

The WV INDEPENDENT Observer

JEFFERSON COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

MAY 2021

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With A Mission

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THIS PAPER WANTS TO BE RECYCLED. 



(Above) John's Family Restaurant at 847 Berryville Pike near Rippon, Jefferson County WV. Owned and operated by Sue Smith since the late 1970s, the restaurant was started by her parents John and Catherine Smith in 1963. The planned Route 340 widening project has been casting a shadow over the restaurant for many years. The highway project has yet to break ground, but the pandemic has closed this roadside institution for good this year, leaving just fond memories.

TO OUR READERS



Many of us can remember being told by our parents to carry some change in our pockets to call home when we were ready for a pick up — at least until we were old enough to get a driver's license (and a job to pay for gas). Whether we grew up here or elsewhere, the payphone (at left, still hanging on the front porch of John's Family Restaurant, but soon to be just a memory) was once a common feature of the landscape across America.

But change has always been part of this landscape and what we call home evolves just as much as we ourselves do. In Jefferson County, we're fortunate to have many pockets where these kinds of memories can live on and find meaning for a new generation. Case in point: the enormous Winchester Cold Storage facility just outside of Charles Town. Once built to store the apples grown in Jefferson County by the millions, this facility has now found new life housing the Shenandoah Planing Mill, an innovative startup business.

We can see that others will soon be calling Jefferson County home too. Looking at the regional trends and counting the permits for new housing, it's evident that the pace of home building will soon be picking up, perhaps to a level we haven't seen locally since the 1980s and 1990s. The challenge ahead will be how to balance the character and vitality of the county with welcoming new neighbors. Although change is inevitable, hopefully we can find a way to maintain that essence, that specialness, that calls us to make this place our home.

Steve Pearson
 EDITOR IN CHIEF

// COMMUNITY

NOT YOUR RUN OF THE MILL OPERATION

Shenandoah Planing Mill – Businesses Built On Wood



JOHN VAN VLIET AND AMANDA MCDANIEL (both pictured above on the left, with family), the father and daughter team running the Shenandoah Planing Mill, have weathered the pandemic and are eager to continue expanding their vision to build a sustainable-scale manufacturing hub for a local woodworking industry. After two years

of operation, the mill has grown to host several other businesses that fit into the collaborative model that takes in raw logs at the back of the building and can deliver finished furniture, molding, and other wood products out the front loading docks.

Van Vliet started out his career in construction sweeping floors, then trained as a carpenter, and eventually retired as a vice president of operations for a large commercial construction company. Somewhere along the way he had a dream of opening a lumber mill. Looking at the mill operations today at the old Winchester Cold Storage property just outside of Charles Town, the dream has come to life.

McDaniel oversees the business side of the mill. For her, the vision extends beyond just processing wood. “I want to see Jefferson County grow in a healthy way, to add sustainable jobs so the people who grow up here can thrive and not get pushed out. My passion is the people we work with. We see this as an incubator space for small business owners with big plans. When we all work together, we all do better.”

BY: Steve Pearson



THE RAW MATERIAL

SPM has a timberland license and works with local tree services to harvest logs sustainably from local woodlots – mostly walnut, cherry, soft maple, and poplar which are common in the area. They also purchase pine, hard maple and other wood from suppliers.

SUMMERTIME FESTIVAL

The Shenandoah Planing Mill (SPM) will host its annual “Summertime at the Mill” event on June 12, from 9 am to 6 pm. Most events will be outside, including exhibits by the artists of Over The Mountain Studio Tour, demonstrations by local artisans and craftspeople, and music by Mink’s Miracle Medicine. Event details are posted on the Mill’s Facebook page @SPMWV.

Shenandoah Planing Mill is located at 471 Cold Storage Road, Charles Town, WV, 25414. Web: ShenandoahPlaningMill.com, Email: CustomerService@ShenandoahPlaningMill.com, Tel: 304-609-2449.



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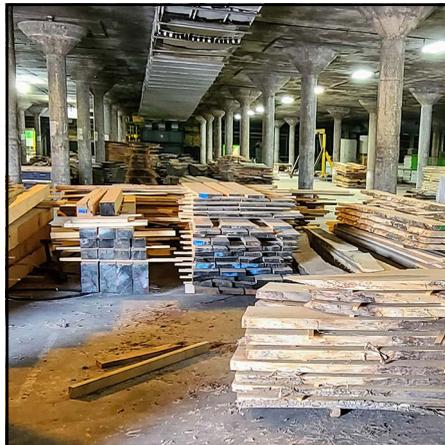
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IN-HOUSE SAWMILL

S&K Enterprises runs an independent saw mill operation at SPM cutting logs into rough lumber (called a “cant”). They can process between 5 to 20 logs a day.



PRE-DRYING

The mill has plenty of indoor space to store the rough lumber while it “pre-dries” before being planed into dimensional lumber.



ENERGY-EFFICIENT KILN DRYING

The mill’s computer-controlled vacuum drying kiln operates at a relatively low temperature. In addition to being energy-efficient, the process produces very straight boards with little checking (the small cracks that appear when wood is dried quickly under high heat).



HIGH-PRESSURE GLUE PRESS

The glue press holds multiple strips of wood under high pressure to create tabletops and stair treads. After the operator loads the loose wood, the press will automatically align and compress each piece and then flip up, ready for the operator to load the next set of wood pieces. After drying, the tabletop is ready for finishing (glued top shown here on a custom sawhorses created in-house on the mill’s computerized cutting machine).



FINISHED LUMBER

After kiln-drying, lumber is stacked and ready for sale or a variety of uses at the mill.



MOLDING LIBRARY AND CUSTOM MILLING

The mill acquired an extensive library of molding shapes and can also match a customer’s samples. The molding machine has multiple blade stations that can create complex shapes.



VINTAGE SHUTTER MAKING

Mill co-owner John Van Vliet has become an expert at restoring vintage equipment. Shown here, a belt-driven nineteenth century shutter-making machine restored for use on the shop floor.

// COMMUNITY

CHANGES COMING TO KEARNEYSVILLE

Considering New Houses & Industrial Uses

ON APRIL 15, JEFFERSON ORCHARDS INC. (JOI), applied to the Jefferson County Commission to change the zoning designation for the old Miller Orchard and a second, adjacent property located to the northeast of Kearneysville. The two parcels (240+ acres) are currently in the rural zone. The JOI application requests that the Commission amend the zoning map to allow residential growth and light industrial use on the parcels. Per the ordinance revision process in WV state law, the County Commission referred the application to the Planning Commission for review and scheduled a public hearing and possible vote on the application (see bottom of page for key dates).

JOI plans to develop approximately 196 acres of the land for residential housing, consisting of a mix of single family homes and townhouses. Documents submitted with the application indicate that JOI also envisions extending Northport Drive from the Rockwool factory property through the residential development to create at least two connecting routes for through traffic from Route 115 (adjacent to Route 9) to Route 480 (Kearneysville Pike). The southern portion of the JOI property (approximately 44 acres) abuts the Rockwool factory property and is proposed for light industrial use. This parcel was identified in a 2017 land use agreement between Rockwool and JOI as potential additional property to be acquired by the Rockwool factory owner (which also obtained a right of first refusal on the parcel).

The recent expansion of utilities, specifically water, sewer, and natural gas, to the adjacent Rockwool factory property is mentioned as a consideration for why rezoning the proposed development area would be consistent with the County's Comprehensive Plan. New development by JOI in the rezoned parcels would facilitate additional expansion of utilities into the Kearneysville area, currently designated as a Preferred Growth Area (PGA) in the Comprehensive Plan. The County staff are currently evaluating these considerations in advance of the scheduled Planning Commission meeting. 



(Above) The application requests a change in zoning for a 242-acre parcel (outlined in blue) to a combination of residential growth and light industrial uses. Like much of the surrounding area, this parcel is currently zoned as rural (green shading) according to the 2015 Future Land Use map of Jefferson County. The area in white at the lower right is location of the Rockwool factory in the City of Ranson.

(Below) The WVDOH is studying extensions of Novak Drive to connect from I-81 at Tabler Station Road to Route 115 (red) or Route 480 (yellow) near Kearneysville.



The amendment application and information about the public meetings are available online at WeAreTheObserver.com/kearneysville-rezone-2021.

WHAT WE HEARD...

The Observer heard several common questions from Jefferson County residents about the proposed rezoning of the old Miller Orchard purchased by Jefferson Orchards Inc. (JOI) in December 2017:

- What specifically are the permissible uses in a "light industrial" zone?
- What would prevent a future change in zoning to allow light industrial or other non-residential use on the entire 242 acres?
- Is the 44-acre portion proposed for light industrial zoning the same land included in the 2017 land use restriction and right-of-first refusal agreements between Roxul and JOI?
- Could the tax relief programs that apply to the current Rockwool factory apply to any adjacent property acquired by Roxul?
- Is a 9-acre buffer between light industrial and high-density residential use sufficient (in discussing the 2017 land use restriction agreement, Roxul expressed concern that residential construction is not compatible near its industrial plant, given the truck traffic, nighttime lighting, and noise)?
- Is the WVDOH Novak Drive extension project the I-81 connection referenced in the zoning amendment application?
- What are the traffic increases expected from connecting Northport Drive to Route 480 and is WVDOH planning improvements to the adjacent roads (Routes 9, 115 or 480)?
- Does the current school system planning for elementary and middle school construction take into account the number of children who could be added from this development?

DEADLINES FOR PUBLIC COMMENT & QUESTIONS

On May 11, the Jefferson County Planning Commission is scheduled to review the application to rezone 242 acres in Kearneysville for compatibility with the County Comprehensive Plan. The meeting begins at 7 pm. This is not a public hearing and earlier this year the Planning Commission voted to remove public comment from its regular meeting agendas. **Public comments received by 5 pm on May 4 (Tuesday)** can be included as "non-actionable correspondence" in the meeting packet provided to the Commissioners. Comments may be sent by mail to PO Box 716, Charles Town WV 25414 or by email to PlanningDepartment@JeffersonCountyWV.org.

On June 3, the Jefferson County Commission is scheduled to hold a public hearing to accept comments and take action (immediately following the hearing) on the application to rezone 242 acres in Kearneysville. The hearing is scheduled for 1:30 pm. County residents who cannot attend the hearing (to be held by video conference) may send comments by mail to PO Box 250, Charles Town WV 25414 or by email to Info@JeffersonCountyWV.org. **Comments must be received by 5 pm on May 27 (Thursday)** to be included in the meeting packet sent to the Commissioners.

// COMMUNITY

A BUILDING WAVE

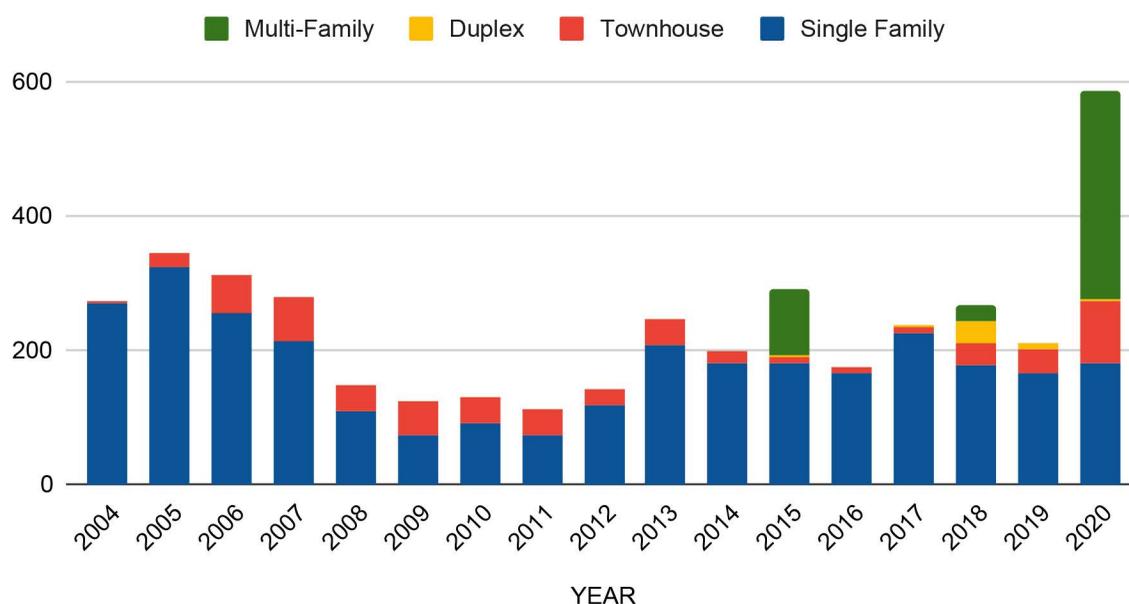
Housing Trends Indicate Growth In Jefferson County

“NEW HOUSING SUPPLY is not keeping up with rising demand. We estimate that the housing market is undersupplied by 3.3 million units and the shortage is rising by about 300,000 units a year” states a recent report by Sam Khter, Chief Economist at Freddie Mac. As one of the two large government-sponsored finance companies that underpins the US residential mortgage market, Freddie Mac tracks data across the country. This report's concise observation explains the challenges new home buyers are encountering in many markets as limited inventory in turn limits buying options and sparks bidding wars for desirable homes.

Here in Jefferson County, the slowdown in new home construction after the 2008 recession is visible in the building permit numbers as reported by the County's Office of Impact Fees. Looking just at single family houses, an average of 270 were built each year between 2004 and 2007 – that number fell by two-thirds to an average of 90 per year from 2008 to 2012. The pace of construction picked up after 2013, averaging 190 homes per year.

Looking at what's ahead, the County's Planning Department reports that there are several large developments under construction in the County, including the Magnolia Springs subdivision (300 houses), Rocky Ridge (132 townhouses), Kings Crossing (400 houses), and the nearly completed Aspen Green (200 houses). The County's Office of Impact Fees Construction reports 149 residential building permits countywide (all jurisdictions) for the first three months of 2021. That number is mostly single family homes, which could suggest a full-year pace between 300 and 500 new single family housing units – a dramatic shift upward from the past two decades. 📈

NEW HOUSING PERMITS IN JEFFERSON COUNTY



(Above, left) The Beallair subdivision off Old Country Club Road northeast of Charles Town, survived the 2008 recession and is currently building out its final phase. If completed according to the initial plan, the project will have 240 single family homes and 54 townhouses.



(Above, right) The developer of the Toll House Woods subdivision off Route 480 south of Shepherdstown (near Morgan's Grove Park) has recently started groundwork. Planning for this project, slated for 69 single family homes, began in 2005 but was put on hold after the 2008 recession.



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// HEALTH

MONITORING HEAVY METALS IN THE AIR

WVU School of Public Health Studies Local Children's Exposure



The Rockwool mineral wool factory, scheduled to begin production this spring, is visible across the road in front of North Jefferson Elementary School.

IT'S ABOUT GIVING FAMILIES PEACE OF MIND, emphasized Dr. Michael McCawley and Dr. Catherine Feaga, speaking about the WVU School of Public Health research project to study the potential exposure and near-term health effects of heavy metals in children in the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia. Dr. McCawley, who is currently a Clinical Associate Professor with the School, worked with the US Public Health Service for almost three decades, studying miners' health, occupational respiratory disease, aerosol measurement, and ultrafine particles. Dr. Feaga is a practicing family physician specializing in integrative medicine, which focuses on the health of individuals in the context of lifestyle and environment.

Both Dr. McCawley and Dr. Feaga noted the value of collecting health data before operations begin at the Rockwool mineral wool factory near Kearneysville. Establishing baseline measurements of the heavy metals detectable in local children now will enable better interpretation of data collected in the future. "We don't know what the outcomes might be," said Dr. McCawley. "If we can bring more certainty and understanding to the community, it gives families the capacity to make informed decisions about their children's health."

The study will be collecting hair samples from children of all ages (from birth to age 18). "The potential for harm to kids of metals exposure is well known," said Dr. McCawley. He noted that with an accurate baseline and ongoing testing, "we can detect smaller effects and see trends early. The metals are either there or not – this could be innocuous or it could

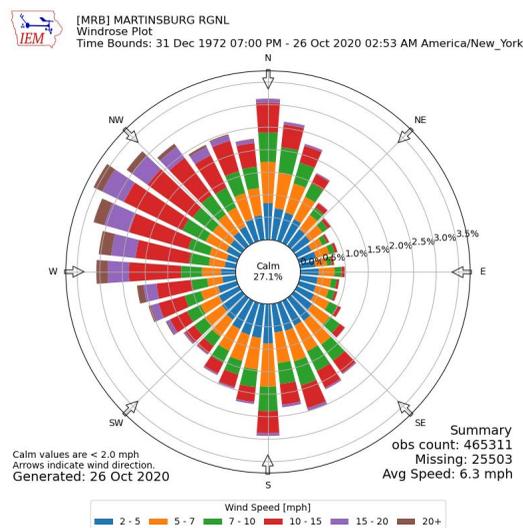
be a perfect storm. We want to start with as much information as possible and follow up to alleviate the uncertainty." 📷

Free Testing

Residents of Berkeley and Jefferson Counties are invited to participate in this study. Visit Go.WVU.edu/JeffersonCountyStudy for more information. The study organizers will hold a free testing event at Sam Michaels park on May 15 & 16 from 10 am to 5 pm (details on page 11).

WHERE THE WIND BLOWS

The prevailing winds in Berkeley and Jefferson Counties vary in direction and intensity throughout the year (see below). Depending on the day, any part of the counties could be downwind from the mineral wool factory near Kearneysville.



WHAT'S THE RISK?

Since the chemical characteristics of heavy metals are similar to the minerals that are essential to growth, the body will readily absorb them. Children are particularly susceptible, as they are more metabolically active.

The study will measure various metals, some of which have been linked with a variety of health issues. The list of metals and the potential health issues they cause includes:

Arsenic

Skin problems (including cancer); lung & bladder cancer; problems with cognitive development, intelligence, and memory; lung disease; heart attacks; adverse pregnancy outcomes & infant mortality.

Cadmium

Lung disease & cancer; kidney disease; bone weakness & fractures; neurological & skeletal birth defects in the unborn; concentrates in breastmilk.

Chromium

Lung disease; upper & lower respiratory cancers; kidney & liver failure; gastric & intestinal ulcers; miscarriage.

Nickel

Allergic reactions; upper & lower respiratory problems (asthma, bronchitis, cancer); blood & kidney problems; abdominal pain & nausea.

Lead

Anemia; immune dysfunction; metabolic dysregulation; headaches, gastric distress, fatigue, weight loss, cognitive dysfunction, decreased coordination, depression, anxiety, & aberrant behavior (ADHD/ADD); transmission in breastmilk.

Manganese

Developmental delays & mental disability; memory problems; difficulty with speech and walking; SIDS; infertility; inflammation of the kidneys & kidney stones.

Zinc

Dysregulation of copper levels; metal fume fever; nausea, vomiting, diarrhea; pancreatitis; infertility; low birth weight.

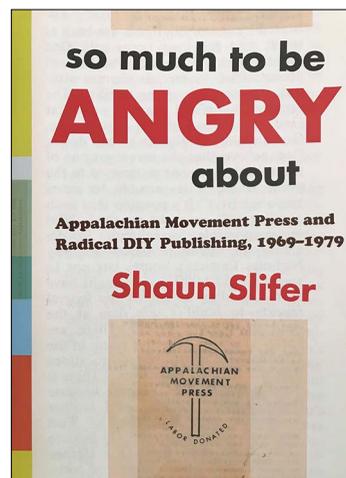
// BOOK REVIEW

REVOLUTION IN APPALACHIA

So Much to Be Angry About, by Shaun Slifer

Publisher: West Virginia University Press (2021)

Review by: Gonzalo Baeza — Born in Texas, raised in Chile, and currently living in Shepherdstown, Gonzalo is a fiction writer with books published in Spain, Italy, and Chile. His stories have appeared in *Boulevard*, *Goliad*, and *The Texas Review*.



THE UPSURGE of social justice movements and radicalism that characterized the Sixties had an equally dynamic correlation in the so-called “movement press”, the many independent print shops across the United States that published

pamphlets and other political materials aimed at everyone from college students to blue-collar workers. Many of these outfits were little more than an offset press run by a handful of volunteers in charge of everything from typesetting and hand stapling to selling copies in a street corner, but their enthusiasm and commitment often made up for what the publications lacked in production values.

One such publisher was the Appalachian Movement Press (AMP), which operated from 1969 to 1979 in Huntington, WV. AMP was the only movement press in the entire region. Its catalog consisted primarily of reprints of earlier political tracts but also included magazines (such as *MAW: Magazine of Appalachian Women*, likely the first feminist magazine in Appalachia) and poetry and journalistic booklets. Even though AMP sought to explore regional history and culture from a political activist lens, it was part of the milieu of the New Left, the name given to the disparate movements and groups that emerged during the 1960s, including organizations like Students for a Democratic Society (which had a chapter in Huntington) and the Youth International Party, also known as the Yippies. As a matter of fact, AMP was started by two student activists, Tom Woodruff and Danie Stewart, who sought to have their own press to publish the Huntington SDS’s newspaper, *Free Forum*.

In delving into this forgotten chapter of Appalachian activism, Pittsburgh artist and

writer Shaun Slifer, creative director at the West Virginia Mine Wars Museum in Matewan, has undertaken a painstaking work of historical reconstruction. The AMP’s publications are hard to find and live largely in university library collections. In order to fill in the chronological gaps of an undocumented cultural phenomenon, Slifer interviewed many of the people involved in the project as well as researched in places like the Appalachian South Folklife Center, founded by poet and activist Don West and his wife Connie, a teacher and community organizer.

In The Shadow of Don West

The connection with West is no coincidence, as his work and stature as an elder statesman of the old guard of Appalachian activists loomed large when Woodruff and Stewart decided to launch AMP. Born in northern Georgia, West was a militant labor organizer and an accomplished poet. He was 63 years old when AMP’s founders approached him for support. He became a friend and mentor to Woodruff and, in turn, AMP became the home for several of West’s poetry and history books.

Along with a history of AMP, *So Much to Be Angry About* reproduces some of the publishing house’s titles. These include a true bibliographical curiosity titled *Lazar & Boone Stop Strip Mining Bully to Save Apple Valley & Buttermilk Creek*. Subtitled “a story for children & mature adults,” it is a purported children’s book that tells the story of how anthropomorphic animals in an idyllic rural community fight against a bulldozer and the ravages of strip mining.

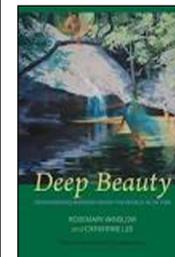
Another highlight is a reprint of a journalistic investigation on the 1972 Buffalo Creek flood in Logan County, WV after a precariously-built coal slurry impoundment dam managed by the Pittston Coal Company collapsed. Nearly 130 million gallons of wastewater were released upon 16 coal towns, killing 125 residents and leaving nearly 4,000 homeless.

The Pittston Mentality: Manslaughter in Buffalo Creek was first published in *Washington Monthly* and reprinted by AMP. As it often happens when reading West Virginia history, the article has striking parallels to other incidents – for example, the Sago Mine disaster of 2006 or the Upper Big Branch explosion of 2010 – and describes a similarly ineffectual response by state authorities. Its eloquence helps the reader better situate AMP’s trajectory within the state’s cultural and political history and elevate it from a historical curiosity into an integral chapter in the fight for social justice in the region.

Handsomely designed and visually appealing, Slifer’s book is an invaluable work of recovery and historical memory.

THE FRONT SHELF

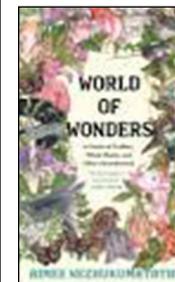
Deep Beauty: Experiencing Wonder When the World is on Fire, by Rosemary Winslow and Catherine Lee



Woodhall Press (2020) \$19.95

As our global discourse continues to be dominated by border walls, white nationalism, sexual assault, and autocratic leaders, many of us find our basic human values under constant attack. *Deep Beauty* is one collective attempt to counteract this discourse. The essays offer curious and thoughtful inquiries into experiences of wonder and beauty through the eyes of a diverse group of beholders, at a time when such considerations are often lacking. These writers help create an emotional and psychological space for us to meditate on how peace, safety, compassion, and dignity are integral to a fulfilled and fulfilling life

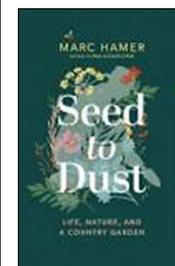
World of Wonders: In Praise of Fireflies, Whale Sharks and Other Astonishments, by Aimee Nezhukumatathil



Milkweed Editions (2020) \$25.00

From beloved, award-winning poet Aimee Nezhukumatathil comes a debut work of nonfiction—a collection of essays about the natural world and the way its inhabitants can teach, support, and inspire us. Warm, lyrical, and gorgeously illustrated by Fumi Mini Nakamura, *World of Wonders* is a book of sustenance and joy.

Seed to Dust: Life, Nature, and a Country Garden, by Marc Hamer



Greystone Books (2021) \$26.95

In this formidable and clairvoyant new collection of poems, Jorie Graham deepens her vision of our futurity. What of us will survive? Identity may be precarious, but perhaps love is not? Keeping pace with the desperate runaway of climate change, social disruption, our new mass migrations, she struggles to reimagine a habitable present – a now – in which we might endure, wary, undaunted, ever-inventive, “counting silently towards infinity.” Graham’s essential voice guides us fluently “as we pass here now into the next-on world,” what future we have surging powerfully through these pages, where the poet implores us “to the last be human.”

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// NATURE

A LOOK AT THE BLUE-EYED CICADA

By Doug Pifer

Doug Pifer is an artist, naturalist, and writer. He has a Master's Degree in Journalism from Penn State and has been an editor and art educator. His illustrations have appeared in various books and magazines and he has been a contributor to *The Observer* for several years. He lives with his wife and assorted animals on 5.7 acres in a historic farmhouse near Shepherdstown.

BY THE TIME YOU READ THIS STORY, tens of thousands of cicadas may have already appeared in the Eastern Panhandle, filling the air with their buzzing. The emergence of Brood 10 of the 17-year cicada is a dramatic natural event.

Many kinds of insects live longer than you might imagine. The familiar “annual” cicadas that make the trees ring at the end of every summer have already spent several years underground in their immature form. But there’s more to the seventeen-year cicada drama than longevity.

After seventeen years of feeding on the juices of tree roots underground, legions of immature cicadas start to dig upwards until they’re just below the surface, waiting for a mysterious signal. Then one night in late April or early May, when the soil has warmed to just the right temperature, they emerge from underground

by the hundreds and head for the nearest tree or other upright surface. Upward and onward they all climb. When they reach a secure spot to anchor themselves, they stop. Their skins split down the back. From the husks of these wingless, crawling adolescents emerge pale creatures whose soft wings slowly unfurl. They grab onto the empty husk with their soft legs and hang there all night.

This most dangerous and vulnerable moment of their lives is over by morning. They have now hardened into black, inch-and-a-half long insects with ruby-red eyes and orange-veined wings. Now at the apex of their lives, they deserve the scientific name, *Magicicada*—magic cicada.

This synchronized emergence is the seventeen-year cicada’s strategy for survival. Their sheer numbers protect them, a strategy known as predator satiation. These insects are defenseless. They neither bite, stink, nor sting. They’re tasty, nutritious, and easy to catch. Animals of all types — including fish, turtles, snakes, chipmunks, birds, and foxes — feast on cicadas. All will gobble up cicadas by the dozens or feed them to their own young. But every appetite has a limit and these predators will quickly consume so many cicadas they can’t swallow one more. Meanwhile, the remaining hordes of these insects are free to fly around, sing, mate, and lay eggs.

A NOTE ABOUT DOGS & CICADAS

According to the American Kennel Club, Cicadas are not poisonous for dogs and eating a few is not cause for worry. However, the hard skeleton is not digestible and many dogs will find these crunchy insect treats irresistible and overindulge, which can lead to severe abdominal pain, vomiting, or diarrhea.

The accompanying drawing of cicadas was made on June 7, 2004 near White Post, Virginia. At the top is a male in profile. Below him to the left is a ventral view of a female. See her ovipositor [egg-laying tube] at the tip of the abdomen. To her right is the abdomen of a male, showing the white drum-like membranes he vibrates to make his buzzing sound.

On the bottom, to the left of the flying cicada, are two views of the empty husk of skin the cicada shed after it emerged from the ground. Notice its wingless form, with heavy front claws for digging. Now look at the middle right sketch of the front view of a cicada. Instead of the usual red, this individual’s eyes were pale blue. Cicadas with light blue or whitish eyes are mutations. During the last brood ten emergence, rumors circulated in some areas that a certain university offered sums of money to anyone finding such a creature. An image search on the internet reveals a multitude of “blue-eyed cicada” photos, which tells me they can’t be all that uncommon.

Just for fun, you and your family might try to find a blue-eyed cicada. I know I’ll be looking!

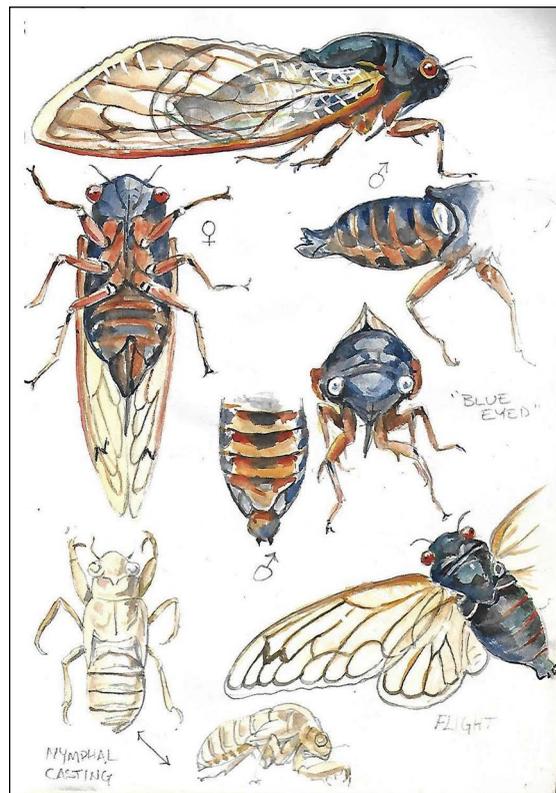


Illustration of cicadas by Doug Pifer (June 2004, White Post, Virginia)

NATURE HIKE

Wildflower Walk At Ferry Hill



Join volunteer naturalists for a walk on the trails of Ferry Hill Ridge Trail (across the river from Shepherdstown) and the nearby C&O Canal. This walk is scheduled to coincide with the later spring wildflower season – participants will be on the lookout for Pink Shooting Stars, Dwarf Larkspur, Squirrel’s Corn, Wild Ginger, and Jack-in-the-Pulpit. The trails around Ferry Hill are primitive, so wear sturdy walking shoes. Children are welcome with adult accompaniment. Please leave pets at home. May 1, 10:00 am to noon. Free, but pre-registration is required (limited to 15 participants): PotomacAudubon.org (>calendar).

ONLINE EVENT

Fungi In Your Backyard



Fungi are everywhere and have an astounding variety of shapes, sizes, and uses. Some produce mushrooms – big, small, edible, or poisonous. Some are pathogens that cause serious disease in plants, animals, or humans. Some produce compounds that we consume or use as medicinal treatments. Some degrade wood. Many form underground networks that connect plants in a community. To begin to illustrate this remarkable diversity, Dr. Laura Robertson of Shepherd University will introduce five (of the many) fungi that you might find in your backyard: Pheasant-back, Split-gill, Lion’s Mane, Green-spored Parasol, and Cedar-apple rust. May 12, 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm. Free, no reservation required. Zoom link PotomacAudubon.org (>calendar).

EXPLORE // AROUND JEFFERSON COUNTY

GO OUTSIDE & PLAY!

APPLELAND RACEWAY PARK

Outdoor activities: batting cages (baseball & softball), go karts. Indoor activities: axe throwing, cafe. Location: 4490 Valley Pike Stephens City, VA 22655. Open 7 days/week, 11 am - 8 pm. Web: PurpleCowSoftServe.com, FB @AppleLandRacewayPark, Email: PurpleCow.AppleLand@gmail.com, Tel: 540-866-2357.



FAMILY DRIVE-IN THEATER

Catch a family-friendly movie at this 484-parking spot drive-in. Theater opens May 7 for the summer season. Sound via traditional pole-speakers or your car radio. Snacks and meals available at the concession stand. Playground. Pet-friendly. Location: 5890 Valley Pike Stephens City, VA 22655. FB @FamilyDriveInTheatre, Email: FamilyDriveInTheatre@yahoo.com, Tel: 540-773-2646.



JAY DEES FUN

Outdoor activities: water park, miniature golf, batting cages, go karts. Indoor activities: arcade, nature zone, jungle gym, cafe. Location: 2332 Henshaw Rd, Inwood, WV 25428. COVID-19 precautions/restrictions in effect. Open daily Monday to Thursday 4 pm - 8 pm; open Sunday for private rental; closed Friday & Saturday. Web: JayDeesFun.com, FB @JayDeesFun, Email: info@JayDeeswFun.com, Tel 304-229-4343.



MINI GOLF AT WAR MEMORIAL PARK

Operated by Martinsburg-Berkeley County Parks & Recreation. Opens June 13. Location: 500 North Tennessee Ave, Martinsburg, WV 25401. Web: MBCparks-rec.org, FB @MBCWarMemorialPark, Email: info@mbcparks-rec.org, Tel: 304-264-4842.



CAMPING AT CANAL QUARTERS

The Canal Trust has 7 former lock houses along the C&O Canal available for rent. Some with amenities, some are rustic. Each house rents for a maximum of 3 days with up to 8 guests. Details on each location, FAQs, and reservation form online at CanalTrust.org/programs/canal-quarters. Email: cq@canaltrust.org, Tel: 301-745-8888.



HOGBACK MOUNTAIN PAINTBALL

All day rates \$35-\$45. Bring your own equipment or rentals available. Low-impact paintball for kids (& beginner adults). Location: 20267 Hogback Mountain Rd., Leesburg, VA 20175. Open Saturday & Sunday 10 am - 4 pm; available for group rental 7 days/week. COVID-19 precautions/restrictions in effect. Web: Hogback.net, FB @HogbackPaintball, Email: play@hogback.net, Tel: 703-777-0057.



SATURDAY, MAY 15 AND SUNDAY, MAY 16
FREE HEAVY METAL TESTING

HOW TO PARTICIPATE:

- Bring your child to Sam Michaels Park on May 15 or May 16, 10 am - 5 pm
- The procedure will be explained to you and your family
- A small amount of your child's hair will be clipped by a physician
- Your child's heavy metal levels will be made available to you on the website

Monitoring = Peace of Mind

If your child lives in Jefferson or Berkeley Counties in WV, they are eligible for free, non-invasive testing of heavy metal levels as determined by hair testing (over \$100 value).

MEASUREMENTS OF HEAVY METALS SURROUNDING A PROPOSED MINERAL WOOL FACILITY

Materials used in industrial processes may result in the release of heavy metals in areas near the factory. A WVU School of Public Health study aims to determine if heavy metal levels increase in children who live or attend school in the area around the mineral wool factory once it begins operation.

Sign up TODAY at go.wvu.edu/JeffersonCountyStudy

Questions? Please contact:

Dr. Michael McCawley at 304-293-8042 or mamccawley@hsc.wvu.edu or Dr. Catherine Feaga at 301-790-9246 Catherine.Feaga@MeritusHealth.com



SUNDAY, MAY 16

11 AM - 3 PM

Come for the testing, stay for the free activities

- Pony Rides
- Glitter Tattoos
- Petting Zoo
- Games/Prizes
- Seed Planting
- Live Music

Children's activities provided by Jefferson County Vision and the Eastern Panhandle Green Coalition

EXPLORE // EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

STORYTELLING



SPEAK STORY SERIES - JOHNNY MOSES

Speak Storytelling presents Johnny Moses on May 11 at 7:30 pm (online event).

Johnny Moses (Whis.stem.men.knee) is a Tulalip Native American raised in the Nuu-Chan-nulth village of Ohiat on the west coast of Vancouver Island in British Columbia, Canada. Moses was raised in the traditional ways by his grandparents and sent by his elders to share their teachings with all people. He is a master storyteller, oral historian, traditional healer and respected leader. Fluent in nine Native Languages, he is a traveling ambassador for Northwest Coast cultures.

Tickets are \$15 (free for season ticket holders). Speak is for adult audiences; mature youth allowed at guardian's discretion. Info & tickets online at SpeakStorySeries.com or email Info@SpeakStorySeries.com.

ART EXHIBIT



THE ART AND EARTH

Berkeley Arts Council is presenting an eclectic gathering of works for its 11th annual Art & Earth Exhibit. Each piece contains an energy, vibrancy and relevance of the “now” that collectively represent a fullness of “Life” in its various states of whimsy and stolid grace. Some of the works selected are “states of being” that present actual scenarios and experiences. Some are fantastical or futuristic. Some come forth as alter egos, portraits or self-portraits. Some are visual renditions of abstract thoughts that represent form, color, and movement, the core message remaining somewhat obscure or direct. Some are observations of and within distinct or obtuse environments and some are the haunting products of brief, yet profound experiences that may have emerged from life-altering events. Others portray concepts and methodologies that remain mysterious or vague.

The exhibit opened on Earth Day, April 22 and runs through May 29. Details online at BerkeleyArtsWV.org/category/arts-events.

FAMILY HIKES

HARPERS FERRY HIKES

The Harpers Ferry Park Association organizes monthly hikes in and around historic Harpers Ferry WV. The May “Bark Ranger Walk” on Saturday May 22 starts at 10 am and is a 3.5 mile easy walk exploring the Armory Canal Trail and Virginus Island on Saturday May 22 (approx. 3 hours). All ages and sociable dogs on leash are welcome. Suggested donation is \$10/person. Details on this hike and other outdoor events online at HarpersFerryHistory.org and Facebook @HFPAssociation.



MUSIC FESTIVAL



APPALACHIAN CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL

Enjoy an online interactive preview concert of the upcoming ACMF summer festival, broadcast live on YouTube on May 2 starting at 2 pm. The Barn of Harpers Ferry will be hosting a watch party if you prefer an “in-person” experience. Details online at AppalachianChamber.org and Facebook @AppalachianChamber. The Barn is located at 1062 W Washington St in Harpers Ferry (HarpersFerryEventBarn.com).

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LET'S TALK!
304-240-0587 | ClimbingNewHeightsWV.com
54 General Motors Access Road, Martinsburg

EXPLORE // EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

COMMUNITY EVENT

PAPER SHREDDING EVENT

Do you have old bank statements and personal documents you need to clean out of your files? The Friends of Shepherdstown Library are offering a shredding event where you can have your papers securely recycled.



Open to all. The event is on May 8 (Saturday) 11 am to 1 pm behind the Shepherdstown Library (100 E. German St, Shepherdstown WV).

No charge, but donations to the Library are very much appreciated. Email sarah.brumback@martin.lib.wv.us with any questions.

CUTURAL FESTIVAL



MARTINSBURG HERITAGE FESTIVAL

Chartered in 1778, Martinsburg has a rich history from the Colonial and Civil War period that is often hidden from public view.

The annual festival is a chance to peek inside some historic buildings and see artifacts and displays of this history. Events include historic house tours, ghost tours, food and music performances. Past festivals have included tours of Belle Boyd House, the B&O Roundhouse, the Stephen House & Tunnels, Boydville, and the Sumner-Ramer Museum.

This year's festival is scheduled for May 8 and 9 (Saturday & Sunday). This year's events will be adjusted in light of current pandemic guidelines.

Find more details about the festival on Facebook by searching for "MartinsburgHeritageFestival" or email AdamStephenHouse@gmail.com.

ART CLASSES



LEARN WATERCOLOR PENCIL

The Berkeley Arts Council is offering a 4-session, online class appropriate for students who have no watercolor painting experience as well as those who currently paint with watercolors but who want to improve their techniques. Students will learn methods for creating multitudes of variations of hue as well as texture. Students will also learn about the ease of using the pencils when traveling, journaling, making their own greeting or note cards, or when sketching as well as painting entire compositions.

Two sections are offered, both taught by Judith Beckner: Wednesdays 6:30-8:30 pm on May 5/12/19/26 and Fridays 2:00-4:00 pm on May 14/21/27/ June 4.

Details, materials list, and registration online at BerkeleyArtsWV.org/instruction.

RELAY FOR LIFE



SPONSOR A LUMINARIA TRIBUTE

On June 12, when the sun goes down, hundreds of luminarias light the way under the stars to remember those lost to cancer, those fighting cancer, and those who have fought cancer and won. This ceremony of light symbolizes the hope and perseverance with which we all continue to fight. Your donation to Relay for Life will fund a tribute in honor of a cancer survivor or in memory of someone who has lost the battle. Choose either a traditional luminaria (white bag) or a golden luminaria (gold bag with star cutouts) – your loved one's name will appear on a luminaria and will be lit during the Luminaria Ceremony at Relay for Life in Jefferson County.

Details and order form online at WeAreTheObserver.com/relay-for-life-2021.



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- 304-728-6807

Shepherdstown
Thomas C. Ours, CPA

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Shepherdstown, WV 25443

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GET READY FOR LOCAL ELECTIONS

>>> PAGE 16 <<<

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—C.G. Jung
“The Spiritual Problem of Modern Man” (Collected Works 10, p.177)

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FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY
>>> PAGE 11 <<<

SHEPHERDSTOWN

- BAVARIAN INN & BREWPUB**
Fine & casual dining
- BETTY'S RESTAURANT**
Casual diner, open early
- BLUE MOON CAFÉ**
Inventive American fare
- CHINA KITCHEN**
Traditional Chinese
- COMMUNITY GARDEN MARKET**
Organic & natural grocery
- DEVONSHIRE ARMS CAFÉ & PUB**
English-style pub
- FARMER'S MARKET**
Sunday morning market
- GRAPES & GRAINS GOURMET**
Wines & craft beers
- GREEN PINEAPPLE**
Poke, ramen, & bubble tea
- KING'S NY PIZZA**
Pizza, subs & Italian
- KOME THAI & SUSHI BISTRO**
Creative Asian fusion
- LELLYBELLE CAFÉ**
Vegetarian & vegan fare
- LILAH RESTAURANT**
New American
- LOST DOG COFFEE**
Coffee, tea & beans
- MARIA'S TAQUERIA**
Mex/SoCal cuisine
- MECKLENBURG INN**
English-style pub & garden
- PRESS ROOM**
Regional cuisine, fine dining
- SHEPHERDSTOWN LIQUORS**
- SHEPHERDSTOWN SWEET SHOP**
Baked goods & sandwiches
- TOMMY'S PIZZA**
Pizzas & subs to go

CHARLES TOWN & RANSON

- A LA MODE CAFE ICE CREAM & DESSERTS**
- ABOLITIONIST ALE WORKS**
Craft beer & pub dining
- ALFREDO'S MEDITERRANEAN GRILL**
Quaint & homey bistro
- ALMOST HEAVEN PUB & GRILL**
Pub food & drinks

- ANDY'S PIZZA**
Pizza, Rolls & Subs
- GINZA**
Hibachi & sushi
- GRANDMA'S DINER**
American & Spanish
- INKWELL'S TAVERN**
Cocktails, craft beer, food
- MAD MONKS BAKERY**
Coffee and baked goods
- MI DEGOLLADO**
Traditional Mexican

- MOUNTAIN VIEW DINER**
Classic family restaurant
- ORTEGA'S TACO SHOP**
Homemade Mexican cuisine
- PADDY'S IRISH PUB**
Irish-theme sports bar

- ROSSY'S PLACE**
American restaurant

- SIBLING COFFEE ROASTERS**

- SUMITTRA**
Innovative Thai & Asian

- TEE DAWGS BBQ**
TX style smoked meats

HARPERS FERRY & BOLIVAR

- A LA MODE CAFE ICE CREAM & DESSERTS**
- ALMOST HEAVEN PUB & GRILL**
Pub food & drinks

- THE ANVIL RESTAURANT**
Casual dining, rustic space

- THE BARN OF HARPERS FERRY**
Bar & events venue

- BATTLE GROUNDS BAKERY & COFFEE**
Pastries & sandwiches

- THE CANAL HOUSE CAFÉ**
Local ingredients

- CANNONBALL DELI**
Sandwiches, Snacks, Drinks

- COACH HOUSE GRILL N' BAR**
Full service dining

- THE COFFEE MILL**
Coffee shop

- COUNTRY CAFÉ**
Breakfast & lunch, casual

- CREAMY CREATIONS**
Ice cream shop

- HAMILTON'S TAVERN 1840**
Inventive craft menu
- HARPERS FERRY BREWING**
Craft brews
- HARPERS FERRY ICE CREAM SHOP**
Ice cream & milkshakes
- KELLEY FARM KITCHEN**
Vegetarian & vegan

- LES & ALI'S SEAFOOD**
Fresh catch fish market
- MOUNTAIN HOUSE CAFE**
Cozy family inn, takeout
- THE RABBIT HOLE**
Casual American & drinks
- WHITE HORSE TAVERN**
Burgers, brews & bourbons

FARMERS MARKETS

WEEKLY MARKETS, LOCAL GOODS

Celebrate spring by visiting one of the many weekly farmers markets in and around Jefferson County.

In addition to walk-up sales and pre-order pickups, many vendors at these markets also offer online ordering.

Visit each market's website for complete lists of vendors, ordering options, and special events.

Shepherdstown

Now open every Sunday morning from 9 am to 1 pm. Location: 100 East German St (behind the library) Shepherdstown.

Pandemic guidelines in place - masks are required. No pets please. More information on Facebook @ShepherdstownFarmersMarket.

Martinsburg

This market opens May 14 and will take place weekly on Friday evenings after that. Location: Downtown Martinsburg (see website for more details).

For a list of vendors and other market updates, visit MartinsburgFarmersMarket.com or find the market on Facebook @MartinsburgFarmersMarket. Contact buylocal@martinsburgfarmersmarket.com for additional information.

Charles Town

Now open every Saturday morning 9 am to noon. Location: 100 S Samuel St Charles Town.

For more information, visit the market online at ctfm.JeffersonGAP.org, call 304-579-0924, or email at CharlesTownFarmersMarket@gmail.com.

Berkeley Springs

Now open every Sunday morning from 10 am to 2 pm. Location: 129 Fairfax St, Berkeley Springs.

For vendor information and other updates, visit the market online at BerkeleySpringsFarmersMarket.org, call 304-258-8400, or email directly at BSFMmanager@gmail.com.

EXPLORE // SHOPS AND GALLERIES

The locally-owned shops and restaurants across Jefferson County offer a personal touch and small town ambiance. Visit our website WeAreTheObserver.com/shop-local for addresses and other details.

SHEPHERDSTOWN

ADMIRAL ANALOG
Vintage & new vinyl

AZAD'S ORIENTAL RUG EMPORIUM
Handmade rugs

BADGERHOUND STUDIO & GALLERY

BRIDGE GALLERY
Showcase of local artists

COOPER CAPTURES
(Currently online only)

CREATIVE PROCRASTINATIONS
Whimsical art emporium

DICKINSON & WAIT CRAFT GALLERY
American craft products

EVOLVE GALLERY
Pop-up art gallery

FLOWER HAUS
Floral designs for events

FOUR SEASONS BOOKS
New & resale books

GALLERY AT 105
(Currently online only)

GERMAN STREET MARKET
Gifts & delicacies

THE GOOD SHOP
Women's clothing

THE HIVE HOUSE
Beekeeping supply

HONOR D FINE SHOES & HATS
Stylish shoes, hats for all

KIMOPICS GALLERY
Local photographer

MEDITATIVE MEDICINALS
CBD, health & beauty

MOUNTAINEER POPCORN
Sweet & savory treats

O'HURLEY'S GENERAL STORE
Novelties & gifts

ON THE WINGS OF DREAMS
Gifts for spiritual journeyers

REVERSA ROSE
Natural skin-care products

RICCO GALLERY
Artistic jewelry

THREADS
Fun t-shirts & gifts

TONIC HERB SHOP
Holistic health products

THE VILLAGE FLORIST
Flower arrangements

CHARLES TOWN & RANSON

ART DECO DEKOR
20th century vintage

B.VINTAGE
Modern farmhouse vintage

BUSHEL & PECK
Specialty grocery store

FAST CASH PAWN
Jewelry, electronics, etc.

FEAGANS JEWELERS
Custom jewelry & repair

FUZZY DOG BOOKS & MUSIC
Used books & vinyl

THE HOBBIES SHOP
Models, RC, kites, etc.

LITTLE POTTERY HOUSE
Make & paint pottery

MITIELDA LATINA
Convenience store

NEEDFUL THINGS
Vintage & new items

OP-SHOP
Curated resale clothing

TRADEWINDS FLOORS
Carpet & flooring

TWO CROWS ANTIQUE
50+ antique dealers

TWO RIVERS TREADS
Active & outdoor footwear

WEANT TO PLAY
Sporting equipment

WEAR IT AGAIN KID
Consignment boutique

THE WILLIAMS STORE
Convenience store

THE WOODEN SHOE
Vintage lighting, glass

WASHINGTON STREET ARTISTS COOP
Gallery & exhibits

YARNABILITY
Arts & crafts

HARPERS FERRY & BOLIVAR

THE GILDED FLEA
Antique & vintage wares

HARPERS FERRY PARK ASSOCIATION BOOKSHOP

THE HODGE PODGE
Gifts, souvenirs & antiques

MAGPIE POTTERY
Ceramics by local artisans

MARY ADAMS ACCESSORIES
Eclectic jewelry

NATURE'S HEALTH & BODY
Health & wellness products

HARPERS FERRY OUTFITTERS
Outdoor gear & bike shop

RIVERS STUDIO & GALLERY
Functional & sculptural art

HB SNALLYGASTER GENERAL STORE
Whimsical goods & cafe

TENFOLD FAIR TRADE COLLECTION
Hand-crafted wares

TESSOTERICA
Hand-crafted bath items

TRUE TREATS HISTORIC CANDY
Retro candy & fun treats

THE VILLAGE SHOP
Souvenirs & novelties

THE VINTAGE LADY
Jewelry & local WV goods

WASHINGTON STREET STUDIOS
Ceramic studio and classes

CRAFT SHOW



BLUE RIDGE ARTS & CRAFTS SHOW

The Festival is back for 2021 with 60+ local artisans with 100% handcrafted gifts, live music, and food trucks. Saturday, May 1 from 11 am to 5 pm at Sam Michael's Park (235 Sam Michaels Lane, Harpers Ferry, WV). Free admission, door prizes, kid's games, rain or shine. Info and vendor list online on Facebook @BlueRidgeArtsAndCraftsFestival.

FESTIVAL

SHENANDOAH APPLE BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

The Apple Blossom Festival in Winchester, Virginia is "Back in Bloom" for 2021 with 30 events, including races, band competitions, dances, parades, carnival, a circus, fire-fighting demonstrations and the annual coronation of Queen Shenandoah.



Many of the regular events are outdoors under tents this year at the Frederick County Fairgrounds. Pandemic restrictions and guidelines apply. The festival opened on April 23 and runs through May 2. Info online at TheBloom.com.

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GUIDE // LOCAL ELECTIONS

CITY OF CHARLES TOWN
Local Elections
May 27



Charles Town residents will vote for Mayor and 5 City Council seats:

- Mayor** (4 year term): Todd Coyle or Bob Trainor
- Council - Ward 1** (4 year term): Chet Hines or Elizabeth C. Ricketts
- Council - Ward 2** (4 year term): Jeff Hynes or Kevin Tester
- Council - Ward 3** (4 year term): Julie Philabaum
- Council - Ward 4** (4 year term): Steve Rodgers & Rikki Twyford
- Council - Ward 4** (term ending 2023): Micheal George

Elected candidates will take office on June 22. A revised City Charter is also on the ballot for voter consideration. For additional candidate and Charter information, visit the City's website (CharlesTownWV.us/city-elections).

REGISTER TO VOTE

May 6 is the last day to register to vote. Visit the website GoVoteWV.com to register (blue "register to vote" button) or confirm that your registration is active.

THREE WAYS TO VOTE IN THE UPCOMING ELECTION

OPTION 1. VOTE ABSENTEE

May 21 is the last day to request an Absentee ballot. Call Carolyn Vezzosi, Assistant Clerk at 304-724-3250 or email to CVezzosi@CharlestownWV.us to submit a request. You can also download an absentee ballot request from the WV Secretary of State's website (GoVoteWV.com & click the red "absentee voting" button). Military and overseas voters should visit FVAP.gov to request a ballot.

Concern for COVID-19 exposure is a valid medical reason for requesting an absentee ballot (check the first box in section 4-A of the application).

Mail your absentee ballot so it is **postmarked by May 27** (or earlier) to City of Charles Town, Clerk's Office, 101 E Washington St, Charles Town, 25414.

You may also drop off your absentee ballot in-person during office hours by Monday, May 26 (or earlier) at the Clerk's office in City Hall (101 E Washington St, Charles Town). You may drop off your own ballot and 1 other person's ballot (e.g. spouse, parent, child).

If you request an absentee ballot and decide to vote in person, bring the absentee ballot with you to the polling place on Election Day to exchange it for a standard ballot (otherwise you will be directed to cast a provisional ballot).

OPTION 2. VOTE IN PERSON - EARLY

You can vote early at City Hall (101 E Washington St, Charles Town) during the hours of 9 am to 5 pm on **May 14-15, May 17-22, and May 24**. See Voting ID requirements for what to bring when you vote.

OPTION 3. VOTE IN PERSON - ON ELECTION DAY

Election day is THURSDAY, May 27. Voting will take place at City Hall (101 E Washington St, Charles Town), from 6:30 in the morning to 7:30 in the evening.

The area within 100 feet of the entrance to a WV polling place is a "campaign-free zone" — to avoid being challenged, don't wear any buttons, hats, shirts, etc. for/against any candidate or issue within the area indicated by the posted signs.

REMINDERS ABOUT VOTER ID - WHAT TO BRING

Voters in WV should expect to show a valid and non-expired ID to vote. Visit GoVoteWV.com for a full list of accepted types of ID.

If you are a first-time WV voter, you will need to show proof of residence at your voting address. Bring an ID (with photo and address) or a photo ID and recent utility bill, bank statement, government check or paycheck. If you do not have a valid ID or your ID is not accepted — ask for a provisional ballot. You may still obtain a regular ballot if an adult (with valid ID) accompanying you can sign an affidavit or if a poll worker confirms to have known you for 6 months.

CITY OF RANSON
Local Elections
June 1



Ranson residents will vote for Mayor and 2 City Council seats:

- Mayor** (4 year term): Brian Parish, Tyler Payton, or Keith "Duke" Pierson
- Council - At Large** (4 year term): Michael Baker or Amanda Stroud
- Council - Ward 3** (4 year term): Michael Anderson

The elected candidates will take office on July 1.

REGISTER TO VOTE

May 11 is the last day to register to vote. Visit the website GoVoteWV.com to register (blue "register to vote" button) or confirm that your registration is active.

THREE WAYS TO VOTE IN THE UPCOMING ELECTION

OPTION 1. VOTE ABSENTEE

May 26 is the last day to request an Absentee ballot. You can obtain an absentee ballot request form at City Hall (312 S Mildred St, Ranson) or download the form from the WV Secretary of State's website (GoVoteWV.com & click the red "absentee voting" button). Military and overseas voters should visit FVAP.gov to request a ballot.

Concern for COVID-19 exposure is a valid medical reason for requesting an absentee ballot (check the first box in section 4-A of the application).

Mail your absentee ballot so it is **postmarked by June 1** (or earlier) City of Ranson, Attn: Clerk's Office, 312 S Mildred St, Ranson WV 25438.

You may also drop off your absentee ballot in-person during office hours by Friday, May 28 (or earlier) at the Clerk's office in the Ranson City Hall (312 S Mildred St, Ranson). You may drop off your own ballot and 1 other person's ballot (e.g. spouse, parent, child). Note that Monday, May 31 is a holiday and the City Hall will be closed.

If you request an absentee ballot and decide to vote in person, bring the absentee ballot with you to the polling place on Election Day to exchange it for a standard ballot (otherwise you will be directed to cast a provisional ballot).

OPTION 2. VOTE IN PERSON - EARLY

You can vote early at the Ranson City Hall (312 S Mildred St, Ranson) in the Council Chamber room during the hours of 9 am to 5 pm on **May 22 (Sat) and May 24-29 (Mon-Sat)**. See Voter ID requirements for what to bring when you vote.

OPTION 3. VOTE IN PERSON - ON ELECTION DAY

Election day is TUESDAY, June 1. Voting will take place at Ranson City Hall (312 S Mildred St, Ranson), from 6:30 in the morning to 7:30 in the evening.

The area within 100 feet of the entrance to a WV polling place is a "campaign-free zone" — to avoid being challenged, don't wear any buttons, hats, shirts, etc. for/against any candidate or issue within the area indicated by the posted signs.