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SCOTTSVILLE: VIRGINIA

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Scottsville Monthly

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Funeral Service Professional Rhonda Winfield has joined Thacker Brothers Funeral Home staff. All photos by Ron Smith

A New Face in Town

By Ron Smith Correspondent

hacker Brothers Funeral Home has been around for quite a while. With the advent of corporate funeral home chains, the residents of Scottsville can be proud and thankful that their funeral home is still privately owned. In fact, after almost a century of service to the community, the funeral home is still privately owned and operated.

Those who may have had the occasion to visit the funeral home over the past month probably noticed a new face and wondered, "who's that?" Well her name is Rhonda Winfield, the

newest member of the funeral home family.

Born in Pensacola, Florida, the family moved to Montgomery, Alabama when she was around one year old. A family situation precipitated a move with her mother to Craigsville, Virginia. Occupying a small apartment above the general store near the rail road tracks, Rhonda remembers "at night when my mother and I were in the bed we shared, the train came by and was so close the building shook and the bed walked across the floor!"

In high school she fell for and married the football hero. But things don't always work out the way they are planned. As a single parent with two children Rhonda worked three part time jobs until she landed a full-time job in the Harrisonburg office of State Farm Insurance. Eventually she met a dairy farmer, they were married and had two children. A career in funeral service was the farthest thing from her plans.

Working with her husband on the farm, driving a rural mail route, and raising her family occupied most of her time. Her oldest son had joined the army: then 9/11 happened

army; then 9/11 happened.

Rhonda's seventeen-year-old son Jason wanted to serve like his older brother but needed his mother's consent. When she gave that consent, she was hopeful that he would join the reserves and go to college. But with his desire to serve he opted to join the Marines. After graduation from high school he went through boot camp, infantry school and was off to Irag.

infantry school and was off to Iraq.
On the last day of his eight-month deployment Jason called his mother. He would be on the way home the next

day. On that "next day" as Rhonda approached her home returning from her postal job, she saw Marines standing in her front yard waiting for her. On his last patrol her son and several of his buddies died when their vehicle hit an IED. Yes, Jason would be coming home, but it would not be a happy occasion

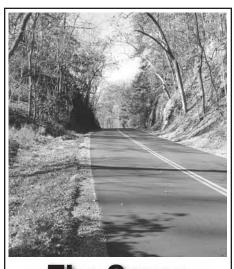
When a tragic event befalls someone, they often feel lost. As Rhonda says, "I felt as though I had no direction to my life; I could not think of what to do or how to do it." Then there was a second Marine death in the community. Rhonda visited the family to offer comfort and help in whatever way she could. "I felt this was something God wanted me to do," she says.

Seeing how her funeral director

Seeing how her funeral director helped her as well as how others in the community were helped she "felt something." Those who enter funeral service are likely to have been "inspired" to do so. Relating her experiences to funeral directors she knew, she was told that she would make a good funeral director. She was offered a job in a funeral home.

The funeral home she found herself working for did not have the volume of services required by state statute to offer apprenticeship training. Rhonda had to find a job with a firm that offered training. She was able to secure such a position with a firm in Charlottesville. Receiving her funeral service license in 2007 she had found the direction she sought.

The Charlottesville firm became part of a chain. One day, as Rhonda puts it, "I was reprimanded for not selling the family of a child who had died more than they needed. I should have sold 'a package' of goods and services but did-



The Cover

The Notch at the crest of Israel's Gap, east of Batesville on Plank Road. Photo by Patrick Healy

Cover designed by Marilyn Ellinger



Funeral Service Professional Rhonda Winfield stands before a display at Thacker Brothers Funeral Home.

n't." That's when she saw the difference between funeral homes owned by chains and funeral homes owned privately. She left.

For the next several years she owned and operated a restaurant in Waynesboro offering dishes made from the Angus beef her husband was now raising. The restaurant business can be very labor intensive Rhonda found. The hard decision was made to close and sell the property.

was made to close and sell the property.

Bradly Howdyshell and his wife Yvonne have owned Thacker Brothers for over ten years. He knew Rhonda and when he saw that her restaurant was closing he contacted her. He knew of her history both within the funeral service world and as one who had been the recipient of funeral service professionalism. He made a call.

Rhonda made the decision to get back into funeral service. She had earned her Bachelor's degree and a Master's in counseling while working in Charlottesville. Now she brings that knowledge plus her expertise in funeral service to Thacker Brothers.

Her experience with the loss of Justin gave her the realization that "as a parent, with the loss of a child, no matter the child's age, the heartbreak is the same." She has written and published a book on her experience dealing with Justin's death.

Funeral service is a unique career choice. Not everyone is cut out to be a funeral director. Thankfully, Rhonda Winfield is.





FOR

Back by popular demand is the **Definitive Downsizing Workshop**, which has proven to be one of the most popular Third Thursday's of the year. Join us for this informative and

enlightening event as presenters share important information and advice on how to organize a downsizing and how to achieve all your downsizing goals in the process. You'll hear from the experts about understanding the spring real estate market, how to prepare your home for sale, how to downsize and dispose of unwanted items, how to work with an auction house and much much more. This is one event you can't afford to miss. **PRESENTERS:**

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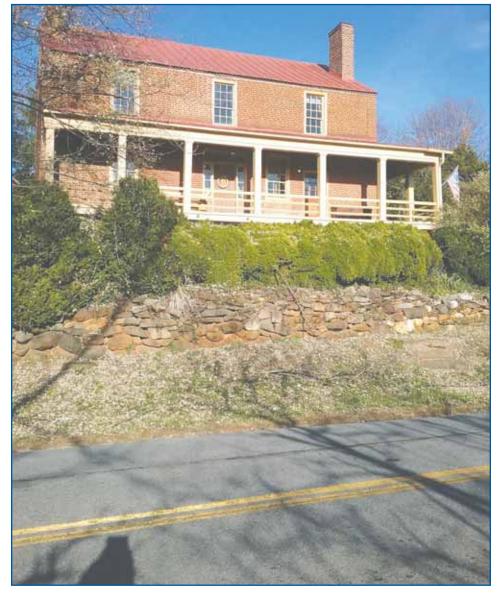
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The More They Stay The Same: Crossroads Tavern (c. 1820) is currently The Crossroads Inn, at Plank Road and U. S. Route 29. All photos by Patrick Healy

Cover Story

A Peek at the History of the Staunton & James River Turnpike

By Patrick Healy Correspondent

n the decades leading up to the Revolutionary War, this sweet land around the Horseshoe Bend was still part of the frontier. West of the Blue Ridge lay an almost foreign frontier, more settled by Germans down from Pennsylvania, than by Englishmen up from Williamsburg. Beyond the Alleghenies lay wilderness. This area was simultaneously claimed by England's Virginia colony, France, and several confederations of tribes native to those lands. Shot, shell, and the 7 Years War ensued.

Back here, the area then known as Albemarle began to divide itself into the discrete political entities of Louisa, Fluvanna, Buckingham, Nelson, Amherst, and Albemarle counties. Eventually, the county seat moved from Scott's Ferry, or Scott's

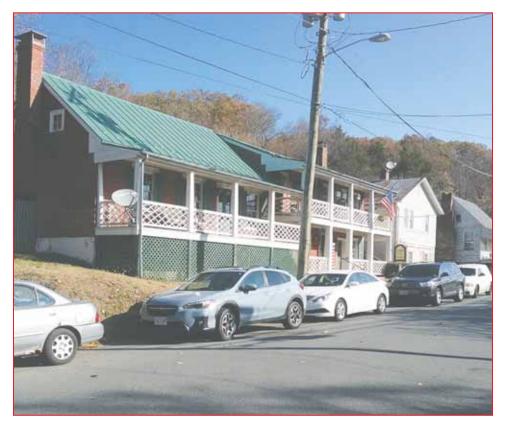
Landing, to Charlottesville.

In its earliest days the little settlement of Scottsville was not unlike a frontier town in an old Hollywood western. There'd be a tavern, which would serve as church or courthouse, depending on which circuit rider was present. The ferry got wagons across the river, and bateaux could get passengers or goods to the deepwater port of Richmond. Add a scattering of structures, a livery stable, and a stockyard corral and you'd pretty much have it. Nearby were small farmsteads and Monacan villages. Instead of cattle barons and cowhands, there would be planters and their slaves.

Though the colonial capital of Williamsburg was more concerned with Tidewater Virginia, and trade with the mother country than with the colony's wild west, in 1764 the legislature authorized the county of Augusta to collect up to £150 to build a road through the Rockfish Gap. At the time, the Three Noc'd Road and Wood's (now Jarman's) Gap led travelers across the Blue Ridge and into the Shenandoah



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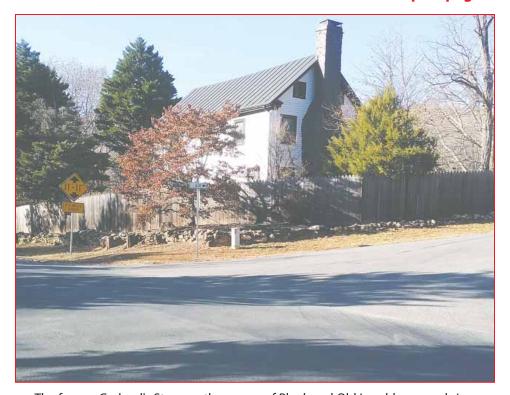
The More Things Change: The old Tavern on East Main Street now houses Images Salon.

Valley. The War for Independence came, and in 1780 Virginia's government moved to Richmond. With victory in 1783, came a new nation, and with that the Commonwealth's newfound interest in its mountainous west. In 1790 the legislature approved a lottery to raise £400 to repair the Rockfish Gap Turnpike, and extend it, "...to Nichol's and Scott's Landing, on the Fluvanna." as the James River west of Point of Forks was often called back then. The funds were raised, but the new road was never built, though the Rockfish Gap Turnpike was improved, and continued to thrive. With the arrival of the new century we entered our Turnpike Era (c. 1800 - 1830).

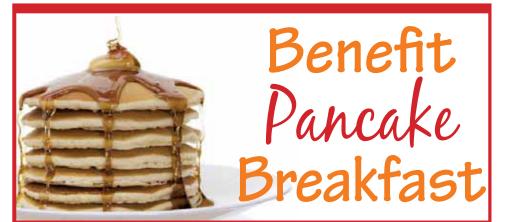
By 1816, a long-standing issue for Virginia's western counties began to simmer. At the time there were only 4 state senators representing the 210,000 souls living west of the Blue Ridge, while the 160,000 Virginians scattered across the Piedmont and in Tidewater had 13 senators. Western business and political leaders convened in Staunton that year, then went to Richmond with their concerns. In response, the legislature created The Bureau of Public Works, which authorized the construction of the James River & Kanawha Canal to, "...improve river travel up to Buchanan." Then, in 1818, the General Assembly called for a \$200,000 subscription to build a good road connecting the hub city of Staunton to the shipping center of Scottsville. Richmond's concern was its loss of revenue from the Shenandoah Valley. Without a dependable, or even decent, way to cross the eastern mountains, western producers were sending their goods up the valley, to Baltimore or Philadelphia.

When investors didn't bite, the legislature sweetened the deal, proposing in 1818 a public/private, 40/60 split of the costs. This did the trick. By the following year,

See Turnpike page 6



The former Garland's Store on the corner of Plank and Old Lynchburg roads is now a private residence.



Saturday, February 8 8:30-10:30

Join us for our 11th annual all-you-can-eat pancake breakfast to benefit the Fluvanna County SPCA.

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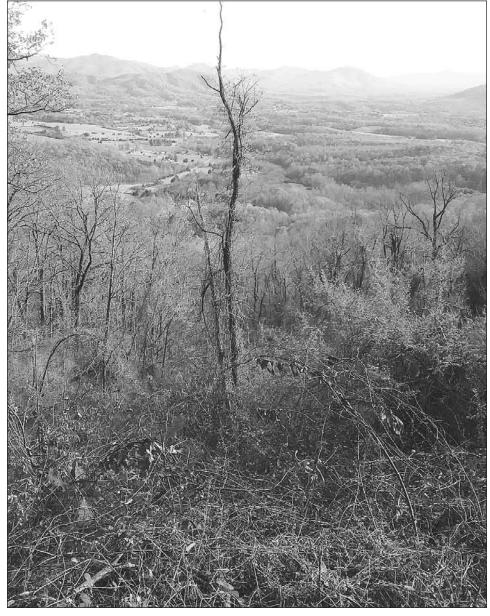
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Turnpike from page 5



Sharp switch-backs climb Old Turnpike Road, on Afton village's east side.



Looking south, down the upper Rockfish Valley from Stagecoach Road, just west of Afton village. The southern entrance to Crozet's Blue Ridge Tunnel is about 100' directly below this point.

subscriptions totaled \$50,000, so the Commonwealth duly release \$20,000, which included the old, unspent lottery revenue. The Turnpike was in business. The funding legislation called for a road, "...30' wide, well graded, and paved when deemed essential..." by the project's lead engineer. On this point, the road builders were in luck. The Commonwealth's engineer at that time was preeminent. Claudius Crozet had previously drawn his pay from the likes of the Emperor Napoleon, and Czar Nicholas I. And he was already in the area, scoping out the terrain for what would become his most famous project, the Blue Ridge Tunnel, which he would undertake a couple of decades later. By the Spring of 1826, the first tolls were being collected along the Staunton to Waynesboro stretch, and in 1827 subscribers received their first dividends.

In its particulars, Crozet didn't care much for the way the Turnpike had been built. In the Valley portion, funds had been squandered by building string-straight rather than coping with the terrain. The grades over the Blue Ridge were too steep, while the path from Brooksville to Batesville was, "...low and miry." And the road was frequently over-crowned, with its center as much as 15" higher than its edges. All and all, Crozet felt that the new turnpike was, "...not so good as it might have been...nevertheless, one of the best..." The costs varied with the topography. In the profligate valley, construction costs ran to \$700/mile. Going up to, over, and down from the Rockfish Gap ran \$5,500/mile. The stretch from Israel's Gap to Scottsville coped, not straight - came in at a frugal \$685/mile.

The Turnpike was a rip-roaring success. Designed to draw commerce from Augusta, Nelson, and Albemarle counties, it became the route of choice for producers from Bath, Rockbridge, and Pendleton counties, among others spread across the mountain and valley portion on the Commonwealth. And no wonder. In a study conducted in 1844, Edwin M. Taylor found that a barrel of flour cost \$.96 to ship from Staunton to Baltimore. Shipping the same barrel to Richmond, via Scottsville, cost \$.68. That \$.28 difference was an enormous boon to the western producers. Scottsville became a booming town, with thriving docks, fine homes and churches, banks and hotels. Wagons by the dozens lined the riverside streets, where they off or on loaded goods from dawn till dusk. But the Turnpike was no charity, organized for the benefit of barrel shippers. It was a highly profitable business. The same 1844 study showed that the company could enjoy a 72% gross profit margin on revenues of about \$18,000, if it improved its services. Taylor had undertaken the study to justify the added and, in his view, much need expense of Macadamizing the Turnpike; referring to John McAdams' process of paving roads with crushed stone.

But then, as now, shareholders cast a flinty eye on the expense section of the annual report. Deferred maintenance, along with the structural shortcomings initially highlighted by Claudius Crozet, was causing problems with day-to-day turnpike operations. Several sections - most notably, the low and miry Brooksville to Batesville run - would keep an open gate policy (i.e. no tolls) for weeks at a time, due to their poor surface conditions. Competition, offered by the newly Macadamized Staunton-Parkersburg and Staunton-Winchester Turnpikes, was drawing Valley commerce to western, or northern ports. And everyone knew that railroads would be the next big thing. Once Crozet's crews punched that hole through the Blue Ridge, the Turnpike would be yesterday's news. So the investors opted for the cheap solution, which is why today we call Routes 692 and 712, from the Brooksville area to Keene, the Plank Road.

Those words might conjure a sort of wooden railroad; two parallel lines of planks, on which the wagon's wheels could roll. Indeed, back in the day, plank roads were derided as farmer's railroads. Which is correct, if the railroad was flipped over, with the rails on the ground and the wooden cross-pieces on top, like a boardwalk. Such structures are relatively cheap to build, and maintain - in theory. In practice, it depends. If you and your sweetie go strolling, with cafes and souvenir stands at the one hand, sand and surf at the other, boardwalks work quite well. But yoke four iron-shod oxen to a heavy wagon with a few tons of lumber on board, and drag that over the planks and it won't be just the theory that breaks down. In the end, the cheap fix proved to be good money after bad. By 1860, the Turnpike collected only \$293.45, but reported expenses of \$80,190.64. It was over.

These days we take for granted good roads, as public facilities. But for most of our history that wasn't the case. When the Turnpike company went belly-up, nobody owned those roads. Heavy use dictated that the Commonwealth or the County - somebody! - would, sort of, maintain the Scottsville Road and the Rockfish Gap Turnpike. Even so, by today's standards those roads would be impassable. The Plank Road would be worse. The same nobody that owned it took care of it. Contemporary accounts speak of the Mud Turnpike. No doubt, a farmer dealing with a couple of mules knee-deep in the muck might choose other, less descriptive words. Finally, on March 31st, 1860 the General Assembly passed a law permitting Albemarle County to purchase the roads. But it wasn't until after World War I, and the mass acceptance of the automobile, that the United States started to get serious about its road networks.

Today the Plank Road is beautifully paved, and shouldered by valuable Albemarle County real estate. U. S. Route 250 connects Richmond, at the fall line on the James River, to Sandusky Ohio on the western tip of Lake Erie, traversing some of the most beautiful and historic land in the eastern third of our nation. Virginia Rt. 20 meanders down the Piedmont from Wilderness to Dillwyn, passing through town on its way. Though great loads of timber still pass along, river traffic has dwindled to the occasional kayak, and the seasonal flotillas of inflated innertubes. We call our little patch of the old Staunton & James River Turnpike Valley Street.

Hmm...wonder which valley that is?

Production of this article relied on research papers written by Douglas Young (1975), and Nathaniel Mason Pawlett (1981; revised 2003). Any errors found in this article will have originated with the reporter.



A tribute to first responders

As the sun was setting to usher in Midwinter's Night, Jack Maxwell welcomed a couple of first responders to his front yard. There was no emergency this time. Maxwell, who volunteers with the Scottsville Fire Department and with Albemarle CERT, was decked out in his firefighter gear for the occasion. He had spent the previous week meticulously crafting a tribute to those First Responders who have fallen in the line of duty or passed away following their time of service. Maxwell's mixed media display ranges from found objects to craft sticks, holiday lighting to repurposed political signs.

Albemarle County Officer Knight and First Sergeant Wood joined Maxwell in a photo, then toured the dis-play, ending up at the pine garland laced with ribbons and crosses, each carrying the name of a departed brother or sister.

As the longest night of the year darkened, friends and family members took in the scene,

and other first responders dropped in, between calls. Whether in the cold or the dark, these people will always be there for us. Jack Maxwell kept his memorial illumination lit from December 21st through January 6th. - Patrick Healy





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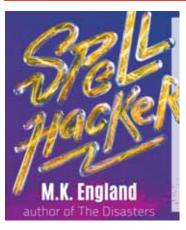


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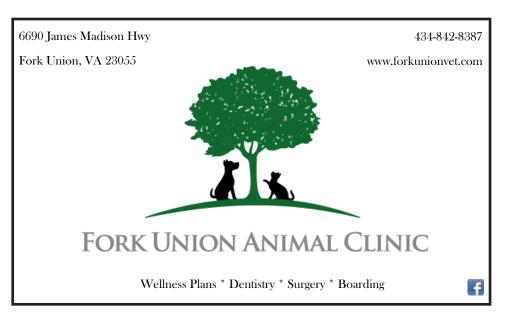
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ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EVENTS



Author Q&A with "Spellhacker" author, Megan England Hosted by Scottsville Center for Arts and Nature and Baine's Scottsville Saturday, January 25, 2020 at 2 PM - 3 PM

Baine's Scottsville, Virginia 24590
Come and join us as we celebrate the release of
Spellhacker, written by acclaimed local author,
Megan England. SCAN Board Member and Local Author, Amber McBride, will be hosting a Q&A Session with Megan.





Scottsville VFW Post 8161

Meeting Times are the Second Sunday of Every Month at

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Join SCAN's official book club!

SCAN Book Club Wednesday, January 29, 2020 5:30 PM 6:30 PM

Start the new year off fresh and accomplish your book reading goals with SCAN! Starting in January of 2020, SCAN is having a monthly book club curated by Amber McBride. This book club will challenge participants to read across genres and forms. The list includes science fiction, historical fiction, nonfiction, fantasy, across of a starting of science for the science f coming of age stories, New York Times best sellers, novels in verse, self help books and much more!

The book club will meet the last Wednesday of every month from 5:30-6:30 at The Batteau!

We can have a drink and discuss this very different and excellent books! Join us

whenever you can!



The Monthly Community Jam
Hosted by Scottsville Center for
Arts and Nature
Friday, February 7, 2020 at
7 PM – 9 PM
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The Monthly Community Jam is an acoustic
get together of local musicians with all levels of
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Friday of each month. It is open to everyone! Contact for more information: Ron Smith, 757-719-4424.

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Back by popular demand, musician and educator Horace Scruggs and his band bring their layered harmonies and soulful delivery for another unique "learning and listening" concert. Following up on his past programs tracing the evolution of soul, gospel and music of the civil rights era, Scruggs explores through commentary and live performance the ways in which music, race, and religion influence and inform one another.

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From their very first note, you will know that this group is going to knock your socks off!! We welcome back with great anticipation the Big Band sounds of Big Ray and the Kool Kats with Sinatra-crooning guest soloist, Danny Barrale. This exciting and professional group plays everything from Sinatra to Bruno Mars and has performed at the last four Presidential Inaugural Balls as well as at the Bellagio in Las Vegas and the Kennedy Center in DC. Their music is guaranteed to chase away any leftover winter blues! Don't be surprised to see some dancing in the aisles!!

Unless otherwise specified, Admission is: \$12 Advance, \$15 Day of Performance, \$10 Student/Military/Veterans, Family Package \$5/person (2 Adults max, + 3 or more children)

• To purchase online: http://www.Carysbrook.org

Please note: No reserved seating.

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Bob Abbott explains tools to Mayor Nancy Gill and Supervisor Donna Price.

Facing a Problem, Offering a Solution

By Ron Smith Correspondent

ecent reports released by the Department of Defense and the Department of Veteran's Affairs show that suicide among both active duty personnel and veterans continues to be on the rise.

Shelley MacDermid Wadsworth is the director of the Military Family Research Institute at Perdue University. The purpose of this program is "to study mental health issues that affect active military and veterans."

The Annual Suicide Report for 2018, issued by the Department of Defense, shows that suicide rates for active duty and National Guard members continued to rise while members of Reserve components showed a slight decrease. When percentages are translated into hard figures it can be more than alarming.

Since most statistical data takes time to gather and analyze, the most recent true

figures come from 2017. Of all veterans, 6139 died by suicide in 2017 compared to 6010 who died in 1016. For 2018 there were 325 active duty, 135 National Guard and 81 reserve deaths by suicide! These figures do not include the overall veteran population.

population.

The great tragedy of individuals who die by suicide – whether currently serving military, veteran or civilian – is that they cannot at that moment believe there is a better solution, and they lose hope that everyone who cares so much about them can help," Professor Wadsworth says, adding, "military service, especially during wartime, can expose individuals and families to a variety of traumatic experiences."

Local resident and veteran Bob Abbott has come up with a program he hopes will not only address the problem of veteran suicide, but hopefully provide a solution.

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Located at 492 Valley Street, it's called "The Space."

Conceived as a place where not only veterans, but everyone can "work, learn, play and create something" as Bob says, The Space is open to the public with a very small monthly fee asked. The mission statement goes on to add that "whether it be wood working, pottery, coding or fiber crafts, (the Space) has the tools you need and expert artists to assist you in your project."

The Space has an area for fine arts such as pottery, sewing, and fiber arts, and another area for coding with several computers available as well as a 3-D printer. But most of the floor space is dedicated to wood working equipment and hand tools. And while Abbott spent a considerable amount from his own pocket to get The Space up and running, many tools and some equipment have been either donated or loaned to the effort.

This "workshop for veterans" will give those veterans a place to go not only to be creative, but to give the veteran who is looking for a purpose the opportunity to find that purpose. "There are veterans who need jobs," Abbott said. "The process of com-



Entrance to The Space.

pleting a project gives the participant skills he or she could use when looking for employment and it is a fact that there is a shortage of skilled crafts persons in the trades areas," he continued.

Town Administrator Matt Lawless, who helped Bob, as he said, "in a very minor way" with this project, describes The Space as "a special niche in the community that will serve everyone."

With a ribbon cutting by Mayor Nancy Gill and Scottsville Supervisor Donna Price on January 3rd, the grand opening was on January 11th. And although The Space is there to help veterans, it is open to all. You should stop by, talk with Bob, and discover what The Space is all about. According to Abbott, "volunteers run the show (here)."

Since our veterans volunteered to serve our country, perhaps after visiting and talking with Bob Abbott you may just want to return the favor and become a volunteer.



Creator of The Space, Bob Abbott.





Supervisor Price and Mayor Gill cut a "wooden ribbon" with saws.

Crossword by Margie E. Burke															rke
ACROSS	1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
1 Throws in	14	├		-		15	_					16	├		Ш
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10 Yellowstone,	17					18					19		\vdash		П
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14 Guitar part	20				21				22						
15 December ditty			23					24							
16 Medicinal herb	25	26			27		0.0			29			20	0.4	
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25 Big club?													$oxed{oxed}$		
27 Shredded	64					65						66			
29 Text alternative 32 Old what's	67					68						69			

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- 33 Built-out window
- 35 North Pole workers

name

- 37 Sparkle
- 39 Sub detector
- 41 Hot rock
- 42 Taxi ticker
- 44 Be silent, in music
- 46 URL ending
- 47 Humdinger
- 49 Clock part
- 50 Barley brew
- 51 Nonpoetic writing
- 53 Splinter group
- 55 Create a stir
- 58 Kids' racers
- 61 High spirits
- 63 Medical remedy
- 64 Desertlike

- 65 Ill-gotten gains
- 66 Prayer's end
- 67 Anagram for "user"
- 68 Floor it
- 69 Pundit's piece

DOWN

- 1 Bushy do
- 2 Cheerless
- 3 Slow down
- 4 Fashion sense
- 5 Tailor's tool
- 6 Ketcham of the comics
- 7 Fly ball's path
- 8 Four-legged friend
- 9 "Freaky Deaky" author Leonard

- 10 R.J. Reynolds brand
- 11 Direction at sea
- 12 Memorization
- method
- 13 Peachy follower19 Feather in one's
- cap
 21 Quite fond of
- 24 Like The Who's wasteland
- wasteland
- 25 "Excuse me..." 26 Paparazzi target
- 28 Barrel of laughs
- 28 Barrel of laugh30 Donald's first
- wife
 31 Carpenter's
- device 34 Fancy edging 36 Fill to the gills

- 38 Ocean current40 Thought out
- 43 Like the
- boondocks
- 45 Arduous journey
- 48 Bottom-line figures
- 52 Sting operation
- **54** Tree for chocolate
- 55 A bit cracked
- 56 Wise one
- 57 Sacred bird of
- the Nile 58 Former V.P.
- 59 Sloth's home
- 60 Sam Cooke song, "You ____ Me"
- 62 NHL surface

Crossword Answers page 15





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Cookin' Good at The Beijing Kitchen

By Patrick Healy Ćorrespondent



Chef, Xing Wang runs things at the Beijing Kitchen. All photos by Patrick Healy

Once upon a time, the sine qua non of American fine dining was found in the French culinary arts. Julia Child, perhaps our first rock-star chef, starred in a popu-lar cooking show during which she would plough through dozens of sieves, sifters, and funny-shaped pots and pans while searing this, blanching that, and sautéing the other thing - all of which would end up in the immensely complex dish she was preparing. Most good-sized cities

boasted one or more French restaurants, where the gentry could enjoy tut-tutting over the quality of the sauce, and the folk could celebrate special occasions. Men wore suits and ties, and women gloried in fancy dresses and their heirloom pearls. If children were to attend, they would be parged into their Sunday outfits - starched to the point of masonry - and admonished to behave themselves. It was great fun and, though few could pronounce the items offered on the menu, the food was deliciously rich.

But tastes, so to speak, change. As restaurant culture proliferated, and chefs struggled to establish their French identities, cooking morphed into nouvelle cuisine. Freed from the strictures of Le Cordon Bleu, fine dining entered its rococo

period. Adventurous diners tucked into entrees such as "flash-braised jalapenos stuffed with hand rubbed rabbit brain chutney, garnished with fragments of unsweetened bakers chocolate, which are served on a house graham cracker and drizzled with a reduction drawn from tamarack bark infused pork rinds."

Instead of a cherry on top, one could expect a rare jabuticaba berry. Those whose palates were more risk intolerant found novelty in ethnic/regional eateries, or the infinity of barbeque. What emerged from this creative ferment was akin to cuisine as theatre, where one or two shows enjoy long runs, while most close after a couple of performances. In simple math, restaurants are businesses and the customer is always right. Of course, large markets can accommodate both the most flagrant-

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ly nouvelle, and the most religiously authentic regionalist establishments. But the industry as a whole stuck with the winners, be they Mongolian or Cajun in origin, and Americana - the melting pot as kitchen utensil became the next new thing.

So, if popular tastes are the order of the day, could plain old comfort food be far behind? Not exactly. In the lead is more like it. A while back, Bon Appetit Magazine published a rhapsodic critique of a NOLA sandwich shop, and its world-famous fried bologna sandwich. National Geographic quality photographs of the masterpiece accompanied of the masterpiece accompanied a couple of paragraphs given to the meticulous gathering and processing of the ingredients, the time-gobbling production of the components, and so forth. Most of the piece profiled the creator of this culinary wonder. Appropriate to his rock star (chef) status the proprietor was (chef) status, the proprietor was said to be foul of mouth, impetuous of habits, and utterly obsessed with his creative vision. This last bit, his obsessions in the best of the control of th sion, is what matters because the most important brand any chef going down the comfort food path can build is Not-Fast-Food. Narrative helps. Our sandwich chef seems like a real character. But the food's the thing, and anyone wanting to make a living serving up mac-n-cheese, bologna sandwiches, and the like better be dishing out some-



Beijing Kitchen partner, Jay Feng keeps the bargains moving at The Outlet, in The Scottsville Shopping Center.

thing special.

To that end there seem to be common standards for the Not-Fast types of comfort foods now proliferating. The provenance of the ingredients is a biggie, and the closer to the restaurant the better. With provenance comes narrative. The gathering of wild walnuts on Findlay Mountain and their hand-pressing in a 200-year-old log barn makes for a better story than the exercising of a futures contract on a metric ton of canola oil; and it probably makes the sandwiches taste better too. Process is equally important. It matters how long an ingredient was kept at one temperature, and how quickly it was raised to the next. Gas, or wood? Iron, or stone? It matters!

Also important are the Nevers. These are found on a long list, topped by what are known as GMOs. If you're playing in this league, you Nev-Ver use a GMO.

This trend has led us to a couple of interesting places; one curious, and the other expected. How odd it is, one ponders, that the chef who prepares old reliables like tossed salad, chicken noodle soup, or cheeseburgers has become the new Julia Child. And how inevitable that a quick lunch consisting of an artisanal grilled cheese sandwich and a hand grafted boverage is going to set you back about \$30. That sandwich and a hand-crafted beverage is going to set you back about \$30. That many of us can afford such pricing is a testament to the area's general attractiveness and robust economy. That said, many of us can't. And there are plenty of us who have the cash on hand, but don't choose to allocate it to that particular sector. As one wag put it, the main reason Millennials haven't entered the housing market

Here in town all levels of dining are available, from steam table and microwave eats at the filling station to the seriously enjoyable comestibles and libations provided by the chefs and brewers whose establishments have helped us keep body and soul together for years. Perhaps the most popular comfort food of all time is found inside the door at 440 Valley Street where, for the last 5 years, the Beijing Kitchen has been heaping the platters and packing the cartons with those irresistible steamed or fried treats. After all, for generations the phrase, take out, has been syn-

"We don't do authentic Chinese." says Beijing Kitchen co-owner, Jay Feng, from behind the counter at The Outlet over in the Scottsville Shopping Center. "We do American Chinese." He shrugs. "It's what people expect."

So, what's the difference? "Everything." says Feng, mentioning the spices, preparation and pairings which are true to their origins, but foreign to our expectations. General Tso's Chicken? Never heard of it.

In 1998, Mr. Feng moved to the area from West Virginia for a job at the University

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Beijing Kitchen from page 14

of Virginia. That's when he discovered Charlottesville's Ming Dynasty restaurant, and its chef, Xing Wang. "I often went. It was a treat for me to go for the traditional food." he says. In time, Wang and Feng decided to try running a business. In 2007, Scottsville's Luv'n Oven was closing its doors, and they jumped at the opportunity to keep them open; which they did for 4 years. In 2010 a new opportunity appeared, when the partners bought the Dew Drop Inn build-

That was some work." Feng recalls. "Everything was worn out. Ruined. We went all the way back to the bricks and fixed it all. What a mess." Feng tells of crumbled bricks, powdered mortar, and muck filled crannies left in the wake of those pre-levy times when more than the dew dropped in. He holds his hand up to indicate the height of the water line on those old brick walls.

Today, the Beijing Kitchen is as neat as a pin. Well-scrubbed porcelain floor tiles, glazed to resemble ancient sandstone pavers, evoke distant dynasties while ensuring the benefits of contemporary building codes. The rest of the decor is crisp, clean and uncluttered. The front room is divided in two, with a small section for casual dining, and plenty of room for the takeout crowd to mingle. And if you must eschew money during your next comfort food outing, the Beijing Kitchen's price point will

also be welcoming.

Mr. Feng, from his perch in The Outlet, sums up the business model. "We offer what people need at a fair price. I wanted to open the kind of place I would want to go." Back at the Kitchen Wang is proud of his small business, which serves up its popular fare, Monday through Saturday. And on Sunday? Wang smiles. "It's a day off.' Ah, comfort.

Answers to the Crossword Puzzle from page 11

Α	D	D	S		S	Н	Α	Р	E		Р	Α	R	K
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