailor who last month deserted to protest the war, I agree that he must face courts marshal. An officer must have confidence that his command will be obeyed without question. When the officer says, "Proceed along the right flank," the private can't stop and look up at the sky, twiddle his thumbs and decide to march to the rear.

Therefore, to truly support our troops it is absolutely essential that those of us who still have freedom of choice and speech make certain to hold our government to the purest, highest standards. When we perceive that there is something amiss, it is incumbent upon us to ask questions and demand answers on behalf of our soldiers who cannot ask questions and demand answers on their own behalf. Yes, indeed. Support our troops: question the government's actions. These soldiers are our children. It is our duty to protect and support them.

Then, too, I wonder if there is anyone listening out there. The response to "Thank you" is almost always "Thank *you*." Whatever happened to "You're welcome?"

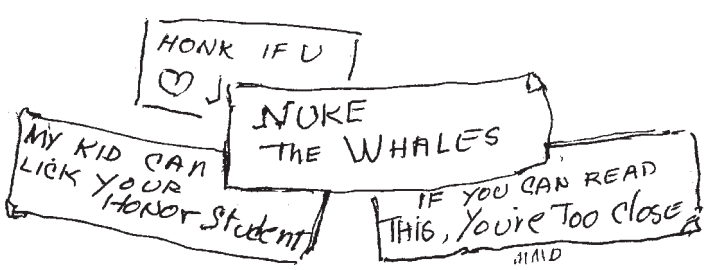
Daily we are assailed by total strangers airily tossing platitudes in our general direction, without a moment's consideration of their meanings. A waiter will plop down a plate containing an unidentified slab of something swimming in a gray sea of glutinous gravy and say as he/she retreats, "Enjoy your meal." You know and I know that he/she could not care less about my pleasure. (Don't get me started on the misuse of that phrase.)

But this is enough complaining for one article. (I should be allowed one grumbling exercise in 15 years.) So I will close with . . .

Have a good day!

* * *

*When **Marge Dower** is not grumbling about the state of the world, she is fighting the chickweed in her garden and turning into her sons' worst nightmare: a little old lady with cats.*



St. John's Wort

Summer Sunshine

By Virginia Provenzano

You may have heard a lot lately about the use of St. John's Wort as a treatment for mild depression. What is this plant, what does it look like, and where do we find it?

Actually, it's not an "it" but a "many." The word "wort" means plant or herb. Worldwide, there are at least 200 known species of Hypericum, the genus of all St. John's Worts. There are 30 or more in the eastern United States, and Strausbaugh and Core describe 12 species in their "Flora of West Virginia."

These plants share a number of characteristics. They all have opposite leaves that are simple and entire (smooth edges). They bloom bright yellow in early to mid summer, mostly terminal flowers with some lateral flowers forming a cluster. The flowers consist of five sepals and five petals surrounding a large brushlike cluster of stamens. Their fruit is a dry capsule. Some species grow as herbaceous perennials, and some as woody shrubs.

The common name comes from their flowering time, around St. John the Baptist's Day, June 24, however, the reputation of this little plant precedes the Christian Era. The Teutonic tribes of northern Europe held it in high regard as a talisman against evil spirits when gathered on Midsummer's Eve. European settlers came to these shores with a knowledge of this plant and were pleased to find its relatives growing here.

Shrubby St. John's Wort (*H. prolificum*) is a native shrub that grows in well-drained sites on mountain and piedmont woodland edges from Georgia to New York and west to Texas. It has been noted that it seems to prefer a limey soil. This plant is fairly common throughout West Virginia. It grows rapidly, forming a low, rounded, dense bush, four to five feet high and wide, with stout, stiff, erect stems.

The leaves are glossy, blue-green and grow thickly on the branches. Oblong, lanceolate in shape, they grow to one to three inches long by one quarter to a half inch wide. The bright yellow flowers bloom on new growth, and the numerous protruding stamens give a light fluffy appearance. The fruit are dry, three-valved capsules that persist through winter, and are useful in dried arrangements.

This shrub does well in dry, rocky soils in full to part sun and shows good adaptability to pH and moisture. It should be weeded and pruned, if needed, in early spring, but then requires little care. If you want to increase your plants, softwood cuttings root readily, and seeds of most St. John's Worts germinate with no special treatment. This plant is good for golden summer color in a mixed shrub border, or massed on a sunny bank.

The Golden St. John's Wort (*H. frondosum*) is another of our native shrubs whose cultural requirements are similar to those of Shrubby St. John's Wort. It grows somewhat smaller, three to four feet high and about as wide. It puts on a stunning show in summer with single, golden one- to two-inch blooms centered with long, dense clusters of stamens three-fourths of an inch across, set against the handsome blue-green foliage. The cultivar "Sunburst" is lower than the species, at only two feet high by four feet wide, and produces an even showier display. These two species, Shrubby and Golden, and their cultivars, can often be found in nurseries for planting in home gardens. The next five native species may sometimes be found in specialty nurseries, but are not as common.

Illustrated by Virginia Provenzano

Dense or Glade St. John's Wort (*H. densiflorum*) produces dense clusters of flowers, smaller and more profuse than Shrubby St. John's Wort. The leaves are also more densely packed on the branches, with small leaves clustered in the axils. It grows as an upright oval, 4 to 6 feet high and 3 to 4 feet wide, densely twiggy and leafy. This shrub is found growing in moist, acid soils in swamps and pine barrens from Long Island and New Jersey to West Virginia and south. Here in West Virginia, we find it in mountain glades.

H. aureum displays large showy, deep yellow flowers in pairs at the ends of its branches. This shrub was discovered by the younger Bartram in Georgia, and he described it as "a species of shrub Hypericum of extraordinary show and beauty; the showiest one in flower of the whole genus." The flowering is said to linger late into the autumn.

H. buckleyi, Blueridge St. John's Wort, is a low-growing (less than one foot), spreading shrub with the typical yellow flowers. It grows in the wild on rocky cliffs in the mountains of North Carolina and Georgia.

Spotted St. John's Wort (*H. punctatum*) is a herbaceous plant that grows from a woody base, growing to one to three feet tall. The pale yellow flowers grow in crowded clusters and the petals are marked with dark lines and dots. The leaves are also black dotted. Thickets and damp places are home to this plant, and it can be found in many areas of West Virginia, as well as generally from Texas to Maine.

Great St. John's Wort (*H. pyramidatum*) is large all over. The leaves are three to four inches long, partly clasping the stem. The one- to two-inch flowers contain a dense cluster of long, showy stamens within the five petals, and these petals curl up as the flower fades. The plant grows two to six feet high in meadows and along stream banks, and blooms in summer.

These last two plants we will look at are from Europe; one is a pesky weed and the other is a commonly-used garden ground cover.

Common St. John's Wort (*H. perforatum*) is an herb growing from a woody base. In North America, it is a common weed of fields and waste places. Its leaves are narrowly oblong, one and a half inch or smaller, and show translucent spots when held to the light (perforations). The golden yellow flowers, three-fourths to one inch wide, grow in branching clusters, and show black dots along the margins.

Aaronsbeard St. John's Wort (*H. calycinum*) is a semi-evergreen, stoloniferous little plant, growing one to one and a half feet high by two feet wide. It can suffer some winter kill at the tops, but since it flowers on new growth, it recovers nicely. The flowers are bright yellow, three inches across, borne singly or in pairs from June to September. This plant does well in poor, sandy soil, and makes a fast growing ground cover.

We mentioned earlier the role of St. John's Wort to treat depression, but there is much more to the story than that. Traditionally, the fresh flowers have been used in tincture or oil to treat external wounds, ulcers and bruises, and it was early called "balm-of-the-warrior's-wound." The tea has been taken internally to treat bladder ailments, depression, diarrhea and worms. Experiments have shown it to contain a number of biologically active compounds including choline, pectin, rutin, sitosterol, hypericin and pseudohypericin, and further to have sedative, anti-inflammatory and antibacterial activities. Recent studies have also shown potent anti-retroviral activity with few side effects. It is now being studied as an AIDS treatment.

Extracts of *H. perforatum* have long been used in modern European medicine as a treatment of choice for depression, but according to ethno-botanist Dr. James Duke, our native *H. prolificun* contains more of the active ingredients than the commonly studied European plant. One word of warning: using St. John's Wort can increase one's sensitivity to sunlight. More information on medical uses of this plant and others can be found on the Web at www.ars-grin.gov/duke.

In conclusion, several of the St. John's Worts would make lovely additions to your garden. I even grow two of them in my nursery. And if you wanted to learn to use these plants medicinally, hey, go for it.

* * *

Virginia Provenzano *helps folks design their gardens with habitat for wild creatures in mind. To aid in planting these gardens, she also has developed a small, native plants nursery.*

Once Upon a Time, Old McDonald Had a Farm

By Al Henderson

I'm more than just a little ticked off at my old friends, relatives and former neighbors for letting me and my wife down. In our last year's Christmas letter we beseeched them to pray for the continued good health of our neighboring dairy farmer and the continued high — but fair — price of milk. We noted that we would sorely miss the bellowing cows, the pesky flies, the pungent aroma of manure, and the coughing and chugging of the farmer's vintage tractor if misfortune came to him.

I'm not certain what's happening to the price of milk. But our farmer neighbor — now in his 60s — had a heart attack, he needs to take it easy, and none of his children or their spouses are interested in farming, certainly not in dairy farming. I can't blame them. From what I can see, dairy farming is pretty much a 24/7 proposition. Hard work and little play.

So when our farmer neighbor was offered a handsome price for 17 of his acres near Martinsburg, he reluctantly accepted the opportunity to become an instant millionaire. (The Farmland Trust offer didn't come anywhere near the developer's offer.) He plans to continue living on the remaining acreage of his farm and trade his milk cows for beef cattle. Less work that way. If the trend continues, we'll soon be importing milk from Mexico or even China. (I like to think that I'm exaggerating, but . . .)

Dairy cattle aren't the only things that are disappearing from West Virginia, at least not in the Eastern Panhandle. Apple production in West Virginia is down. West Virginia growers produced more than 115.5 million pounds of apples in 1997, with 475 orchards and more than 10,000 acres. In 2003, West Virginia growers produced but 85 million pounds of apples on less than 7,541 acres. Those missing 2,459 acres have got us worried, really worried, and my wife and I have more than a sneaking notion of what's happened to them — like giving way to the 240 new homes off Dry Run Road, Apple Knoll Estates. And that's just one of the many apple and peach orchards in the tri-county area that have fallen to the bourgeoning growth of what is rapidly becoming dormitory communities for D.C.–area workers. If you're an average Joe, you just can't afford to live in communities close to the district.

Those 17 acres our farm neighbor sold for development border on the western edge of our property. It raises a number of questions, unsettling questions. What, for instance, if the developers build high-rise apartment buildings? There goes our view of the North Ridge, along with the magnificent sunsets we've enjoyed from our deck since moving here three years ago. The developers have supposedly made certain representations to our farm neighbor about housing density, but nothing is legally binding and once construction begins all bets are off. This has happened to friends of ours in Kearneysville who were "assured" that the area behind them would forever remain forest land. They're now looking to move. But where? The thought of barren Alaska sends shivers up and down my spine.

We have well water. What happens to the water table if the new homes draw water from wells? Will we end up having to use bottled water to drink and cook? Recently I was a guest in a home in a new development just outside of Shepherdstown where this is the case. When one neighbor watered her lawn for hours on end, my guests' water turned brown with mud. Despite the fact that the houses are all on relatively small lots, they have septic tanks! All the homes in our development are on at least two acres of land to allow for adequate drainage fields; nonetheless, we were recently required to hook up with a sewer district. How could two adjoining counties have such radically different sanitation requirements? As a friend of mine would say, "It boggles the mind." (It might even poison it!)

How many schoolchildren will live in the new development next to us? Who's going to pay for the necessary classrooms, teachers and the buses to transport the kids? Will the developers be assessed? If so, will the assessment be adequate?

Dry Run Road, with its up and downs, twists and turns can only become more dangerous as the number of cars using it increases with the addition of more and more homes. Certainly — at the very least — the road will have to be widened . . . when and if state money becomes available.

Photo by Al Henderson

An increasingly common scene in the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia.

Will any good come of all this growth?

Yes. Definitely yes. Downtown Martinsburg is already perking up. Stores, offices and even apartments on North Queen Street have been or are being rehabbed, and new businesses are opening in anticipation of increased demand. Martins, the grocery store-delicatessen-pharmacy-bakery, has been renovated and enlarged. City Hospital's Wellness Center has undergone a remodeling and expansion to accommodate a growing number of clients. New doctors (including at least one obstetrician!) are actually coming to town. New medical facilities, at least one under the umbrella of the University of West Virginia, have been and are being built. City Hospital in Martinsburg and Jefferson Memorial Hospital in Charles Town are merging. Both the Holiday Inn and the Hampton Inn are being renovated. A former grocery store, vacant well before we moved here, is being expanded and revamped as a mini mall. Things are looking up, both in Martinsburg and, so I understand, Charles Town and elsewhere. (Now if we could just make a decision about new sidewalks in Shepherdstown!)

Much has been made of the disappearing farm and ever-increasing suburban population. But — as I recently discovered as I did online research for this article — the opposite has its problems, too.

As noted in the May 27, 2004 edition of *The State Journal*, "the rural nature of West Virginia can be troublesome and costly, especially when trying to make sure people get the services they need, be it extending sewer lines out to new developments, putting in broadband lines for Internet service or just providing bus transportation to school-aged kids.

"As West Virginia struggles to improve its economy, encourage new job growth and improve residents' quality of life, providing these services is a must. But the state, trapped in a vortex of shrinking tax revenues, is wondering just how it will pay for these services in areas where the next-closest neighbor is a half-mile away.

"In a state with many needs, West Virginia has too few (sic) people who live too far apart. In fact, a study by the American Planning Association named West Virginia as one of the worst sprawl states in the nation."

So as much as the Hendersons have for these past three years enjoyed the bellowing cows, the pesky flies, the pungent aroma of manure, and the coughing and chugging of the neighboring farmer's vintage tractor, maybe, just maybe, we can take solace in having new neighbors, many new neighbors, close by.

Not really — I still prefer the cows.

* * *

Al Henderson *is a freelance writer and photographer. He and his wife, Sharon, a native of West Virginia, retired from the Chicago area to Martinsburg about three years ago. Al can be reached at alhenderson@adelphia.net.*

Construction Zone
Building Character with Jesus

Four-year-olds have their feet washed like Jesus.

August 1–5 (9 a.m.–12 noon)

Ages 3-15 or preschool through 8th grade

Begin at St. Agnes Catholic Church, proceed to New Street Methodist, close at Trinity Episcopal.

Students in 6th grade and above can serve as craft helpers or teacher's assistants if they do not wish to participate in a class.

Bible school includes opening, storytelling, music, snacks, games, classes and crafts. There will be a closing program on Friday night.

Primary group has fun.

All children are welcome. Please register them at your respective churches or by calling or e-mailing Kathy Blue at 725-4358 (skblue02@email.msn.com) or Suzanne Swartz at 876-6723 (SSw5477551@aol.com).

Helpers are needed for crafts, teaching, assisting and games. Any time you can offer is greatly appreciated. Call or e-mail Kathy or Suzanne if interested.

"Pharoah Pharaoh" at the closing program.

The Crafters Gallery of Helpers.

Singing God's praise with Sarah and Suzanne.

The "Disciples" from Joan Snipes' class.

Hope to see you all at Community Bible School!!

COMMUNITY BIBLE SCHOOL 2005
Registration Form

Child's Name _____

Age _____Grade Finished_____

Parent Name _____

Phone _____

Emergency Contact_____

Phone _____

Food Allergies _____

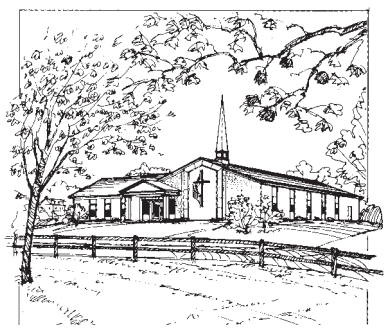
Other Allergies_____

Other Important Information _____

_____

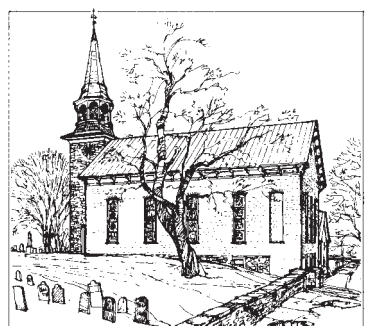
Please mail registration **by July 25** to Kathy Blue, P.O. Box 112, Shenandoah Junction, WV 25442.

Religious Worship and Education Schedules



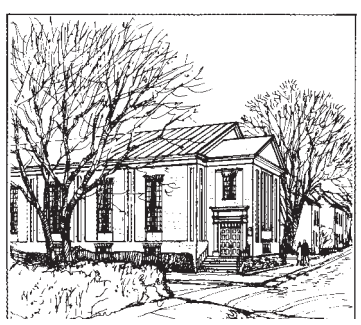
Asbury United Methodist
Rt. 480 (Kearneysville Rd.)
Rudolph Monsio Bropleh, Pastor
Telephone: 876-3122
Sunday Worship: 11 a.m.
Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.

Baha'i Faith
Entler Hotel, German St.
Telephone: 876-3995
Sunday Worship: 11:30 a.m.
Discussion Group:
1st & 3rd Fridays, 8 p.m.

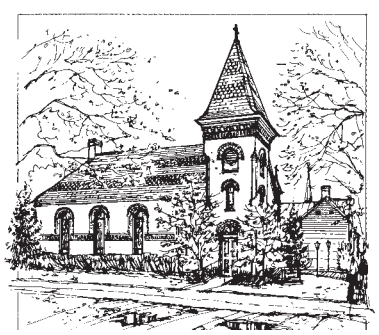


Christ Reformed U.C.C
304 East German Street
Bronson Staley, Pastor
Telephone: (301) 241-3972
Sunday Worship: 11 a.m.

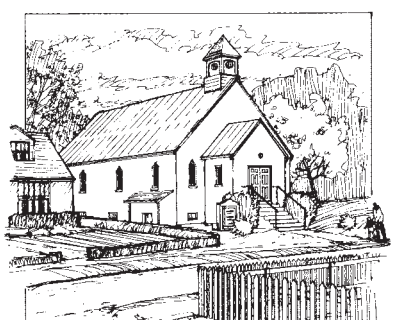
Christian Science Society
Entler Hotel, German & Princess Streets
Sunday worship & Sunday School: 10 a.m.
Testimony meetings: 1st & 3rd Wednesdays
3 p.m. from September through May
7 p.m. during June, July, and August
Reading Room: 1st Wednesdays 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Telephone: 876-2021
Sentinel radio program Sundays 7 a.m.
on WINC 92.5 FM



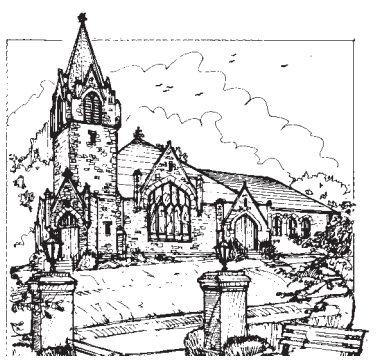
New Street United Methodist
Church & New Streets
Dee-Ann Dixon, Pastor
Telephone: 876-2362
Sunday Worship: 10:45 a.m.
Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.



St. Agnes Roman Catholic
Church & Washington Streets
Father Mathew Rowgh
Telephone: 876-6436
Sunday Eucharist: 8 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
Saturday Eucharist: 5:30 p.m.
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.



St. John's Baptist
West German Street
Joe Liles, Pastor
Telephone: 876-3856
Sunday Worship: 11 a.m. & 7 p.m.
Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.



St. Peter's Lutheran
King & High Streets
Fred Soltow, Pastor
Telephone: 876-6771
Sunday Worship: 11 a.m.
Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.

St. James', Uvilla
Sunday Worship: 9:30 a.m.
Sunday School: 10:45 a.m.

Shepherdstown Presbyterian
100 W. Washington Street
Randall W. Tremba, Pastor
Telephone: 876-6466
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Sunday School: 10:45 a.m.
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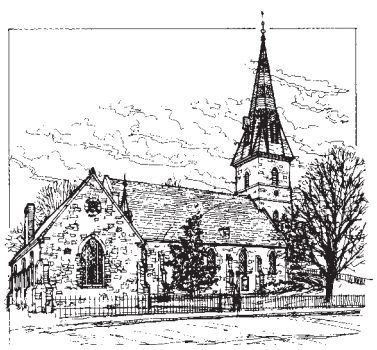
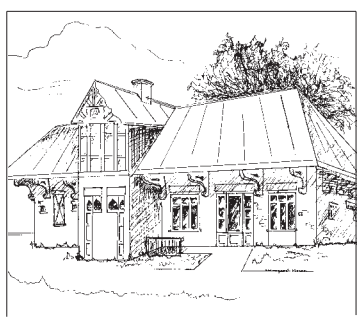


Trinity Episcopal
Corner of Church & Germans Sts.
George T. Schramm, Pastor
Telephone: 876-6990
Sunday Worship: 8 a.m. & 10 a.m.
Sunday School: 10 a.m.



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Shepherdstown Train Station
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Shepherdstown Day Care Center, Director (Ret.)

Sam Janotta & Lisa Lafferty
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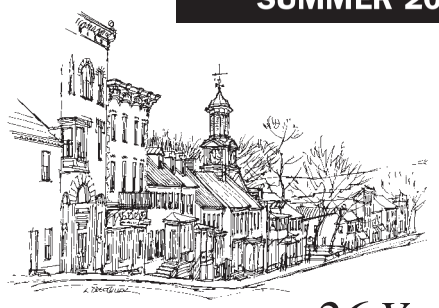

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