

March 2010

# Shepherdstown Men's Club

An organization of men & women dedicated to community service since 1947.

## President's Report

Mike Austin

Well, it looks like 2010 is going to be very interesting. Maybe we should start thinking about a new event to celebrate the arrival of spring after all of this snow!

I encourage you to make frequent visits to our new website: [www.smc25443.org](http://www.smc25443.org). It is the easiest way to work with us and to share information about the Men's Club with others in the community. Among other things you will see there, after much consideration, we have updated our rental rates and policies for the War Memorial Building. It isn't just about generating more rental income. We are trying to interact with our community more effectively and equitably. Your suggestions for improvements and updates to information on the web page are always welcome. And, that also applies to any other aspect of the management of your club.

I am pleased to announce our new slate of SMC officers. John Amos has taken over from Tom Trumble as Vice President and Chris Stroeck has replaced Ruth McQuade as Secretary. Cris Kinsella and I are continuing in our respective roles as Treasurer and President. We are still working on finalizing our committee assignments. The first look is always internally at the board since we are proud that we have a "working board" that shares the responsibilities for managing the club. I am very grateful for their commitment and important contributions. Despite

that, we still have some vacancies. If you are interested, we are particularly in need of more help in publicity and fund raising. The objective is to build a strong team of volunteers around each committee chairman who share that specific functional interest. The best way to get what you want out of the club is to actively take part in our endeavors. You will certainly enjoy it.

Earnest planning is underway for the Back Alley Tour and Tea Party which will be held in May and the annual Used Book Sale which will be held in October. Both are hallmark events for the Mens Club. You will see more on those events elsewhere in this newsletter. One of our goals this year is to start raising funds for a complete renovation of our kitchen. It is a vital part of our ability to serve the community. It would be nice to have a level floor and some new, state-of-the art equipment that is reliable and easier to keep clean.

I would like to launch our Long Term Planning Committee for Morgan's Grove Park. Our approach is to develop a vision for the Park that will serve as a source of guidance for the next 20 years. There are some important decisions coming up regarding the park and I want to approach them with "due dilligence." Please contact me if you want to participate or have inputs. In that context, we are delighted to hear that our town and county have committed funds to pursue building a bike path along Rt. 480 out to Morgan's Grove. We strongly support this initiative.

### Board of Directors - Officers & Board Members

Mike Austin, President      John Amos, Vice President

Chris Stroeck, Secretary & Morgan's Grove Park Liason      Cris Kinsella, Treasurer

Charles Printz, Director Emeritus

Bonnie Austin, Hospitality Chair & Back Alley Tea - Tom Keyrouze, Maintenance Chair - Art Wineburg, Book Sale

Vicki Thomas, Program Chair - Mary Stanley, Web Page Chair & Back Alley Tour

Other Board Members: Elizabeth Kyle, Tom Trumble, Ruth McQuade



## Hospitality Report

Bonnie Austin, Chairman  
Hospitality Committee

### DINNERS

Our first dinner meeting on January 20 was a success with 35 present. Nieltje Gedney, our resident four-star-chef prepared a wonderful beef pot pie and a huge salad. This was served along with the side dishes from members, which included approximately 18 very tasty desserts. Attendees declared they loved potlucks.

After taking a hard look at the road and parking conditions in Shepherdstown, it was decided to cancel the February dinner. It was still icy and treacherous to walk and nearly impossible to find a parking place.

Our next dinner will be on St. Patrick's Day, March 17. The menu will feature Corned Beef and Cabbage. (What else on Shamrock Day?) Neiltje and Bonnie will be doing the dinner with Judy Shepherd and her gang doing the serving and clean-up. The cost will be \$15 and \$20 with no reservation. An RSVP would be appreciated for food preparation and table set ups.

The social hour starts at 6:30 pm and the dinner begins at 7:00 pm. Our speaker for the evening will be Mike Athey, a long-time member of the Shepherdstown Volunteer Fire Dept. He will discuss how the Fire Department interacts with the community.

For reservations call 304-876-3323, option 2 no later than Monday noon, 3/15 or [rsvp@smc25443.org](mailto:rsvp@smc25443.org).

### JOINT LECTURES

Our January Lecture Series, jointly presented by the Men's Club and the Jefferson County Historical Society, was tremendously popular with all who came out that evening. The speaker was Keith Alexander, who spoke on the 18<sup>th</sup> Century waterfront commerce near Shepherdstown. We provided drinks and light refreshments before the talk, which was attended by at least 120 people. Historic Shepherdstown loaned us chairs and there were still people standing.

The second of our Lecture Series for the new year was rescheduled for February 22 and was also a great success, especially considering the continuing bad weather, with approximately 65 attendees. The evening started off with drinks and light refreshments. Mr. Jim Taylor, President of the Jefferson County Black History Preservation Society, presented the second showing of "Road Trip to History - African Americans of Jefferson County, West Virginia." This was a recently released 27 minute video that was several years in the making. It included the oral history of many of our local folks and kept the audience spellbound. It has been said that Jefferson County has more African-American history than any other county. Members of the BHPS took many questions from the audience and also told us that they had recently returned from Charleston, where they were presented with certificates and a resolution signed by many Senators for their work.

The next lecture will be held on March 8, with Walter Washington and Betsy Wells presenting "The Washington Family in Jefferson County" which promises to be equally fascinating. We hope to see you there and hope Spring will be in the air and the snow will be gone!

## Back Alley Tea



An integral part of the Back Alley Tour is the Back Alley Tea. Plans are in the works for this cheerful event, which will be held upstairs at the Men's Club on Sat., May 22 and Sun., May 23. The hours will be from 11-3 both days. Our theme this year will be "April Showers - May Flowers" which lends itself to interesting decorating ideas. As "guests," we will have "Mae" and a new friend, "Rose" and possibly "Sarah." Our wonderful teen servers will be with us again, headed by Nate Howard and his hard-working mom, Libby Howard. Shirley Derr will come back as the kitchen coordinator and Sheri Garner will be the "Hot Tea Lady". I am working on finding the rest of my crew. My friends know I never throw anything away, so I have all my lists of bakers and other workers, so don't be surprised if you get a call from me. We hope this year will be bigger and better, which means we need more help. If you would like to volunteer, please contact me at (304) 876-0598 or at [memasbarn@frontiernet.net](mailto:memasbarn@frontiernet.net).

# SMC Membership Report

John Amos, Chairman

SMC Membership Committee

Whew, this has been quite a winter! Please watch your step out there, especially coming and going around town. And while you're safely at home recuperating from the latest bout of shoveling, if you haven't already done so, please renew your Club membership for 2010.

Under the leadership of Mike Austin and the new Board of Directors, the Club has returned to fundamentals. We continue our traditional role as a casual social club and meeting place. And, as you're all aware, SMC owns and maintains two vital facilities for the use and enjoyment of the entire Shepherdstown-area community: the War Memorial Building and Morgan's Grove Park.

The grand old building, at the heart of Shepherdstown hosts some of the signature events in the area's cultural calendar, including the Goose Route Dance Festival, American Conservation Film Festival, Friday Painters, seasonal market places, Back Alley Tour and Tea, annual Book Sale, the haunted house for Halloween and a busy slate of other special events, meetings, concerts and shows that contribute to the lively and dynamic atmosphere of Shepherdstown. Many of these events are free and open to the public. Some generate revenue that helps us maintain this lovely old building, but we've got expensive repairs facing us if we're to keep this facility open for community use. Tom Keyrouze, one of our newest board members, has fearlessly jumped in as our building chairman and is developing a list of projects, large and small, and in search of willing volunteers.

The Park, located just a mile south of town, is one of the only public parks in the northern part of Jefferson County. Thousands of children use the Park year-round, exploring the wooded areas, playing soccer and volleyball, getting kites stuck in the trees, whooping it up in the playground, and doing what kids need to do to grow up healthy and strong. Folks come from all over the region to walk and run on the well-maintained fitness path.

Church groups, neighbors, wedding parties,

nonprofits, and other organizations regularly use the kitchen and dining pavilion. Everyone benefits from the preservation of this significant historic site and natural area – birthplace of the US Army, and headwaters of Town Run.

I don't have space to mention all of the many programs and volunteer opportunities that the Club provides for its members and as a service to the community. Check out the Club's new website at [www.smc25443.org](http://www.smc25443.org).



## War Memorial Building Maintenance

One of the more challenging responsibilities of our Executive Board is maintaining the War Memorial Building. Tom Keyrouze has stepped into the breach to fill this important role and brings refreshing enthusiasm and imagination to the effort.

He has already cleaned out and organized our office transforming it from "Fibber Magee's closet" into a pleasant place to work. He has also started keeping a list of projects which include at the moment:

1. Clean out/inventory/organize furnace & storage.
2. Paint building inside/outside - weather permitting.
3. Sand & re-stain the benches in front of the WMB.
4. Renovate or replace bathroom privacy partitions.
5. Clean, inspect, and repair the building's gutters.
6. Replace broken glass in the Store Front Window

This is a dynamic list. Tom is building a team of volunteers who would like to help periodically. If you want to get involved, please call him at:

(304) 894-8318

# Our Rental Management Team

You have probably noticed a more resonant buzz around the Men's Club recently, in which case you have become aware of our "dynamic duo" who are really making a difference. I am speaking of Judy Shepherd and her daughter Jenny Haynes who we have engaged to handle rentals of the War Memorial Building. We certainly got much more than we bargained for, as you probably noticed at Halloween when they single-handedly put on the "Haunted House" for the first time at the Men's Club. Or, you saw this lady stalking the sidewalk with snow shovel in hand. They both show a wonderful sense of ownership that is refreshing. Hiring them to help us was undoubtedly one of the best ideas we had this past year. This doesn't detract one bit of course from our still growing appreciation of the marvelous job that Judy Jenner did all of those years backed up by Mina Goodrich – two wonderful volunteers.

A big part of their job is not just to sign rental contacts and to collect money. Their most important function is to be there to help those using the War Memorial Building to ensure that it meets their and our expectations: theirs to have a successful event, and ours to successfully maintain and operate this important asset. Another critical dimension is the skillful balance our rentals with the Club's own use of the building. Our objective is to use the building to the maximum extent possible to meet the social needs of our members as well as to aid our many civic and non-profit organizations that are such an important ingredient of the Shepherdstown character.

So if you encounter Judy and Jenny in and about the Men's Club, acknowledge their presence and see what they are up to. It will be a very enjoyable and refreshing encounter.

## Morgan's Grove Park

Mike Austin

We continue to work with Jefferson County Parks and Recreation Commission which presently operates the Park under a long term lease. As owners, we still bear full responsibility for capital improvements,

maintenance of essential operating equipment and legal obligations. The Park is a designated historical district which adds to its significance. The Men's Club and the Shepherdstown community have worked hard to maintain and improve the Park. Many in our community have fond memories of gala events held there. More recent enhancements include the exercise trail, tree plantings along Town Run, kitchen and bathroom facilities and the pavilion. You can seldom go by without seeing groups or individuals enjoying its many excellent facilities.

One of the provisions of the lease is that we have priority use of the facilities for our own activities as long as we give adequate notice to the Parks and Recreation Commission. You have probably heard recently about the County's acquisition of land to build a large new park facility on Hite Road. We don't know as yet what impact that might have on use of Morgan's Grove. That is one of the reasons why we are anxious to develop a long term strategic plan for the Park.

We recently received a \$2,000 state grant which will be used to renew the special mulch that is applied to the base of the playground equipment. We will again request a similar grant that will probably be used to renew the gravel on the driveways and parking areas. Chris Stroech has replaced Dave Pugh who served very effectively as our representative and liaison for park matters. We will miss his insight and counsel very much. We did meet recently with the Shepherdstown Parks and Recreation Committee to improve mutual awareness and support. It was very productive. There is genuine interest and concern on the part of the Shepherdstown Town Council in the Park.

Finally, you may have noticed recently that the front gate of the park was locked. This action was necessary because it was found that people were using the Park dumpsters and adjacent areas for disposal of their garbage. The lower gates are kept open and the facility is available for public use. We will have to develop a long term remedy.





## Back Alley Tour & Tea

Mary Stanley  
Back Alley Tour Organizer

Put away those thoughts of snow and ice. The Back Alley Tour & Tea (BAT&T) is coming May 22 and 23. Generous gardeners will once again invite us into their private spaces. The whole town gets involved and War Memorial Building is the center of it all.

Event proceeds benefit the care and maintenance of the building and community projects. Last year we netted over \$10,000 primarily from out of town visitors. Once again they will be treated to viewings of over a dozen private gardens and a charming tea. This is a major fundraiser for the Men's Club and we do need many volunteers

On the tea side, Bonnie Austin needs help baking, assistance in the kitchen and more. For the tour route we will need docents, logistics help, publicity, traffic control, ticket takers and several other tasks as well. Last year we counted well over 200 volunteers who contributed time and talent. Talk to Sara Lueck, our Volunteer Coordinator or join as a volunteer by visiting:

[www.backalleygarden.org](http://www.backalleygarden.org)  
or link to if from  
[www.smc25443.org](http://www.smc25443.org)

Our local merchants will participate offering special discounts for Tour ticket holders. Local organizations with garden related missions will have displays as well. The Beekeepers will have a demonstration apiary in the Shepherdstown Urban Garden on Princess Street.

Watch our website for updated information. Tickets go on sale in April. Selling tickets is a big contribution but if you cannot volunteer directly, invite your family and friends to attend. They will enjoy the gardens and the tea.

The Tour Organizer is Mary Stanley and Vicki Lanham is the Organizer-in-Training. Bonnie Austin is hosting the Tea and the 2010 theme is:

**"April Showers - May Flowers."**

### The Friday Painters

The Friday Painters will again participate in a **BIG** way in support of the **Back Alley Tour & Tea**

Their garden related art will enhance the walls of the Tea setting and their work is available for purchase to enhance *your* home!

A generous portion of the proceeds will be contributed to The Men's Club.

**OPENING NIGHT RECEPTION**  
**MAY 21 from 6 PM to 9 PM**  
**War Memorial Bldg. - 1st Floor**

The exhibit will remain up through the following week.





# Things To Put On Your Calendar!

## March 8

Joint Historic Lecture Series: Presentation by Walter Washington and Betsy Wells on "The Washington Family in Jefferson County."

## March 17

St. Patrick's Day Dinner & Program by Mike Athey on "The Role of the Shepherdstown Volunteer Fire Department in our Community."

## April 6 & April 8

Candidate forums in preparation for the May 11<sup>th</sup> Primary Election

## April 12

Joint Historic Lecture Series: Presentation by Doug Estep on "The Mine Wars' Impacts on Jefferson County."

## April 21

April Dinner Program

## April 24-25

Shepherdstown Public Library Annual Book Sale

## May 10

Joint Historic Lecture Series: Presentation by Doug Perks, "I am a Son of Virginia, and Her Destiny Shall be Mine, Jefferson County's Struggle to Secede from the Union."

## May 19

May Dinner Program

## May 21

Reception for Friday Painters Art Exhibit

## May 22-23

Back Alley Tour and Tea Party, Friday Painters Art Exhibit, and Eastern Panhandle Beekeepers Demonstration Apiary

## June 14

Joint Historic Lecture Series: Presentation by Jerry Thomas, "Soul of the People: The Federal Writers Project."

## June 16

Men's Club Annual Picnic for member families at Morgan's Grove Park

## July 4

Family event at Morgan's Grove (Details under development)

## September 6

Annual Labor Day Picnic at Morgan's Grove for the Shepherdstown Community

Board Members welcome your comments, questions or concerns.

You can email any of them via the Men's Club new website:

**[www.smc25443.org](http://www.smc25443.org)**

# SPRING 2010 NEWSLETTER

Shepherdstown Men's Club  
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Shepherdstown, WV 25443

