Artist Danielle Corsetto held a cartoon workshop for youngsters at the Shepherdstown Public Library this summer and showed samples of her work.
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Pictured are artist Danielle Corsetto (story, p. 14) and the Fish and Wildlife Service Archives, National Conservation Training Center (story, pp. 18–19).

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GOOD NEWS PAPER
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I made the acquaintance, earlier this summer, of Julian William Smith, pictured at right. Now, that’s a good-looking boy, don’t you think?

And a lucky one, too. He was born with a slew of fans already clamoring for him to arrive. Now that he’s here, all they want to do is cuddle him. When he performs some brilliant feat, like wrinkling up his face or kicking his legs, they marvel and exclaim. No one questions his fashion sense or personal hygiene choices. Julian has it made, as they say, in the shade.

I recall that his mother, while she was carrying her yet-to-be-named baby boy, couldn’t help but worry a bit. Talk about timing! she said. She, her husband, her family, her friends—they all stay attuned to current events. Can you think of a worse time, she asked, to bring a child into the world?

Hah! The fact is, I couldn’t think of a better time to bring little Julian into the world, except maybe years ago, when I could have tossed him up in the air or chased him around the garden without worrying that I’d pull something. He is my first grandchild, and yes, bringing him into the world is an inspired thing to do.

It’s hard to argue against having babies. Have you ever held a baby? If the average baby were to smile at you and say, “Give me the nuclear codes,” you’d say, “Awww, what a sweetheart you are! Here you go, little munchkin!” This goes double for grandbabies.

Not that they’re all after the nuclear codes, but the average newborn does have an ambition in common with the typical James Bond villain. And what’s that? “World domination,” as Bond tells Dr. No. “The same old dream.” The difference is that Bond villains go to insane lengths to achieve it and never do, whereas babies make it look easy. They get a little fussy and people rush to obey.

Alas, world domination is brief, at best. Julian has never heard the word “no,” but the day is coming. I think your life can be divided into two periods: the Garden of Eden period in which you’ve never heard the word “no,” and the Expulsion From Paradise period that lasts till you die. Think of the bewilderment of the baby-turned-toddler, for whom the good news is that you’ve learned to walk, and the bad news is that you’re not supposed to knock stuff off the coffee table. Get used to it, kid.

Let’s return for a moment to Julian’s mom and her worry that this might not be the best time to have a baby. It’s an understandable concern. The country is obviously having what Mrs. Landingham, the president’s crusty but lovable old secretary on The West Wing, once called “a bit of a day.” This was her unflappable New Englander’s way of saying, “Oh, geez!” Me, I’m highly flappable. But whatever my, or anybody else’s, version of “Oh, geez!” happens to be, we all seem to be saying it—or shrieking it—a lot.

So. A baby. Right now. Good idea?

We can approach the question from the jaded grown-up’s point of view or from the baby’s. The jaded grown-up’s first.

Even this jaded grown-up would argue that during times like these, when our weary republic’s hopes are teetering, babies are a balm for the spirit. More than that, they’re a shot of redemption. A newborn is hope itself, our chance to get it right this time, to help make something good happen.

What’s more commonplace than the birth of a child? The planet, after all, teems with 7.4 billion current and former newborns. And yet no other occurrence, not even the rarest, fills our hearts with such awe or connects us so inextricably to a single root. Here we are, middling folks busy with our wants and weaknesses, our prejudices and preoccupations…and then suddenly here’s a brand-new baby, whose first accomplishment is to remind us of the mysterious Creation we’re a part of, the Creation that fashions from out of nowhere the likes of Leonardo da Vinci, Abraham Lincoln, Aretha Franklin, the people you love, this baby, and you.

Hold the baby. It will un-preoccupy you.

Now, as to the baby’s point of view on whether to be born, we can only guess what babies might be thinking. They don’t articulate a lot. But if I were a baby, I’d want to be born here and now. Especially if, as in Julian’s case, it meant being born into a galaxy of people who adore me, including parents who won’t let me ride in a car seat that hasn’t gotten the highest safety rating from Consumer Reports.

But let’s put comfort and personal safety considerations aside and think more broadly.

More broadly, I’d be getting born into a country conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. I’d be due certain unalienable rights—among them life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It’s said that all people on earth are endowed by their Creator with these rights, but this country was the first to put it in writing.

Which, if I were that baby, would make the decision a no-brainer.

As for Julian, he’s going to learn that America is an ongoing project. Nearly three-quarters of the men who pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor to the proposition that all men are created equal held other humans as slaves. That’s the American story: a new nation declaring revolutionary aspirations of human freedom, and counting on coming generations to make it their goal to fulfill them.

My eldest daughter, Caroline, had a professor at the University of Virginia who taught the history of the civil rights movement. He was himself a significant part of it. Julian Bond led civil rights and voter registration drives in the South in the early 1960s, saw the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, then lived another 50 years in the service of education, the law, and justice for all Americans. Caroline and her husband, Christopher, named their son for him.

Julian William Smith, do great things.

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Ready, Set, Register, and Vote
But first, meet the League of Women Voters

Lee W. Doty

Fifty-one percent of adult citizens in West Virginia voted in the 2016 general election, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Only one state, Hawaii, scored lower, at 47 percent. The total percentage of U.S. adult citizens who voted was 61 percent. This article focuses on one organization’s mission to strengthen the democratic process by increasing the number of voters and educating voters about candidates’ positions and ballot issues. In part because it is nonpartisan, the League of Women Voters and its Jefferson County, WV, Chapter are trustworthy resources for information about the November 6 midterm election.

What Is the League of Women Voters?
It’s worth acknowledging the events leading to the formation of the league, a nonprofit organization, as it helps explain the league’s longevity and membership growth. While today so many U.S. citizens take for granted their right to have a say in their own destiny through the vote, there are those who, during a 72-year period of U.S. history, picketed and protested and suffered incarceration, forced feedings, and brutal beatings for the same right. These brave people, primarily women, secured the ratification of the 19th Amendment on August 18, 1920, which granted women the right to vote. That same year, the League of Women Voters was formed to help 20 million women learn how to discharge their new privilege and responsibility.

Voter Registration Drives
With 300,000 members serving in its state and county chapters nationwide, the league hosts voter registration drives wherever it can reach potential voters, such as high schools, community colleges, transit hubs, and naturalization ceremonies. According to U.S. Census Bureau statistics, of the 1,425,000 adult citizens in West Virginia, only 913,000 were registered to vote in 2016. A simple calculation tells us that over half a million adult citizens, more than one third of West Virginia’s total, were not registered. It’s unlikely one third are mentally incompetent or under conviction of a felony, two principle reasons an adult citizen is ineligible to vote. Clearly, the state needs registration drives and other systems to support registration.

Cris Kinsella, co-chair of voter services for the Jefferson County chapter of the League of Women Voters, says the league partners with other organizations to reach all citizens, including those less likely to be familiar with the registration and voting process or who have trouble accessing West Virginia’s online tools, like those who are homeless. As if to prove the dedication of its registration volunteers, during our interview at a Shepherdstown bakery, another chapter member showed up serendipitously. Kinsella and the volunteer discussed the possibility of holding a new drive at a nearby hospital.

On September 25, the chapter intends to celebrate National Registration Day by holding a “Rock the Registration” party in Charles Town, with food, music, kids’ activities, and participation by Darrell Shull, the West Virginia Secretary of State’s liaison for the Eastern Panhandle. Details are provided on the chapter website (see box below).

Informing the Public About Candidates and Issues
Effie Kallas, who joined the league in the early ’90s, is now president of the league’s Jefferson County chapter. She describes the chapter as a grassroots organization “dedicated to the informed and active participation of all citizens in the democratic process.” She explains that neither the league nor the chapters champion or oppose particular candidates. The league does take positions, however, on important issues after lengthy and careful review and advocates for those positions. A glance at the league’s website reveals its position on, for example, gun laws, voter suppression, DACA (the immigration policy Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), and health care reform.

Aside from registration drives, the chapter sponsors an observer program in which members volunteer to attend meetings and monitor the actions of the county’s government. The chapter also sponsors issue-oriented forums.

Over the summer, the chapter partnered with the Jefferson County branch of the NAACP, Shepherd University’s Lifelong Learning Program, Shepherd University’s Robert C. Byrd Center for Congressional History and Education, and several political parties, including the Republican Party of Jefferson County, the Libertarian Party of West Virginia, and the Mountain Party. Together they sponsored a forum on electoral redistricting in West Virginia. Kinsella says the chapter plans to follow up this fall with these same partners on the topic of “money and politics,” the date and other details to be announced on its website. Also during the summer, the chapter co-sponsored with the Byrd Center a “viewing party”—a livestream broadcast on electoral redistricting presented by lawyers involved in the recently decided U.S. Supreme Court case of Gill v. Whitford. The presentation is posted on YouTube and accessible through the chapter’s website.

According to Kinsella, the fall with be filled with opportunities to meet candidates and learn about ballot issues. On September 5, the league will co-sponsor with the Jefferson County NAACP and the Marshall Holley Mason American Legion Auxiliary Unit 102 an educational nonpartisan voters’ workshop intended to motivate other organizations to conduct their own civic activities such as voter registration drives and candidate forums. On September 18, members of the chapter (and those intending to join) will participate in a meet-and-greet reception with candidates on the November 6 ballot, followed by a presentation on the two constitutional amendments on the ballot, the Judicial Budget Oversight Amendment and the No Constitutional Right to Abortion Amendment.

From October 3 through 25, the chapter plans to host sessions open to the public with West Virginia candidates from among the following governing bodies: Jefferson County Commission, West Virginia House of Delegates for Jefferson County, West Virginia Senate, U.S. House of Representatives (2nd District), and West Virginia’s U.S. Senate. The chapter plans to stream these October sessions on YouTube through its own website.

Finally, the chapter sponsors an annual November Legislative Breakfast, which allows constituents to speak with their representatives about issues they’d like to see addressed in the next legislative session.

Large voter participation is vital to a thriving democracy, but only if that electorate is informed through trustworthy resources. A trustworthy, nonpartisan resource is the League of Women Voters and its Jefferson County Chapter.

To be eligible to vote in West Virginia you must be:
• a resident of West Virginia and the county where you register;
• a U.S. citizen;
• at least 17 years old and 18 by the next general election; and
• not currently under conviction for a felony, including probation or parole, or a court ruling of mental incompetence.

Information on eligibility, how to register, where to vote, voter ID requirements, who’s on the ballot, early voting, and FAQ may be found at http://sos.wv.gov/elections

Information on issues to be voted on and voting in general may be found at http://VOTE411.org, http://LWV.org and http://LWV-JCWW.org

Lee W. Doty, a retired lawyer who writes mystery novels, believes that voting in elections and serving on juries are among our most important privileges and responsibilities as citizens in a democracy.
Raise the Roost
A New Tower for Our Chimney Swifts

Hannah Cohen

The Potomac Valley Audubon Society is hoping to build a new home for Shepherdstown’s chimney swifts. The organization is preparing to construct a tall brick tower with capacity to shelter 5,000 birds. These chimney swifts call Shepherdstown home in the fall and spring. The neotropical migratory bird travels 6,000 miles to and from the Amazon Basin in Peru.

Katelyn Walters, PVAS conservation and land manager, and Suzanne Offutt, vice president, discussed the society’s plans to Raise the Roost. The campaign is overseeing the logistical and financial arrangements of the future chimney swift tower.

The group works closely with local landowners to protect animal, bird, and plant species. It also organizes adult and children’s educational programming, with topics ranging from birding and butterflies to watershed initiatives. The Raise the Roost project touches on each of the society’s individual key elements—it explains the bird’s needs, receives land donations, and raises funds—all in an effort to provide a home for Shepherdstown’s chimney swift population.

A small cigar-shaped bird with black and gray coloring, the chimney swift was first named the American swift. Originally, it found its home in old historic, homes. As Walters explains, the new tower will be constructed in an even better location than the Sara Cree tower. It will be near a storm water retaining pond, and trees, and away from development. The proposed Raise the Roost tower is designed to endure for 100 years and will be 30 feet tall and seven feet wide. Walters and Offutt note that chimney swifts only reside in the top 15 feet of a tower and that 90 percent of the bird is always flying; a chimney swift is in flight about 90 percent of its life.

The design plans for the tower are complete. Construction will take two weeks. But before the tower can be built, funding must be secured. PVAS needs to raise $100,000 for construction. Hence, Raise the Roost is the first large fundraising project PVAS has organized with the aim of rehabilitating a bird species. Offutt notes that the price tag of the project is nominal in relation to the number of birds the tower will be able to accommodate. Other campaigns to reestablish habitat of a bird species would require a significantly larger amount of space and a higher level of funding.

Sara Cree was demolished more than a year ago, and PVAS hopes to have the tower constructed as soon as possible to provide a home for the large migrations. Migrating birds are expected to be the largest group occupying the chimney, though Shepherdstown does have a few year-round resident bird species.

Once tower construction is complete, the public will be invited to use the property surrounding the tower to watch the birds murmurate (that is, move in their flocks through the sky) in the evenings. Offutt recalls the evening “show above our heads” she used to witness at Sara Cree as several hundred swifts swooped, dipped, and dove into their chimney.

Individual donations and a matching campaign are underway to raise the funds needed to build the tower.

One could say that it takes a village to Raise the Roost.

For more information on the Raise the Roost campaign and to donate, go to www.potomacaudubon.org.

Hannah Cohen lives in Shepherdstown. She has an abiding interest in the environment and the future of environmental stewardship.

Offutt explains that chimney swifts have not been extensively studied. Walters adds that it’s because they are always flying; a chimney swift is in flight about 90 percent of its life.

Shepherdstown is ideally located along the birds’ migration route near the Potomac River, and the town offers a number of chimneys atop old, sometimes historic, homes.

Chimney swifts adapted to living in chimneys because the structures accommodate the birds’ anatomical design. Their perching style necessitates a vertical surface. “They can’t perch like other birds. All they can do is cling,” Walters explains. “They even have barbs on the end of their tails that they curl under them to help prop themselves up against the vertical surface.”

The former Sara Cree building at Shepherd University used to house the Shepherd Wellness Center, and an average of 1,500 swifts resided in Sara Cree’s tower. When the tower was found to be too unstable to leave standing, the university and PVAS discussed alternative “homes” for the birds. The university first uncapped the chimney at Knutti Hall in hopes of relocating the birds. It could simply be that Knutti’s chimney isn’t deep enough, but the swifts chose not to relocate there.

The university then located acreage on the campus and has donated the property as the future home of the soon-to-be-built chimney swift tower. As Walters explains, the new tower will be constructed in an even better location than the Sara Cree tower. It will be near a storm water retaining pond, and trees, and away from development. The proposed Raise the Roost tower is designed to endure for 100 years and will be 30 feet tall and seven feet wide. Walters and Offutt note that chimney swifts only reside in the top 15 feet of a tower but, for reasons not entirely understood, require a tall tower.

Chimney swifts consume on average 3,000 mosquitoes a day. They also feast on no-see-ums and other pesky insects. The range of their impact to our ecosystem is not fully known, but tower design plans include locations for video observation and audio.

The newly named chimney swifts thrive in Shepherdstown, where they are 90 percent of the birds’ lives are spent in flight.
Do you remember that old kids' game, “Button, button, who’s got the button?” Alan Sturm has buttons, somewhere around three or four thousand of them—political campaign buttons, that is. He has been collecting buttons and other political items for about 30 years.

Originally from Buckhannon in Upshur County, Sturm taught high school, served as a middle school principal, and retired as Upshur County Schools assistant superintendent in 1998. Upon his retirement 20 years ago, the Sturms moved to Jefferson County, about the same time that his wife, Libby, accepted a position at Shepherd University. He continued his lifelong work in education, serving on the Jefferson County Board of Education.

When he was told he had high blood pressure, Sturm says his doctor recommended that he get a hobby. “I tried playing golf because it was supposed to be relaxing,” he recalls, “but I didn’t like golf.”

Since he did love politics and had attended political rallies with his family since he was a child, he began collecting, beginning with campaign buttons. One of his rarest buttons is a very simple white button that just reads, “Students for Truman.”

He smiled wistfully. “I wish I still had all the buttons I put in my pocket at rallies when I was a kid.”

When Sturm started collecting, he visited flea markets, estate sales, and yard sales. He discovered that they usually don’t yield much, although he made some interesting finds. His collection soon expanded to include all sorts of things, from autographs and photographs to novelties. He met other collectors and started networking, getting acquainted with dealers, and finding auction sites that sell political items. He continues to attend political rallies, regardless of the party. When he and Libby go on vacation, they visit antique malls.

He is a member of the American Political Items Collectors (APIC), a nonprofit organization founded in 1945, whose aim, according to its website, is to promote “the collection, preservation, and study of materials relating to political campaigns and the presidency.” Materials—everything from buttons, textiles, books, and even sheet music to license plates, glassware, street banners, and anything else you can imagine—may feature candidates, primaries, conventions, and more. The APIC holds meetings, and it has subgroups that specialize in material about particular presidents and geographical areas.

Sturm has a collection room that holds a row of wooden file cabinets with little drawers like those for card catalogs in libraries. They are filled with national and state campaign buttons, and some politicians have more than one drawer devoted to them. Sturm says he has more buttons stored in the basement.

Shelves of neatly labeled boxes are filled with things like matchbooks, stickers, postcards, photos, invitations, and inauguration programs for presidents and members of Congress and West Virginia politicians from governors on down. There are also books, ashtrays, banks, dolls, and all sorts of campaign novelty items.

Sturm explains that he likes paper items, and his collection includes hundreds of political autographs and about 6,000 posters. He says that he likes Kennedy items, and one of his of his most-prized acquisitions is
a large 1960 Kennedy primary poster that was meant to fit on the side of a bus.

Autographs in his collection include those of presidents, members of Congress, Supreme Court justices, and West Virginia politicians. He has over 200 autographs of presidents but lacks a few, including those of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and William Henry Harrison. “They are pricey,” he noted. “They go for thousands of dollars.”

Prices for political campaign buttons can also run into the thousands. Sturm reports that the most expensive button he knows of was an extremely rare Roosevelt-Cox 1920 button that recently sold for $50,000.

He added, “I knew a man who paid $27,000 for a button.” Sturm laughed, “He’s dead now. I don’t think his wife killed him!”

Sturm says that he doesn’t collect historic newspapers in general but does have some that deal with important events, including the scandals involving disgraced former West Virginia governors William Wallace “Wally” Barron and Arch Moore Jr. Both served prison time, Barron for bribery and obstruction and Moore for five felonies, including extortion.

“Guys like that are interesting,” said Sturm. “I’d like to know what makes them tick!”

He quoted an uncomfortable old saying about the first 100 years or so of the State of West Virginia. “It had the best government money could buy!”

West Virginia is a focus these days for Sturm, who says, “When I started collecting, I collected everything I could find, but over the past ten years or so, I’ve been concentrating on West Virginia items.”

Sturm points out a framed picture he bought in a miner’s home. It held matching portraits of Franklin D. Roosevelt and United Mine Workers President John L. Lewis. He recounted that in a West Virginia coal country union miner’s home, it was said that you’d always find three pictures—John L. Lewis, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Jesus. “There was no Jesus picture, but I bought this little picture of Roosevelt and Lewis! It was unusual to have them together like this.”

Below the Roosevelt-Lewis picture hung a framed article on Winfield Scott Hancock, a celebrated U.S. general, Civil War hero for the Union army, and unsuccessful Democratic candidate for president in 1880. He was defeated by James A. Garfield.

Sturm says that Libby has confined his collection to one room of the house and a few cabinets in the basement. He confesses that more than once he has actually tried to stop collecting but simply can’t seem to quit. Acquiring a new find can be quite irresistible. “If I go to an auction or yard sale and I come out empty-handed, I’m proud of myself!”

Sturm does sell duplicates on eBay and other sites, which no doubt helps to keep his collection under control. He trades with other collectors and says there are about half a dozen collectors here in the Eastern Panhandle, in addition to a dozen or so statewide that he keeps in touch with. There are several thousand collectors nationally. He attends shows in Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C., and Ohio. APIC has national meetings, but he’s never attended one.

The rise of the internet, of course, has allowed far-flung collectors to get in touch with each other for the first time. But Sturm says that while the internet has been a boon to collectors, it has hurt the collectibles market itself. There were items that collectors thought were rare because they had never encountered them in their circles of contacts, and then they found out that many more were out there.

Sturm has seen all of the presidents in person who have served in his lifetime so far, starting with Roosevelt and ending with Obama.

Three years ago, he and Libby attended Peanut Day in Plains, Georgia, with the Jimmy Carter Group of APIC. Along with about 100 people, they had dinner with former president Jimmy Carter and his family. Sturm reported that they were allowed to take pictures, and the nonagenarian graciously answered questions for about an hour and signed copies of one of his books.

Sturm described Plains as a town about the size of Shepherdstown or even smaller. The Sturms stopped to look in an antique shop and noticed two secret service men at the door. They looked up and saw President Carter on a balcony above. No state police were around, and locals say that Carter walks around town just like anyone else.

Sturm has made the study of West Virginia political history his lifelong passion. He has been working with the Robert C. Byrd Center for Congressional History and Education at Shepherd University, collecting interviews for the Robert C. Byrd Legacy Oral History Project since 2012. He has done 30 or 40 oral history programs featuring his interviews with people who worked with the late Senator Robert Byrd. He hopes it will be online soon.

Sturm made an interesting find when a box of the late West Virginia Congressman Harley Staggers’s papers was located in a barn. He took them to the Byrd Center where they were immediately put into a freezer to kill all the bugs that had invaded the box over the years. After freezing, it was possible to preserve the papers.

In addition to political items, Sturm also collects license plates and pictures of Mail Pouch Chewing Tobacco barns, simply because he likes them. He explains that his father was a house painter and was offered a job painting Mail Pouch barns but declined the offer because he didn’t want to travel.

If you have any political items, especially West Virginia items, Sturm says he would be interested in seeing them and might even make an offer to buy them.

Claire Stuart has been writing for the Good News Paper for decades. That, she says, makes her “venerable.” She tries not to collect blue glass and metal sculptures.
The ABLE Act Helps People With Disabilities Secure Their Financial Future

NB Cupp

Families of children with disabilities face many challenges and worries. Questions about how to care for their disabled child into adulthood is one of the most common concerns. There are many different types of disabilities, each creating its own challenges, and the degree of the disability is different for all individuals. For scenarios where the child will not be put into institutional care, each family has to design its own family care plan to meet the specific needs of the disabled child. This plan, most likely, will need to take into account how to finance future living, medical, and supportive assistance needs.

Families may discover, however, that federal support programs, such as Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance, do not provide enough financial support to meet a disabled person’s needs, now or in the future. SSI and SSDI are both administered by the Social Security Administration. Securing SSI and SSDI support can be a long and arduous process. To add to this already difficult situation, people receiving SSI will lose their eligibility, thereby canceling their benefits, including medical insurance, if their assets exceed $2,000. These federal needs-based programs, albeit intended to help, may effectively chain the recipients to a life of dependency. And until now, there no investment plans have been available to help with “wealth building” for future expenses.

But within the past several years, major legislation has been passed to help remedy this situation. The Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act was signed into law in 2014 and expanded in 2017. This law allows people who become disabled before age 26 to save money for future living and disability-related expenses in a tax-favored investment account. For those who enroll in the program, the $2,000 ceiling still remains for assets not rolled into the WV ABLE account, but there is at least a venue for wealth building. They must enroll through their state’s ABLE Act Program. Although national ABLE programs are available, the West Virginia Treasurer’s office has partnered with the Ohio Treasurer’s Office to offer a discounted rate to West Virginia residents, who may enroll online at www.WVABLE.com.

People with disabilities and their families don’t ordinarily want to be identified by name, so let’s use the name Susan Maldry, a composite of the kinds of people—disabled before age 26—who typically stand to benefit from enrolling in the WV ABLE Program. For illustrative purposes, let’s say Maldry is a recent Jefferson High School graduate who now receives $694 a month from SSI. Maldry has her own checking account, where her monthly allotment is deposited, but her total balance may not exceed $2,000 or she will lose her SSI eligibility. She would like to work, perhaps own a car, and one day live independently, but the $2,000 ceiling prevents her from earning or saving money. If someone happens to, say, give Maldry a $500 savings bond, that only brings her closer to the ceiling. Her family worries about her financial future. How, for example, will she save for medical expenses and the cost of supportive assistance technologies? But with the ABLE Act now in place, she can enroll in the WV ABLE program and address many such concerns.

Enrolling online is quick and convenient, and the program charges no fee to set up an account. The Frequently Asked Questions section (https://WVABLE.com/faq/) will help with the most general inquiries, and the help desk personnel will answer specific questions and address enrollment difficulties over the phone (800-439-1653, M-F, 9 a.m.—8 p.m.).

While enrolling, Maldry learns that she can roll her savings bond into her WV ABLE account, which will keep her personal checking account below $2,000 and help relieve the stress and fear of hitting the SSI cap. Her family and relatives can now deposit directly into Maldry’s WV ABLE account without worrying that a birthday or Christmas check will affect her SSI eligibility. Maldry’s parents can set up a recurring monthly deposit that she can use to pay future medical expenses. She may now work and have her payroll directly deposited into her ABLE account.

Because an ABLE account is a tax-favored investment account, the earnings on Maldry’s investments are not taxed. Further, for qualifying expenses, she can withdraw funds from the account without penalty. Maldry can enjoy the flexibility of using her WV ABLE card, similar to a debit card, to pay for her food, transportation, and even rent, should she move into her own place. WV ABLE does not report account transactions, including deposits, earnings, and withdrawals, to the IRS or to the state tax office until the account reaches a balance of $100,000. If Maldry’s total assets exceed $102,000, her SSI payments will stop but she will not become ineligible or be removed from the program. And once her account’s total assets fall below $102,000, she will need only to inform the Social Security Administration, and the SSI payments will resume.

Eligible individuals and interested family members may visit www.WVABLE.com for information on all aspects of the program. As with many new programs, the ABLE Act is evolving, and families will want to keep good records of their transactions and purchases. Enrollees who are moving from one state to another will need to move their ABLE account as well, as each state administers its own ABLE program. As a rule, it’s best to talk with help desk personnel in both states before making the move. And it’s also a good idea to get professional advice. Families of people who are considering WV ABLE enrollment may want to consult a tax advisor and/or estate planning attorney to discuss the various investment growth options, threshold liabilities, and qualifying purchases and withdrawals.

For families like the Maldrys, it is clear why the law was named Achieving a Better Life Experience. Maldry is now better able to finance her future plans. She has an investment account that can pay for college, purchase a car, and pay for living expenses. She can work, earn, and live without the fear of losing her SSI benefits. She may now focus on what she is able to do and live a life with more financial options.

NB Cupp is Nathan and Barbara Cupp, a mother-son writing duo living in the Eastern Panhandle (www.NBCUPP.com).
The Promise of SAIL
Shepherdstown Area Independent Living

Agnes Freund

All of us have seen at least one “Best Places to Retire” list. If you think you’ve found that special place here in Shepherdstown, raise your hand. So, you’ve settled in! But as the years pass, your abilities and needs change. Friends and even spouses may be lost. Question: How to remain at home through all the changes? Answer: Shepherdstown Area Independent Living, popularly known as SAIL.

Surely you have heard of it. No? Here’s the backstory. A lady living in the fabled Beacon Hill area of Boston in 1999 found that certain activities, like putting a pet cat into a carrier, had become a challenge. She reasoned there had to be other people living nearby with similar issues. She thought that perhaps, if they called on one another as in the old village ways, they could help one another address their individual occasional difficulties. She called together a group of friends, and after due discussion, the Beacon Hill Village was born. They describe their story this way:

After much consideration, we developed a grassroots membership organization. We, the members, decide what we need and want. We have an expert staff, a great variety of service providers, enthusiastic volunteers, and strategic partners, but we govern the Village, design its offerings, and make it all happen. We are self-supporting, funded by membership fees and donations; we are self-governing as a secular, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization.

These are the fundamental principles of the Village Movement, an alternative to assisted living facilities that require residents to pull up roots and give up the beloved familiar things precisely when they seem most precious. Good new ideas do not remain secret for long, and since there are more and more older people, and many of them would like to age in place for as long as they can, the concept became a movement. By the time the first Village celebrated its 15th birthday, hundreds of others had sprung up across the United States and even in other countries. Thanks to another innovation, the Village-to-Village Network, they share information to help one another and any other interested groups who may want to develop something similar.

Of course, no valuable idea escapes the attention of the bright, active, and progressive people who have chosen Shepherdstown as their retirement haven. So a group of them gathered and pooled their energies and wisdom. In due course, our local Village, fondly called SAIL, was born. Logically, current members are dubbed SAILers. They count among their numbers avid kayakers, experts in classical languages, amateur archeologists, theater buffs, and people with other varied interests.

The current president, Carolyn Rodis, describes why she joined. With a daughter and friends a phone call away, she did not feel SAIL offered services she needed. But her belief in the Village concept and the conviction that it should be supported to ensure its survival led her to volunteer and then to join. A broken ankle temporarily took away her ability to drive and proved to her beyond any argument the value of having SAIL in her life. SAIL can provide volunteers for several weeks to take you where you need to go, be it shopping, a show, or to a follow-up medical visit. Volunteers are available to change a light bulb. And volunteers can provide respite visits—planned temporary care—so members don’t have to burden their children.

Another invaluable service SAIL offers is providing medical note takers, formally trained in the rules of HIPAA and confidentiality, to accompany members to medical appointments. A medical note taker will help organize the information the doctor will need, list current medications, write down the questions the patient wants to ask, and make sure the answers are properly documented.

While SAIL cannot promise that every member will be able to avoid leaving home altogether, Rodis knows of at least one case where that desirable outcome was achieved. One member who lived alone was supported by a rotation of five volunteers who took turns giving her a “reassurance call” every day at noon. Actions to be taken in case there was no response were also predetermined and agreed upon. The volunteers followed this routine for nine months, and the member was able to stay put until the end. It should be added that in cases where leaving home becomes inevitable, the SAIL support group stays in touch via calls and visits—surely an irreplaceable connection to one’s life.

It is by now well documented that the most important factor in one’s longevity is not diet or exercise, as essential as those are, but human connections. In these times of scattered families, and in many instances seniors without any surviving relatives and old friends, a place and a time to make new friends on whom one can rely in times of need is an invaluable resource. A recent study showed that the health effect of prolonged social isolation is equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Furthermore, volunteers say they gain as much or more than the members they assist. Helping others fosters meaning in our lives.

Finally, there is another most welcome aspect to SAIL. Scheduled activities are available all the time. If hiking, going to the theatre and concerts, dining out, or just keeping abreast of developments nearby and worldwide is your pleasure, there are often other members with the same interest, similar level of energy, and willingness to join in the fun.

For more information, go to the SAIL website, www.shepherdstownsail.org, or call 304-870-7245. A friend will answer or call back. That’s a promise.

Agnes Freund and her husband Alvin Freund settled in Shepherdstown in 1997. She helps produce the SAIL newsletter, available on the SAIL website.
Several organizations rely heavily on annual book sales to generate essential funds used to carry out their role in the Eastern Panhandle. Shepherdstown Community Club will hold its annual Legendary Book Sale on October 11–14, and members have been sorting and cataloging books all year.

Despite the surging influence of new technology and the pervasive, almost inevitable dominance of cyber phenomena, books still retain their important role in our lives. As tools that we use to pursue our intellectual and day-to-day objectives, they also retain immense value as collections or repositories of knowledge in personal or communal libraries. In addition to being valuable sources of information and insight, books also provide myriad time capsules, capturing and preserving more subjective and meaningful aspects of life.

Here are just a few examples of the treasures and stories encountered in the process of gathering, evaluating, and finding homes for 40,000 to 50,000 books each year.

• The literary legacy of much-beloved Shepherd University biology professor Dr. Carl Bell. We received several pickup loads of books found mixed in with his voluminous possessions, which included a mounted skeleton of a baby beaver! The rare find: three large binders capturing the history of old mills in Western Pennsylvania, the result of 50 or 60 years of intense research. Despite thousands of books on science and biology, it was hard to ignore that his real love was the reading of mystery novels.

• The entire Claymont Society library of books accumulated over many years, dealing with Eastern religions and the interesting interplay between science, philosophy, and religion. The society practices a form of Sufism heavily influenced by the British psychologist and spiritualist scholar J. G. Bennett and the 19th-century Armenian mystic and philosopher George Gurdjieff. The book collection revealed subtle changes in emphasis and perhaps influence of external forces on the core documents of a movement and its supporting organization.

• Twenty-seven boxes of widely varied, exquisitely illustrated children’s books from the Jefferson Academy near Charles Town. If you look deeper, they provide valuable insight into how we create, or, more frequently, reinforce, and refine the value systems that we hope our children will adopt and live by.

• A weekly contribution from Trinity Church Thrift Shop that provides a surprising variety of books and periodicals reflecting the varied interests and avocations of affiliated church members.

• Hundreds of rare individual finds including: An orphaned Bible—a beautiful, large, 1875 edition of the Holy Bible with a carved leather binding, found in a Halltown paper recycling plant dumpster; a much revered (judging by wear from use and the passage of several hundred years) copy of the Koran; a copy of the 1850 Patent Office Report on Agriculture transformed into a recipe book by some diligent and very patient housewife, who used it to paste or pin-in newspaper clippings and personal notes in beautiful script about cooking and baking; and many old schoolbooks from a time when students practiced their numbers or writing using the end papers or marginalia to leave an irressrible comment.

Books provide living history at our fingertips, subject to our whims and even idle curiosity. And if we enter into the relationship between book and owner and take time to dig a little deeper, we are allowed a glimpse of the owner’s personality and interests. Several aphorisms may be relevant or can be finessed to focus on the subject: “You can’t judge a book by its cover,” and yet the cover tells you a lot and may govern what books get read. “You are what you eat.” Why not “You are what you read”? And still better, “The whole is greater than the sum of its parts”—and now we are talking about libraries.

The dictionary provides a very cold, stark definition of library: “A collection of books” or a “room dedicated to books.” The real question is, when does an assemblage (collection implies some design or purpose) of books become a library? And, more important, when and to what extent does it mirror or reflect the personality and the essential character traits of the owner? We are reminded that some businesses buy books “by the yard” as decorations in their offices. Books are acquired by an interesting variety of means, often as gifts or family heirlooms. Some members of the older generation were raised in homes almost devoid of books. The only exceptions were the family Bible (used primarily to archive births and deaths), an almanac, and probably some useful guide to home remedies.

A good number of people, from an early age, acquire a burning desire not just to read books but to keep them. In their use, a special bond emerges between the reader and the book that for some of us can’t be denied. Living in our Shepherdstown community, we see it reflected in our culture, where books are one of the secret forces that bind us together.

It is always a thrill and source of much contemplation to “reverse-engineer” an assortment of books that we have acquired—to piece together who this person was, what they thought about, what was important to them, and just often enough, some tangible hint: pressed flowers or a four-leaf clover, a valentine, a postcard used as a bookmark, a written note, or the underlining of a key passage. When you find these things, it is impossible not to give them the same reverence and set them carefully aside as part of your personal library—and now I am using the word library advisedly.

See what treasures you can discover at the book sale.

Shepherdstown Community Club will hold its Legendary Book Sale at the War Memorial Building, October 11–14.

First Look reception:
October 11, 6 to 8 p.m.

Sale days:
October 12–13, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.;
October 14, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Mike Austin has spent most of his life collecting books and maps covering a wide range of subjects.
Daniel Tokar, Blacksmith
“A mighty man is he...”
Eleanor Johnson Hanold

Under a spreading chestnut-tree
The village smithy stands;
The smith, a mighty man is he,
With large and sinewy hands;
And the muscles of his browny arms
Are strong as iron bands.

His hair is crisp, and black, and long,
His face is like the tan;
His brow is wet with honest sweat.
He earns whate’er he can,
And looks the whole world in the face,
For he owes not any man.

— “The Village Blacksmith,”
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

F rom his early years, Daniel Tokar wanted to understand how things were made and how to make them. At two, he took his dad’s binoculars apart and tried to reassemble them. At four, he borrowed his father’s toolbox. He began forging at age 16 and started a business at 19.

The owner of The Willow Forge in Shepherdstown, Tokar moved here full time in 1987 from Southwest Pennsylvania, where members of his family lived and died in the mines. Status wasn’t achieved by money and material things; people were admired for their knowledge and craftsmanship. It didn’t take long for Tokar to be admired for his abilities as an expert blacksmith.

His heroes included his grandfather, Jaja, who emigrated from Russian-occupied Poland in 1914, earning his passage aboard the ship that brought him to America. Jaja and other community elders shared their knowledge with him. Eventually, Daniel Tokar began following some well-known national artisans who also provided inspiration—blacksmiths Francis Whitaker, Freddy Habberman, and Serge Macal. Whitaker, it’s said, never shod a horse yet helped to preserve and educate the town’s industrial history. He mark in the town’s industrial history. He enjoys sharing his knowledge with students and apprentices who want to learn from a master.

Tokar acknowledges a need to be mercenary to keep his business funded. He’s not above jobs like welding a local farmer’s manure spreader. But he emphasizes the blacksmith trade, perceived as a down-to-earth one, is also steeped in culture and history. An expert blacksmith must be interested in lots of things; and he must be lively, smart, and hard working. Certainly he must be fully in love with what he does, and, last but not least, he must be unafraid of dirt!

St. Francis of Assisi most likely was thinking of someone like Tokar when he said, “He who works with his hands and his head is a craftsman. He who works with his hands and his head and his heart is an artist.” Daniel Tokar may be reached at The Willow Forge, 498 Princess Street, 304-876-2884.

Eleanor Johnson Hanold admires creativity and hard work and agrees with Martin Luther King Jr.’s suggestion that “all the hosts of heaven and earth” will have to pause and say that whatever the work, when one achieves excellence in it, “all the hosts of heaven and earth” will have to pause and say that this person has lived a successful life.

Versatile in his interests and skills, Tokar worked with local musician Ann Heymann on experiments leading to crafting 18 carat gold wires for use as bass strings on replicas of medieval Gaelic harps. Dialogue on Historical Wire for Gaelic Harps with Dan Tokar and Ann Heymann, a book edited by Simon Chadwick, is a product of their joint effort. Now Tokar is working with a Canadian professor to reproduce 18th-century music wire.

An avid history buff, Tokar has conducted workshops on happenings in Jefferson County during the American Civil War. As a master metalsmith and blacksmith, he possesses keen knowledge of the stock and trade of the early Harpers Ferry craftsmen who left their mark in the town’s industrial history. He enjoys sharing his knowledge with students and apprentices who want to learn from a master.

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DANIEL TOKAR

Harp caps

Scottish 10th-century-style knife

Abe’s hawk

The snake rail

A set of kitchen tools

Sign bracket in Shepherdstown

A tree garden gate in Shepherdstown

A gate in Harper’s Ferry
ARTWORKS

See artworks in color at shepherdstowngoodnewspaper.org

PHOTOS BY DAN TOKAR

Moon gate

Tuner for harp

Silver and fired enamel penannular

Two-quart teakettle

Ouroborous

Magi snake
Danielle Corsetto grew up in Frederick, Maryland, and came to Shepherd College (now University) in 1999 for a degree in photography and digital imaging. “I came for the bachelor of fine arts and stayed for the town,” she says. In 2004, she launched her webcomic strip “Girls With Slingshots” that established her as a professional cartoonist, and it ran until 2015. In 2014, GWS received the Reuben Award for Online Comic Strips from the National Cartoonists Society.

In the early Shepherdstown Street Fest years, Corsetto had a booth where she drew caricatures and sold her self-published softcover GWS books that eventually ran to 10 volumes. Using a Kickstarter campaign, Iron City Comics recently published an oversized, two-volume, clothbound and slipcased set of the complete GWS in color and raised, according to CBR.com, over $250,000 for the project. Corsetto has been touring to sell and sign the boxed sets, which can be ordered through Four Seasons Books in Shepherdstown.

Corsetto both wrote and drew her wildly popular GWS strips, one of whose characters is a rambunctious cactus plant with a drinking problem. She has written three Adventure Time graphic novels for BOOM! Studios. She now has several other writing projects and occasionally teaches illustration at Shepherd University and a two-week course on comic strip format, comedy writing, and clarity in storytelling in Viborg, Denmark. In mid-July, Corsetto led a “Kids and Comics” hands-on, how-to experience for “teens and tweens,” at the Shepherdstown Public Library. This interview took place between her tours.

**What territory did your eastern tour cover, with the release of your GWS webcomic collection?**

I had signings in Philadelphia; Albany, New York; Worcester, Massachusetts; Portland, Maine; Halifax, Nova Scotia; Essex Junction, Vermont; Montreal; Toronto; and Pittsburgh. But I took my time and stretched it out over three weeks to visit friends and fellow cartoonists along the way, so it was half work and half vacation.

**So, Canada—an international tour! Where did you go next?**

I did a much shorter second tour for the new books, starting with GenCon in Indianapolis, with signings in Chicago and Ann Arbor, too. I kept the trip light. I cherish Shepherdstown in summer and don’t like to be away too long!

**What personal connections attended producing the two-volume GWS?**

Producing the books involved way more people than myself. My colorist, who goes by Laeluu, worked a year and a half to color the first thousand GWS strips. They were originally published in black and white. Colorizing them made the two books feel cohesive.

When I was looking for a publisher, I talked to my cartoonist friend Spike Trotman. Spike started in the webcomics scene about when I did but has come into her own as a publisher, starting Iron Circus Comics in Chicago. I asked her about printing the GWS books, and her enthusiasm put me at ease. I knew that, as a fellow comics creator and longtime friend, she’d give more attention to the production of my books than a big publisher might.

In 2015 Danielle Corsetto won a prestigious National Cartoonists Society Reuben Award for her long-running online comic “Girls With Slingshots.”

**What are your new writing projects?**

June saw the release of my newest webcomic, “BOO! It’s Sex.” I write it and Baltimore cartoonist Monica Gallagher draws it. Monica’s editor wanted a slice-of-life, sex ed comedy strip, and I was invited to write it. The story involves four
freshman girls whose house is haunted by the ghost of a dead sorority girl, Tara, who leads them through their sexual journey. BOO updates twice a week on the Webtoon site.

This fall I’ll start the script for my first creator-owned graphic novel. It’s set in Shepherdstown. It’s not named yet—I’ve been calling it “the book”—but I’m excited to breathe life into this idea. It’s been hanging in my brain for years. I’m especially excited to share Shepherdstown with readers, though the characters will be fictional.

I also have a sporadically updated autobio strip called Stuck at 32 (www.stuckat32.com). It’s mostly about my cats and yoga. I guess that pretty accurately defines who I am now: A cat and yoga person in her 30s!

How does it feel to have your writing recognized and confirmed now?
I’m just happy to have my work reach so many people. I appreciate the personal benefits of creating art—art for the sake of therapy and expression—but ultimately the work I put on paper is meant to reach other people who can relate to the stories and characters I share. I’ve joked that “Girls With Slingshots” was like a personals ad for me to find like-minded people. The GWS readers I meet on tour and at conventions are wonderful proof of that.

But I won’t hide the fact that hearing someone tell me, “Yeah, I know who you are” after I introduce myself gives me a buzz.

Did you ever dream or imagine... such success?
I definitely fell for the American dream of magically accessible fame when I was a kid, imagining what it would be like to be “famous.” I don’t know why I thought being a cartoonist would bring fame—I didn’t even know the names of most of my favorite cartoonists. I think I knew I could “make it” as an artist, but I’d recognized that the likelihood of doing it on my own terms was slim. I was ready to create art for other people’s ideas as a freelance illustrator, which I did right out of college, while working on passion projects that wouldn’t reach as many people. When I started GWS, I accepted it as a side project, but I kept my hopes high and my expectations low. It was a surprise when I realized I could shift GWS from a passion project to my full-time job in 2007.

Did particular people empower your drive to succeed in the comics and graphic book world?
I dedicated one of the new books to my mentor Michael Lark, a seasoned comics artist who took me under his wing before I started “Girls With Slingshots.” He told me I had what it took to be a cartoonist full time and encouraged me to quit my job at The Martinsburg Journal—to be honest, a very cool job—and focus on freelancing. Michael is an incredible visual storyteller and was already a well-known comics veteran, so I took his word for it. I started working on comics and illustration full time in 2015. He gave me the confidence I needed to believe that others might see what he saw in me.

What would you tell others about following their dream of acting on their creativity?
When I teach or mentor young artists, I find it’s important to give them space for their own definition of success. Some artists, like me, love the challenge of ethically monetizing their artwork. Being an entrepreneur is almost as exciting to me as being an artist.

And some artists—I’d say most artists—love just making art, and turning it into a business might murder their enjoyment. I encourage aspiring artists to pick out what they love about being a creative person and not to define themselves by what pays the bills. If you’re an artist, you’re an artist regardless of what you write after the word occupation. The best job for artists doesn’t sap their creative energy. Any job with enjoyable co-workers and plenty of downtime to doodle or daydream is ideal. Don’t get a graphic design job just to prove you can be a “professional” artist. Get a job as a receptionist, or a farmhand, or anything that will pay your bills and give you nights and weekends free to draw.

Ed Zahniser is a co-founder of the Good News Paper and member of the editorial board. His books of prose and poetry are available at Four Seasons Books in Shepherdstown.
To All of the Women Learning How To Be Lunar

Kelsey Stoneberger

I come across a Facebook comment written by a male acquaintance that reads, “one of my favorite writers, who happens to be a woman, is Marilynne Robinson.” He interrupts his comment with commas to squeeze the word “woman” between his opinion. Like a woman is not important enough to own a full sentence without pauses. He says this but all I hear is, “she’s one of my favorite writers, but she’s a woman.”

I tell myself to swallow it. As a woman, I feel like I am always being told to swallow it.

Calm down, they say. Why are you so emotional? they ask. It’s not that much, why don’t you just swallow it?

I feel my blood boil.

Women: know that men are afraid of us, afraid of the things we can do, afraid of the emotion we are in touch with when the top layer of reason disappears. I don’t say afraid in a negative way, nor do I say it in a powerful way. I do not want power. I want balance. I want balance men are afraid of because it no longer means they are on top.

If I know anything, men are going to learn balance. Learn the way balance seeps from our hips when we place babies on one side of us while doing something else. Learn the way we balance ourselves with nature, syncing up to wax and wane like the moon. Learn the way balance does not mean back down or apologize. Learn the way that we can yell, that we have voices, that we are lunar beings shining amidst the darkness.

Kelsey Stoneberger is a writer, editor, and reader with a wandering soul plucked from the magic of Appalachia. Her work has been published in Boshemia, Santa Cruz Mountain Bulletin, Fluent Magazine, and Sans Merci. She interns for Tin House literary magazine in Portland, Oregon.
The Vanishing Skill Set
Skilled Trades Face a Crisis

Barbara Cupp

It wasn’t long ago when people learned how to do basic home maintenance and repair. Parents would teach their children how to repair a kitchen cabinet door or replace a faucet washer to prevent water dripping behind the walls, causing mold or rotting joists. Schools taught basic carpentry and electrical repair, preparing both the students who wished to make this a career and those who would someday be a homeowner.

The trend over the past decade to remove “shop” from schools and “herd” all students into universities has caused a major crisis. The U.S. Dept of Labor has released numbers indicating over 250,000 open positions in the skilled trades and construction industry. This number is expected to double over the next decade. The Housing Industry is citing project delays and increased costs due to the personnel shortage. And anyone who was just hit by the last round of severe storms is aware of how hard it is to find a good, affordable carpenter to fix a roof or siding. Insurance companies have to pay extremely high “market value” prices for their covered repairs, which may soon have the effect of raising premiums.

This problem has a far-reaching effect, as Community Development Corporations—government and private—try to maintain the housing stock and publicly owned buildings. With jobs in abundance, people with these skills are in high demand and can command higher wages. Local entities trying to hire people with these skills are in high demand and can't find enough skilled tradespeople because many people do not have this skill set themselves, and fewer professional tradespeople are available to meet the building industry demand or the private sector’s need. Over the past decade or more, it may have become “unfashionable” to enter the skilled trades, especially with questions circulating about earnings potential and employability. However, with some plumbers earning six-digit salaries these days and many college graduates searching for work in their intended fields and unable to pay off their student loans, the attractiveness of the skilled trades may be returning.

The Eastern Panhandle offers some excellent hands-on skilled trades apprenticeships and educational programs. For those looking for a new career with a high probability of employment, and for those who just want to learn how to maintain their own property, there has never been a better time to look into attending a technical school.

Kathy Morgan, vice principal of James Rumsey Technical Institute in Martinsburg, West Virginia, says her school has two mottos: “Our Grads Get Jobs” and “New Career in Less than a Year!” James Rumsey graduates, Morgan says, are given lifetime job placement assistance. James Rumsey, a public technical institute accredited by the West Virginia Department of Education, welcomes high school students from Jefferson, Berkeley, and Morgan counties to attend tuition free; the eight high schools in those counties provide bus transportation. Adult learners may find external grant options. James Rumsey students can earn credits from Blue Ridge Community College that may be applied toward an associate’s degree in applied technology.

Career experience is the first thing employers are looking for, and a hands-on technical school education can provide the needed field expertise. James Rumsey’s carpentry students are currently building houses for the flood victims in southern West Virginia and for Habitat for Humanity clients. These students participate in building a whole house, from start to finish. Masonry students build benches for local schools and parks and may build a large masonry wall just to learn how to tear it back down. The electromechanical technology classes cannot produce graduates fast enough to meet the employment demand. These students are able to diagnose and repair automated factory equipment.

Area companies, including Argos and Procter and Gamble, continually reach out to James Rumsey for potential employees. HVAC (heating, ventilating, air conditioning) and electrical technicians may also train for rewarding careers at James Rumsey. Carpentry classes are offered primarily to high school students but are sometimes available to adult learners if there is room in the class. The same is true for electrical technician classes. Masonry classes are for high school students only, and HVAC technician training is for adult learners only. The curriculum is 50 percent classroom learning and 50 percent hands on.

For those who need a salary now, with no experience necessary to apply, the Plumbers and Steamfitters Apprenticeship school in Martinsburg offers “earn while you learn” programs for commercial and industrial plumbing and steamfitters. Apprentices are expected to emerge from these five-year programs highly skilled and readily employable.

With fewer formal educational opportunities, a person seeking a job in the skilled trades can research the many other “apprenticeship” opportunities in the area. (A simple Google search will yield local results, using the keyword apprenticeship, followed by the skill and geographical location.) It’s always best to research what career you’d like to enter first, and then explore the education, experience, and other requirements to get you there.

There’s great satisfaction to be derived from working with your hands, earning a good living, and caring for yourself and your family. Maybe it’s time to make these worthwhile careers “cool” again.

Barbara Cupp loves life in the Eastern Panhandle. She is half of the writing duo NB Cupp (www.NBCupp.com).
The National Conservation Training Center Archives in Shepherdstown prove we have learned something since de Tocqueville visited the States. Officially called the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Museum/Archives, hidden in the basement of the NCTC Entry Building are a half million objects chronicling American conservation history.

When NCTC opened in 1997, it was described as the “home of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.” Like any family home with an heirloom-filled attic, the USFWS “home” has a collection of sentimental artifacts going back to its creation in 1871. These objects range from a stuffed passenger pigeon, a symbol of humanity’s insatiable hunger to abuse natural resources, to a whooping crane feeding costume, a symbol of our occasional success in rectifying an environmental wrong.

Although NCTC attracts nearly 10,000 students a year, many are unaware of this collection, which is situated beneath the Byrd Auditorium. The NCTC archive also houses the agency’s sole historian (the author of this article), who will serve as your virtual tour guide. As you enter the archive you will be surrounded by tigers and bears (no lion, alas, to make the parallel to The Wizard of Oz complete). Bengal tigers are a species of international concern, and all too often they enter this country as illegal trophies or ground to powder, as an ingredient in traditional Asian medicines. Our agency’s special agents (who pioneered undercover work in the Al Capone era) seek to keep these animals in the wild and out of our archives.

As to bears, we house an amazing polar bear pelt from the first expedition to reach the North Pole on April 6, 1909. As with so many artifacts, this 109-year-old pelt has a story behind the story. The 1909 North Pole expedition, led by Rear Admiral Robert Peary, was a media sensation in its day. But a forgotten member of the “Peary Expedition,” Matthew Henson, is most likely the man behind the pelt. Henson was probably the first man to reach the North Pole (Peary had frostbite and was largely confined to a dogsled at that point) and would have been a more likely and able-bodied explorer to hunt and skin a polar bear on the way to the North Pole. But Henson was largely written out of the famous North Pole journey, as he was an African-American in a period of strong segregation and racism in the United States. The pelt reminds us that much of early environmental history may have literally been “whitewashed.”

As you pass the polar bear and walk to your left, you will see the heaviest object in our archive—a 6,000-pound printing press from the 1930s. This printing press belonged to the most colorful leader of our agency, Jay “Ding” Darling. Darling was an editorial cartoonist for the Des Moines Register and a friend and political supporter of Herbert Hoover. As such, he was an unlikely Franklin Roosevelt appointee to head the Bureau of Biological Survey, a predecessor agency to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. But Darling exceeded
everyone’s low expectations. In a mere 18 months as chief of the survey, Darling helped pass the Duck Stamp Act and actually drew the first duck stamp. His original etching for the duck stamp is housed in the archive and may well have been reproduced on this press. Darling also created the first logo for our National Wildlife Refuge System, started a partnership with land-grant universities, and doubled the size of public lands for wildlife largely along migratory bird pathways. A year after he retired from the survey, Darling founded what became the National Wildlife Federation, whose archives we also house at NCTC. Darling’s press, art, and records remind us how active and productive Americans could be in the cause of conservation before television and social media provided attractive distractions.

Sitting above Darling’s printing press is Rachel Carson’s private library, formerly in her house in Silver Spring, Maryland. If I pull a random box from her collection and open it on our 500-year-old Imperial Chinese ivory table, I will not only find her books but also an insight into her personality. We find her many foreign editions of her pioneering work Silent Spring, including the “Olive Garden” restaurant entree “Primavera silenziosa” or the scary Germanic “Der stumme Frühling.” Each of her books contains a book plate “From the Library of Rachel Carson” and a card catalog entry, reminding us that Carson, too, may have been frustrated at unreturned loaner books and took meticulous care of her research. Next to her magnifying glass lies my favorite book of Carson’s, a double-signed first edition of Silent Spring. A Mr. Donahoe had sent Carson a book (and a buck for postage) and asked her to please sign it and mail it back to him. Carson did indeed sign the book and also wrote a brief, chatty note acknowledging his letter and returning the dollar bill. Carson was dying of breast cancer and extremely busy as a four-time best-selling author defending the most controversial environmental book of the 20th Century. Yet she took the time to write this correspondent, acknowledge his worth, making this book valuable both as a signed first edition and an insight into what type of person Carson was.

Finally, hidden in a cabinet across from our 10,000-year-old elk antler, lies Lucille, the “extinct” black-footed ferret. In the late 1800s, the black-footed ferret population was declining as a result of prairie dog poisoning and plague. Though black-footed ferrets had been declared extinct in 1979, in 1981 rancher Lucille Hogg’s dog dropped this ferret on her porch—a testament to the species’ nonextinction! A search began, and 18 ferrets were eventually found and moved to a captive breeding facility to save the species. Today more than 1,000 ferrets live in five states, the most poignant reintroduction being the return of a population back to the Hogg Ranch in 2016. As a final note, the ferret was called Lucille informally as the stuffed mammal was a fixture at Lucille Hogg’s diner, but he is actually a male officially called “Studbook” in the scientific literature—although his virility was certainly limited by his being dead. Lucille (aka Studbook) recalls Mark Twain’s quote: “The report of my death was an exaggeration.”

The NCTC archives tour is a journey of natural and cultural history. We can see the origins of humans crossing the Bering land bridge 10,000 years ago in the elk antlers (perhaps even from an animal killed by the first North American hunters). We can witness the origins of the American conservation movement with President Theodore Roosevelt’s executive order creating the first wildlife refuge in Pelican Island, Florida, on March 14, 1903. Rachel Carson’s typewriter, magnifying glass, and early drafts of press releases on the environmentally harmful insecticide DDT are the kindling for the modern environmental movement. Some of the movement’s successes include the 1964 Wilderness Act, whose signing pen went from President Lyndon Johnson to the archives, and the Endangered Species Act, whose tools include puppets to help breed California condors and whooping cranes in captivity.

The tour is just beginning, but your guide’s word count has reached its limit. With nearly half a million objects in the archives (including 90,000 photos, 5,000 films, and several thousand artworks), he could go on for many issues of the Good News Paper. But in the interest of newsprint conservation, check out the USFWS History website (https://training.fws.gov/history/index.html), Facebook account (https://www.facebook.com/USFWSHISTORY), and Twitter account (https://twitter.com/USFWSHistory) to keep abreast of everything new that is old.

Mark Madison is the historian for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. His office is adjacent to the NCTC Archives’ half million objects and many million stories.
I Remember Greg Lloyd
(1951–2014)

Ed Zahniser

I remember Greg Lloyd telling me tales about his high school capers in Martinsburg, West Virginia—they reinforced my suspicions I’d grown up a suburban kid with pretty staid friends and no personal relationships with cops, sheriffs, or deputies. Later I met Greg’s mom, Norma, and wondered: “How could you be a part-time juvenile delinquent with a great mom like Norma?”

I remember thinking, “Jeesh, Flannery O’Connor was right. If we survive childhood, we have enough material for the rest of our lives.” Greg’s stories made my riding my bike to the public library sound dull as 78 rpm vinyl played at 33 rpm. I was jealous of Greg’s great stash of hijinx.

I remember Greg dating Mary Ellen Wright. Hmm. The thing is, I had been Mary Ellen’s eighth-grade Sunday school teacher. Mary Ellen and George Miller almost got into fisticuffs. Then I remembered Greg’s high school capers and thought, “Heck, the dude can handle this.”

I remember it dawning on me, “Greg’s dating Chris’s and my former babysitter?” That put a spin on this thing with Mary Ellen.

I remember the Midlife Crisis Band—Greg, Bob Proudman, Melinda Schmitt, Kathy Eckstrand, and me. Greg and Bob played guitars. The first time we performed, Jim Schmitt videotaped us from the church balcony. My head shone so bright in the videos that I wore a hat from then on.

I remember Greg telling me how much he liked my first book of poems, The Way to Heron Mountain. Greg quoted from memory his favorite line in the whole book. It was one of the epigrams. I knew then Greg had discerning taste. Francesco Petrarch (1304–1374) wrote the epigram. He invented modern Western poetry by writing his love poems in the Italian vernacular.

I remember Mary Ellen once worried Greg was gonna go too woo-woo spiritually. Greg had his mystic streak—he’d lived in a spiritual commune. Now he liked another guru and wanted to visit his ashram. As a past Sunday school teacher, I felt obligated to Mary Ellen. We agreed I’d tell Greg, “Look, instead of you visiting the guru, I’ll send you a postcard each week with a different spiritual saying?” Greg agreed to try it. I sent postcards for months. I ran low on spiritual quips, but the guru thing blew over. This was pre-internet. You couldn’t type in “spiritual quips” and get bazillions. (I just tried and got: “There’s nothing interesting about being perfect.”)

I remember being on stage with Greg and feeling out of my element. Meanwhile, Greg bounced from one thing needing doing to the next and the next like God flashed him cue cards: “Do this. Good. Now do that. Good. And now this…” This was long before Red Bull got to America. You know what? God can be as annoying as omniscient narrators.

I remember trying to imagine Greg in his health inspector job. How did this guy with the Buddha’s own compassion tell the owner of an upscale restaurant he’d better clean up his act or the health department would shut him down?

I remember wondering what it’s like to have a job where you routinely smell nice food cooking while you try to concentrate on nasty bacteria and food-handling sequences for raw chicken.

I remember thinking it would break Greg’s professional heart to watch me cook. “Oops,” he once told me as we cooked at church, “you touched your face!” I decided to keep my day job.

I remember Greg telling me in 1996, “I have an extra ticket to see Bob Dylan at Wolf Trap. Wanna go?” Of course: Does Carter have liver pills? Greg said Ani DiFranco (I’d never heard of her) was opening for Dylan. I’d last seen Dylan live in 1965, backed by the guys who became The Band. Trouble was, I had to be at Dulles Airport at 6 a.m. the next morning to fly to Glacier Bay, Alaska, for work. Ani DiFranco was great. Bob and his band were great. A mosh pit woman wore her leopard-skin pillbox hat. Greg and I got back from Wolf Trap at 1 a.m. When I finally got a full night’s sleep, it was in a tent, my second night in Alaska. (Woke up to tracks of two wolves 10 feet from my tent.)

I remember a saying—maybe Lao Tzu—“To achieve eminence is like piling up dust.” Greg embodied eminence but no dust. Eminence means “high station, rank, or repute.” Catholics must make cardinal to be called that. At Greg’s church, you only had to manifest Greg-ness. Besides, Greg sang like an actual cardinal.

I remember reading, earlier in the week that Greg died, “Live like the gate got left open.” That suited Greg. He took his entourage through the gate, too—the Pied Piper of Greater Shepherdstown.

I remember getting the phone call that Greg had died. I felt like God nabbed Greg way too soon. Later I thought, “If I was God. I’d want Greg inside the pearly gates sooner, too.” Then it dawned on me: She’s been jealous of Mary Ellen for years!

I remember Greg warbling in the choir loft looking like Jerry Garcia of the Grateful Dead in a formal maroon dress called a “robe” to allay gender anxieties. Imagine your choir with Jerry Garcia. The Rapture—whether you believe it or not—would be poised to happen.

I remember larger-than-life heroes of British history—Richard the Lionhearted, Sir Lancelot, or King Who’s-it the Umpteenth. I once visited the Armory Room in England’s Tower of London. They have the actual metal armor of specific historical figures. Greg could not have squeezed into any armor there. He was larger than life.

I remember first learning that our lives will soon be full of robotics. I thought of the Wizard of Oz and the Tin Man’s new heart. Before we go gung-ho robotics, we should program our collective memory of Greg Lloyd’s Big Heart into a 3-D printer. Then every robotic could have a big heart. Imagine! (It’s easy if you try.)
Religious Worship and Education Schedules

Asbury United Methodist Church
4257 Kearneysville Pike
Dr. Rudolph Monsio Bropleh, Pastor
Telephone: (304) 876-3112
Sunday Worship: 8 a.m., 9:30 a.m. and 11 a.m.
Mid-Week Mingle: Wednesday, 6:30–8:00 p.m.
Real Recognized Real Teen:
1st & 3rd Sundays, 1:15–2:30 p.m.
E-mail: info@4pillarchurch.org
www.4pillarchurch.org

Christ Reformed, United Church of Christ
304 East German Street
Rev. Gayle Bach-Watson
bachwats@comcast.net
Sunday Worship: 11:00 a.m.
www.christreformedshepherdstown.org

Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
Shepherdstown Monthly Meeting for Worship and First Day School
Sundays at 10:00 a.m.
Shepherdstown Railroad Station, Audrey Eggle Drive
Contact Clerk, Neal Peterson, (304) 584-3126,
mealpeterson@gmail.com
http://shepherdstownfriends.org

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

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

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

St. Peter’s Lutheran
King & High Streets
Karen Erskine-Valentine, Pastor
Telephone: (304) 876-6771
Sunday Worship: 11:00 a.m.
Children/Adult Sunday School: 10:00 a.m.
(located in grey house adjacent church)
www.Shepherdstownlutheranparish.org

Shepherdstown Presbyterian
100 W. Washington Street
Telephone: (304) 876-6466
Sunday Worship: 8:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.
Sunday School: 10:45 a.m.
Nursery year-round
www.shepherdstownpresbyterian.org

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

St. James’ Lutheran Church, Uvilla
Rt. 230 Uvilla
Karen Erskine-Valentine, Pastor
Telephone: (304) 876-6771
Sunday Worship: 9:00 a.m.
Children/Adult Sunday School: 10:00 a.m.
A Face From Long-Ago Shepherdstown...

In 1902, John Henry Show, pictured here in a photo from the Historic Shepherdstown Museum, joined five other citizens of Shepherdstown in petitioning the Town Council about the “dangerous menace to life and property” posed by oil tanks belonging to the Standard Oil Company. A recent fire at the facility near New Street had aroused their concerns that an “explosion which might come at any time from fire would carry death and destruction” to their neighborhood and possibly the whole town.

John Henry Show (1841–1913), his wife, Elizabeth Cookus Show (1845–1907), and their family lived at 211 E. German Street. John Henry was a blacksmith and farmer who ran unsuccessfully for Town Council several times. There is no indication that the Town Council acted on the petition.

Text by Vicki Smith, a volunteer with the Historic Shepherdstown Museum. Follow Historic Shepherdstown and Museum on Facebook.

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