

## FROM THE EDITOR

*The July 2020 issue marks the change in ownership of **The Observer** from Mike Chalmers to Steve & Harriet Pearson.*

COMING HOME TO WEST VIRGINIA, the pulse slows and the mind eases when I crest the Blue Ridge at Keys Gap or cross alongside the Shenandoah River. When Mike Chalmers showed me the image overlooking Harpers Ferry (July 2020 Issue, page 4) it reminded me that this is where “almost heaven” begins and why we call this place home. We plan to continue these WV Perspectives each month — feel free to share an image that reminds you of our state.

Harriet and I are grateful that Mike agreed to share *The Observer* with us. He’s done an amazing job shaping it over the past four years and we hope to be able stewards of this newspaper. We see *The Observer* as a platform to amplify the voices of West Virginia, particularly from our communities in the Eastern Panhandle. Our task will be to identify the issues relevant to the community, to ask the essential questions, and to inform the discussion and debate — based on facts. We won’t presume to have the answers, but we can offer honest perspectives.

*The Observer* will continue to highlight the people, the businesses of the region as they rise to the challenges ahead. We’ll also celebrate the creative culture that thrives here and the artists, artisans, musicians and performers who enrich our spirits. The land and food that sustains us will be part of the story as well. West Virginia has many main streets, and we intend to spotlight how our local economy works to sustain and expand opportunities to keep our communities thriving. Likewise, we hope to shine a light on our local and state governments, to inform and encourage citizens to engage.

As Harriet and I started down this path in early May, we focused on the theme of “reopening” for our first issue — thinking about the relaunch of *The Observer* as well as the reopening of public spaces, organizations and businesses as they adapt to survive the health and economic disruptions visited by the Covid-19 pandemic. But we now find ourselves witnessing another turning point in history — one that has us thinking about the unfinished conversations that need to be re-opened. Our feature this month shares a few of the many voices that need to be heard. We look forward to an open discussion, one we hope will lead to enduring change.



Steve Pearson  
EDITOR IN CHIEF