



Local. Trusted. Professional.
304-725-9997
FREE INSPECTIONS
Same Day Service



Need Help with Retirement Plan Rollover?



Call me today!
MISSION:ADVICE
Tom Maiden MBA, CFP®
304-870-4200
MissionAdvice.com
Mission:Advice LLC (DBA Mission:Advice) is a West Virginia Registered Investment Advisor.

7866 Martinsburg Pike, Shepherdstown, West Virginia 25443

The
Spirit
of JEFFERSON
AND FARMER'S ADVOCATE

For the week of
**August 4 to
August 10, 2021**

95¢ (+ tax)

West Virginia's
oldest newspaper
| SINCE 1844 |

16 pages in an easy-to-read single section

SOME OF WHAT'S INSIDE THIS WEEK

TESTER TAPPED FOR COUNCIL SEAT, **Page 6** | HISTORY MATTERS, **Page 8** | OUTDOORS, **Page 14**



Peregrine falcons roost in Jefferson County, Page 6



Perfect pairings for a summer meal, Page 11

TOURISM IN JEFFERSON COUNTY

Short-term rentals see calls for support, regulation

By **TIM COOK**
Staff writer

NEAR THE POTOMAC – Butch Deal has been hosting overnight visitors in Jefferson County for eight years. He’s among the approximately 180 or so homeowners, he points out, participating in the short-term rental market for tourists.

Those Airbnb-style entrepreneurs have included young people offering occasional stay-overs in second apartment bedrooms to pay their monthly rents, Deal said.

Those folks, he said, include retired couples opening their backyard in-law suites over long weekends to supplement retirement incomes. They include people like himself who renovate a historic home and a small “shack” near Shepherdstown as part of small business ventures competing to provide a sought-after service.

“Tourism is the largest county industry,” he said. “Especially now with COVID — it’s extremely popular to have a whole-home-type rental.”

Deal pointed out that a converted bus, a couple of yurts and a treehouse are all part of the burgeoning, internet-fueled hospitality industry of local home rentals.

“There’s lots of Airbnbs and short-term rentals ... on several different [online] platforms all over the county,” he said. “Some have been there a decade or more.”

Then there’s Wendy Lochner, a homeowner in the residential enclave McShanes Landing along the Potomac River north of Harpers Ferry. Five of the 15 houses in her scrunched-in-a-row community have turned into short-term rentals full-time, she said.

Lochner said she and her neighbors have suffered loud lawn parties. They said they have endured muddy trespassings over private boat docks, chases by visitors’ unleashed dogs and driveways that become packed parking lots.

In apparent frustration, somebody in the neighborhood posted a banner darkly warning visiting renters, “Be Advised. This is a Private Residential Community and You Are NOT WELCOME.”

(See **RENTALS** Page 10)

SIGNS OF FALL | HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL PRACTICE BEGINS



IT'S HERE

High school football practice started on Monday in Jefferson County and the rest of the state. At left, Washington football coach Glen Simpson offers instruction to players. Below, Jefferson coach Craig Hunter observes his players working on this year's offense scheme. Jefferson's first game will be against Millbrook on August 27 and Washington will play host to Hedgesville on August 26. For more on the first day of practice, see page 16.



Old Opera House brings fantasy to life with production

By **BONNIE WILLIAMSON**
Special to Spirit

CHARLES TOWN—Adults and children players alike take part in a trip into a classic fantasy world as the Old Opera House Theatre Company and Arts Centre presents, “The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe,” August 5, 6, 7 and 8.

“This production is part of our summer family show,” said Steve Brewer, the organization’s manager/artistic director. “We’ve been doing this for five years. We started with just children in the shows years ago but decided to have adults this time, too. Everyone can perform side by side. It’s a higher quality show.”

The cast is a large one with 29 people on hand,

(See **OOH** Page 11)



Ethan Mason plays Peter and Duncan Coberly plays the role of Aslan the lion during a rehearsal.

Lynne Riley
of Harpers Ferry

*Thanks for
subscribing!*



6 89076 92596 9

The Jefferson Publishing Co. Inc.
Established 1844 | Published weekly

Honored for General Excellence by the West Virginia Press Association every year since 2012




– Jonathan H. Sherman, MD, FAANS, FACS

My COVID-19 Vaccine Impacts ...my family!

WVU Medicine



James M. Davis

James McKinley Davis, 83, of Spring Arbor of Winchester, Virginia, formerly of Charles Town and Shepherdstown, died Monday, July 26, 2021 at Blue Ridge Hospice Inpatient Care Center in Winchester.

Jim was born September 10, 1937 in Fairplay, MD, the eighth child of the late Harry R. and Mary K. (Miller) Davis.

A graduate of Hagerstown High School and Shepherd College (now University), Jim proudly served as a Supply Corp Officer in the US Navy for four years, and then built his long career in the propane industry as Secretary/Treasurer and General Manager of Supertane Gas Corporation. He served as a Director at Peoples Bank of Charles Town and then Jefferson Security Bank, rising to the position of Chairman of the Board of each. His other Directorships included the Jefferson County Development Authority, Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce (including be-

ing one of the original ten financial backers of the Mountain Heritage Arts and Crafts Festival), the Jefferson Center of the Eastern Panhandle Training Center, WV LP Gas Association, and the National LP Gas Association. His early retirement years were spent in service to Shepherd University as a member, and then President, of the Shepherd University Foundation. At Shepherd, he was a member of the McMurrin Society, the Scarborough Society, and was named the Alumni Association's Outstanding Alumnus in 2006. He was also named Jefferson County Citizen of the Year in 1993.

A devoted member of Zion Episcopal Church, Jim served at various times as a Sunday School teacher, Lay Reader, Chalice Bearer, Vestry Member, and Senior Warden.

Jim is survived by his wife of 61 years, Mary Jane Small Davis of Spring Arbor of Winchester, daughter and son-in-law Anne and Dave Strider of Charles Town, two grandsons, David Strider of New York, NY and Joseph Strider (Charlotte) of New York, NY, and a granddaughter, Susan Strider Copen (Mike) of Walkersville, MD, along with two great-grandsons, Jackson and Parker Copen.

In addition to his parents, Jim was preceded in death by five brothers and two sisters.

A graveside service was held at the Columbarium of Zion Episcopal Church, 301 E. Congress St, Charles Town, WV on Saturday, July

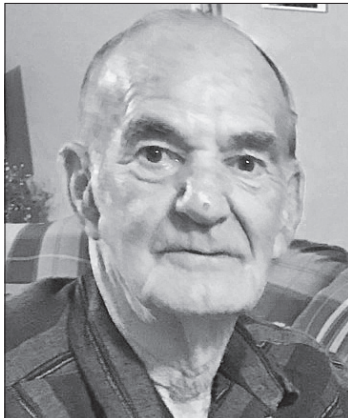
31, 2021 at 2 p.m. Neither a visitation nor an after-funeral gathering was held.

The family is most grateful to Blue Ridge Hospice for the care, comfort, and compassion they provided in Jim's last days. In lieu of flowers, please be generous with your local Hospice.

Arrangements are by the Melvin T. Strider Colonial Funeral Home, Charles Town.

Please sign the online guestbook and view his obituary at www.mtstrider.com.

PAID MEMORIAL



Thomas A. Spicer

Thomas A. Spicer, 84, of Ranson, passed away on Tuesday, July 27, 2021 at his residence while under the care of Hospice of the Panhandle.

He was born June 19, 1937 in Bellefonte, PA to the late William H. Spicer and Ethel (Myers) Spicer.

Mr. Spicer proudly served in the United States Air Force as a second-class airman. He painted and applied decals

to military jets. This love of painting became his career as a professional painter which spanned 66 years. There wasn't anything he couldn't paint and refresh. He was very talented.

He was an avid sports fan and enjoyed cheering on the New York Giants and his favorite NASCAR racer Tony Stewart.

He enjoyed watching western movies, especially if John Wayne was in it and listening to Johnny Cash.

Tom had two of everything, if one was acting up it was thrown out, he always had a spare. His favorite store was Home Depot.

He was of Baptist faith.

He is survived by his wife of 45 years, Brenda (Powers) Spicer; two sons: James "Jimmy" Lewis and wife Cindy of Summit Point and Jerry Lewis and wife Kim of Leetown; two daughters: Tammy Engle and husband Mike of Bunker Hill and Shelli Mailhot and husband Kip of North Carolina. He is survived by seven grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. He is also survived by his sisters: Joann Gill and Sondra Layton and brothers: Ronald Spicer and Jimmy Spicer.

He was preceded in death by two grandchildren, two sisters: Betty and Jean and a brother, Junie Spicer.

A funeral service was conducted at The Melvin T. Strider Colonial Funeral Home on Monday, August 2, 2021 at 11:00 a.m. with Pastor Dennis

Engle officiating. Interment was in Pleasant View Memory Gardens. Friends and family were received on Sunday, August 1, 2021 at the funeral home from 6 to 8 p.m.

Please visit our website www.mtstrider.com to view his obituary and sign the online guest registry.

PAID MEMORIAL



Mervin "Mac" McClure Bartlett

Mervin "Mac" McClure Bartlett, 78, of Charles Town, WV passed away on Saturday, July 31, 2021 at Berkeley Medial Center in Martinsburg, WV.

Born November 1, 1942 in Stanley, VA, he was the son of the late Mervin and Gaynelle Bartlett.

Mac was a graduate of Boonsboro High School, Class of 1961. He retired as Meat Manager with Safeway after 42 years of service.

He was a member of the Loyal Order of the Moose Lodge No. 948 in Charles Town, WV. He was an avid

collector of many items, he enjoyed traveling and going to auctions and enjoyed reminiscing with family and friends.

He is survived by his loving wife, Cheryl Grayson Bartlett, whom he married August 27, 2003, children, Michelle Smith and husband, O.C., Leslie D. Bartlett, Tracy Bartlett (daughter-in-law), Kelly Brown and husband, Jim, and Kristi Luke and husband, Tommy, grandchildren, Brittany Hausler and husband, Sean, Chase and Cody Smith, Chelsey and Savannah Bartlett, Danielle and Lindsay Brown, Ryleigh and Grayson Luke, great-grandchildren, Keeley, Maliyah, Bryce, Austin and Maddison, two siblings, Yonnie Mentzer and companion, Buddy, and Silky Kenney and husband, Dale, and former wife, Mary L. Bartlett.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by one son, Michael S. Bartlett and two sisters, Carol Ann Longbeam and Penny Nuice.

Services will be held at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 4, 2021 at Eackles-Spencer & Norton Funeral Home, 256 Halltown Road, Harpers Ferry, WV. Interment will follow in Brownsville Heights Cemetery.

The family received friends at the funeral home on Tuesday from 2-4 and 6-8 p.m.

Condolences may be expressed at www.eackles-spencerfuneralhome.com.

PAID MEMORIAL

Rentals

FROM PAGE 1

"This is about the quality of life in Jefferson County," she said during a community meeting with about 40 of her neighbors to discuss the matter. "We really have to slow this train down. We're a close community, really close community. So we really want to protect it."

Deal and Lochner agree the county's zoning ordinances should be updated and clarified to address the relatively new but well-established reality of short-term home rentals. But the two differ on what a proposed ordinance revision being drafted should say and do.

Deal said the current zoning code is unclear — and contradictory in some places — in addressing the leasing and rentals of "dwellings." Any zoning ordinance revision, he said, should simply let the short-term rentals and their economic benefits continue.

"My hope is that it would be made clear and not be restrictive to the point where people have to shut down or limit the number of rentals they can do," he said. "And hopefully, eliminate the harassment that a few are

receiving."

Citing unsettling numbers of "strangers" staying in her neighborhood, Lockner and several of her neighbors hope to impose clear restrictions on short-term home rentals, particularly those in rural and residential property zones.

In addition to requiring short-term rentals to register with the county, their restrictions would include capping properties to 180 days of rentals a year; limiting the number of people in a rental unit to six; and allowing rentals only in a homeowner's primary residence. They would also include requiring health and safety inspections and allowing rental properties to operate no closer than 1,000 feet to another.

"We're not saying no to Airbnbs," explained Christina Rife, a neighbor in the same riverside community. "We're saying we want balance within the county."

Rife and Lochner helped form an issue group and website under the name Neighbors4Neighborhoods.

Under the county's current zoning ordinance, short-term rental properties are not defined. Instead, the section refers to a "dwelling unit," where the ordinance states such "owner occupancy" properties can be rented

or leased "on a weekly, monthly or longer basis." That section also states that such dwellings can be "occupied by no more than one family."

County zoning administrators interpret the ordinance to mean that vacationers can be booked into short-term rentals for no more than a week. Those administrators also interpret the ordinance to indicate that no more than six unrelated family members can share a house rental. Still, families occupying a house could have more than six members.

Jefferson County Commissioner Steve Stolipher, who serves on the county planning commission, made a motion, which was adopted last month asking zoning administrators to propose ordinance changes.

Stolipher acknowledged complaints from homeowners near the river about short-term rentals while also recognizing Jefferson County's tourism revenues lead those of any other West Virginia county. However, he also signaled his view for upholding property rights on both sides. "At the end of the day, the folks who are renting their properties, they have a right to rent their properties," he said, "and the people who live there full time, they have a right to protect their property and not have anybody trespass on their property."

The planning commission

will hold a public hearing on whatever draft is prepared and then make a recommendation to the county commission.

Deal, who helps other property owners operate on Airbnb, said no property owner wants to have his customer disrupt a neighborhood.

He pointed out how Airbnb and other market-making platforms have powerful incentives and strict rules that ensure property owners and renters behave well. To continue exchanges with others, no host wants bad reviews from renters, and no renter wants a poor review from a host, he said. And no host or prospective renter wants to be barred from a platform.

And that includes respecting the neighbors and communities where short-term rental properties operate, Deal explained. "My neighbors know me and they have my cell number, so if there's any problem that I haven't caught, they can text me," he said. "My goal is to never have them do that."

However, residents of McShanes Landing say they fear an onrush of short-term visitors will undermine the safe, close-knit character of their rural, out-of-the-way haven.

"Our homes, our neighborhoods — this is where we leave our legacy," Lochner offered. "We are going to be attending a lot of meetings."

WEST VIRGINIA GAS PRICES DROP; NATIONAL AVERAGE ON THE RISE

The average price of gasoline across Northern West Virginia is four cents lower at \$3.019 per gallon, according to AAA East Central's Gas Price Report.

This week's average prices:

Northern WV Average	\$3.019
Last week	\$3.051
Last year	\$2.133

Average prices around West Virginia

\$3.042	Bridgeport
\$3.029	Clarksburg
\$3.006	Huntington
\$3.155	Martinsburg
\$2.890	Morgantown
\$2.944	Parkersburg
\$2.996	Weirton
\$3.089	Wheeling

Americans are paying a pretty penny to hit the road this summer. The monthly national gas price average has increased from \$3.00 in May to \$3.07 in June to \$3.15 in July. The beginning of August will likely be as expensive as July, especially as crude oil prices remain over \$70 per barrel. An increase in global crude production is expected this month. However, even with the additional supply, global demand could outpace global supply and keep prices high.

On the week, the national average increased by two cents to \$3.17 with a majority of states seeing jumps between two to ten cents. Today's average is a nickel more than a month ago and 99 cents more than a year ago.

As many travelers take final summer vacations, AAA reminds drivers not to rely heavily on in-dash fuel economy displays. New AAA research found that a vehicle's "miles to empty" estimates vary significantly and drivers could be taking an unnecessary risk if they over rely on these displays. With more expensive gas prices, motorists may be trying to stretch their tank to empty, but AAA recommends drivers watch their gas gauge and fill up when it reaches a quarter of a tank.

At the close of Friday's formal trading session, West Texas Intermediate increased by 33 cents to settle at \$73.95. A weaker dollar helped to push prices higher last week, while market concerns surrounding demand recovery continued to grow. Crude prices were also bolstered after the Energy Information Administration's (EIA) latest report showed that total domestic crude stocks declined by 4.1 million barrels to 435.6 million barrels. For this week, crude prices could climb higher if EIA's next weekly report shows another decline in total domestic crude supply.

The
Melvin T. Strider
Colonial Funeral Home
310 S. Fairfax Blvd. • Charles Town / Ranson
Full Service Funerals & Cremations



Brenden Craig Agnew
Licensee-in-Charge

Family Owned since 1889
304-725-7068
www.mtstrider.com

Since 1918
EACKLES-SPENCER & NORTON
FUNERAL HOME
Family Owned & Operated
Rte. 340 at Halltown Rd.
Charles Town/Harpers Ferry
West Virginia
Alan H. Norton (Licensee-In-Charge)
304.724.6500
www.eackles-spencerfuneralhome.com

**Need Help Getting
Social Security Disability Benefits?
We Can Help!**



Steady monthly income depending on your paid in amount!



A lump sum payment of benefits owed from back-pay



Annual cost of living increases

• We simplify the process & strive for quick claim approval

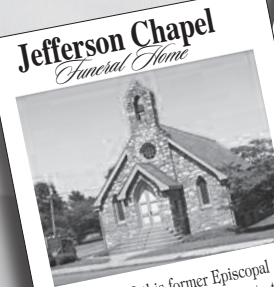
• Starting the process is easy and takes only minutes to complete



BILL GORDON ASSOCIATES
855-239-0257
Helping thousands get the benefits they deserve


Bill Gordon & Associates, a nationwide practice, represents clients before the Social Security Administration. Member of the TX & NM Bar Associations. Mail: 1420 NW 9th Washington D.C. Office: Broward County Florida. Services may be provided by associated attorneys licensed in other states.

Jefferson Chapel
Funeral Home



Built in 1922 this former Episcopal stone mission became the home to the present Jefferson Chapel in 1982 after being purchased by Brown Funeral Home, Inc.

114 N. Mildred St. • Ranson, WV 25438
Phone: 304-725-5321 • Fax: 304-725-4767 • www.BrownFuneralHomesWV.com
Robert C. Fields, LIC



*Compassion,
Care and
Respect.*