



THE GUARDIAN

Volume IV, Issue 2. Newsletter of the Jefferson County WV Historical Society

Oct 2006

Jefferson County History for All

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Key Words: Jefferson County WV Historical Society

Upcoming Events

Fall Membership Meeting

Mark your calendar for 2pm Saturday, November 4, for the **Fall Meeting** in the Betty Roper Auditorium at Wright Denny School on Congress St. in Charles Town. Our guest speaker is Ken Sullivan, Executive Director of the West Virginia Humanities Council. Working with the Board of Directors, his major accomplishments at the Humanities Council include the restoration of the 1836 MacFarland-Hubbard House in Charleston, WV, and the recent publication of *The West Virginia Encyclopedia*, a compilation of 2200 articles by nearly 600 professionals in fields ranging from archeology, biography, history and literature, through folklore, culture, and the arts and sciences. *The West Virginia Encyclopedia* will be available for sale and Ken will gladly autograph your copy.

The West Virginia Humanities Council celebrated its 30th Anniversary in 2004. The nonprofit organization was formed in 1974 at the invitation of the National Endowment for the Humanities to encourage the exploration of the humanities in

daily life and to provide life-long learning opportunities to West Virginians. Encompassing history, cultural studies, folklore, art history, literature, archaeology, philosophy, ethics, language, and jurisprudence, to name a few, the humanities define individuals and their cultural heritage, binding people and cultures together. In less than a decade the Humanities Council's operating budget has doubled, with a comparable increase in the organization's assets.

From the President's Desk

By *Bill Drennen*

It has been a year since your Board of Directors gathered to produce a document to guide the society through the coming years. The Strategic Plan was a group effort guided by Amy Owen of the Eastern Panhandle Community Foundation. The result is expressed in the mission statement: "To Identify, Preserve, Present, and Promote the History of Jefferson County." The vision includes educating everyone to know the important history of Jefferson County. The time to do it is now. We are on our way with a new communication plan; a new logo and soon a new web site; two new re-publications: *Between the Shenandoah and Potomac -- Historic Homes of Jefferson*

County, WV; and *The DAR Cemetery Book*. We are also looking forward to working with the community to ensure a path for graceful growth in the County and the re-birth of Happy Retreat as a lively cultural center for the public.

Finally, in the next month or so the Board of Directors will once again "retreat" to establish viable operating systems to empower our vision for the future. We need a lot of help if we are to become the best we can, so support the society with your ideas and attend our meetings.

New Society Logo

After consideration of designs submitted by Virginia McLaughlin of Frederick, MD, Angela Faulkner of Harpers Ferry, and Intelment, Inc, of Harpers Ferry, a composite logo for the Society was voted number one by the membership and approved by the Board. Many thanks to the artists who produced some unique designs for this project.

JCHS Summer Picnic 2006 by Betsy Wells

The 2006 summer picnic was held on August 9th, the second Wednesday in August, because of a conflict with the Jefferson

County Farm Bureau/Chamber of Commerce picnic on the usually-scheduled first Wednesday. About 200 members and guests gathered at Millbrook, the historic home established by the Billmyer family in the 1700's as part of a small colony of homes built around the Billmyer Mill, which operated during the colonial era. Our hosts were Mr. and Mrs. Henry W. Morrow, Jr. A delightful



evening was enjoyed by all. The weather was perfect, the setting was magnificent, and the food was delicious. After feasting on fried chicken, barbeque, and lemonade provided by Magnolia Tree and an outstanding assortment of delectable pot-luck dishes brought by the guests, we toured the house. Such a good time was had that it was well past dark when the last guest went home.

Charles Town Heritage Days—Dampened but not Discouraged

Despite overcast skies and periods of inclement weather, a good turnout of folks enjoyed a variety of events at the first-ever Charles Town Heritage Festival held between September 21st and 23rd. JCHS member Bob O'Connor did a great job organizing the Festival events which were conducted downtown and at several other sites around Charles Town.

Over 200 people attended "The Taste of West Virginia," a sold-out benefit dinner for Friends

of Happy Retreat (FOHR). Sponsored by the City of Charles Town and organized by Tish Appignani and Bob O'Connor, it was held in a large tent on the front lawn of the estate Friday evening. Featuring a number of outstanding West Virginia chefs led by Chef Harv of Romney, WV, the dinner included a live jazz band and a benefit auction organized by Betsy Wells and other Friends. On Saturday the Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps marched through town in the morning and later that day the Rohrersville Coronet Band performed at Happy Retreat. A farmers' market with booths from several local farms and vendors from near and far was also held Saturday along one block of George Street. In a nearby tent, the Charles Town Historic Landmarks Commission honored Mayor Smith with its Vision Award for her contributions in forming Friends of Happy Retreat. An Action Award, honoring demonstrated furtherance of local preservation goals, was given to the Arcadia Development Corporation for donating acreage adjacent to Happy Retreat to the City of Charles Town for parkland and for improving the grave site of Charles and Mildred Washington near Evitts Run. The Charles Town Historic Landmarks Commission 2006 Vision Awards also recognized Bakka LLC /Dream House for their adaptive reuse of a downtown building for a showroom which has enhanced the Charles Town downtown historic area. Jim Crawford and The Daily Grind also received a Vision Award for their adaptive reuse of a building at the corner of Liberty and George Streets. Both the Dream House and Daily Grind efforts significantly improved and revitalized portions of the Charles Town historic district.

Also on Saturday costumed interpreters representing the Peter

Burr house cooked apple butter and beans over campfires on the lawn at Happy Retreat. William Summerfield, the nation's foremost interpreter of General George Washington, regaled audiences at several locations with witty, knowledgeable and entertaining stories, including several relating to the General's strong connections to the Eastern Panhandle, beginning when he was a lad of sixteen surveying land along Bullskin Run for the sixth Lord Fairfax.



Preserving Happy Retreat

On September 22nd the City of Charles Town sponsored a benefit for Friends of Happy Retreat (FOHR) at the historic estate as part of the City's Heritage Day celebration. Please see the section on Heritage Days for more information about this event. FOHR is very grateful to Mayor Smith and the City Council for their much-needed contribution and to the over 200 guests who attended the "Taste."

The Compass Group Inc, from Aldie Virginia, is conducting a planning study for FOHR to determine the likelihood of success of a capital campaign to raise funds needed to acquire and operate the property.

FOHR's website is updated monthly to provide the latest status of the group's efforts: <http://www.happyretreat.org>.

JCHS Collaborates on Historic Roads Bicycle Tour

On September 17, 2006, the Potomac Pedalers Touring Club of the Metropolitan DC Area hosted

the “Historic Back Roads Century” featuring 17, 25, 50, 63, and 100-mile bicycle tours through parts of Jefferson County, WV, and Clarke County, VA. Tour organizers worked with Curt Mason of the JCHS to develop information for the riders on the history of several of Jefferson County’s historic homes. One of the tour rest stops was at the spring at White House Farm in Summit Point (see photo below). Riders had an opportunity to savor food and beverages, enjoy colonial era music provided by Sam Rizzetta and his band, and relax on the lawn adjacent to the farm’s 265 year old spring house. The rides started and finished at Clarke County High School in Berryville, VA, and followed back roads though the gently rolling and historic Shenandoah Valley. Registrants were given an opportunity to make a donation to the JCHS and contributed almost \$1000 to the Society for celebrating the county’s rich heritage. Additional photos of the event are available at the group’s web site:

http://picasaweb.google.com/linda_tischer/2006CenturyPictures



The Museum Corner
By Sue Collins

There are many definitions of the term “Folk Art” but the most practical description is “paintings and decorative objects made in a naïve style.” I would also add that a sense of fun or whimsy was another requirement! There is one object in the Museum that truly exemplifies the tradition of folk art in the purist sense: a chair, circa 1910, made of leather and wood, that was created in the A.D. Goetz harness factory in Ranson which occupied the site of the current ABC building.

Purchased many years ago at an estate sale by Donald Smith and donated to the Museum in 2001, we have little historical background on the piece. One of a pair, a larger version, surely made for a man, was sold to another bidder, while we have Mr. Smith’s “female” companion. The Goetz chair back measures thirty-seven and a half inches in height and is

padded throughout with horsehair. The seat consists of nine individual squares in rows of three. Each leather square is molded over a wood base with a coil spring and held in place with buckled leather straps. The bottom of the chair slopes down to the base and is completely covered with symmetrical rows of leather “leaves”, two inches in length, held in place with a brass tack. Leather “rosettes” spaced at regular intervals, decorate the entire base which is formed from a Wells Fargo crate. This strange little chair has an air of dignity and also a dash of the exotic. It was made with great care and imagination and, amazingly enough, is comfortable to sit on! Come try it out at the Jefferson County Museum, 200 E. Washington Street, Charles Town, WV 25414.

<http://jeffetywvmuseum.org>



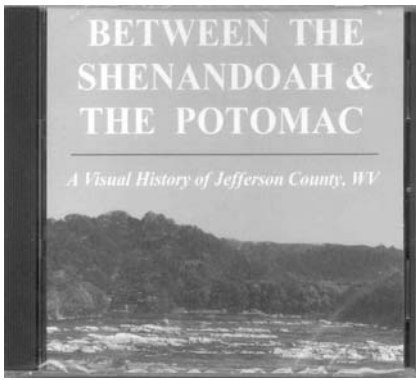
Join the Jefferson County Historical Society Today!!

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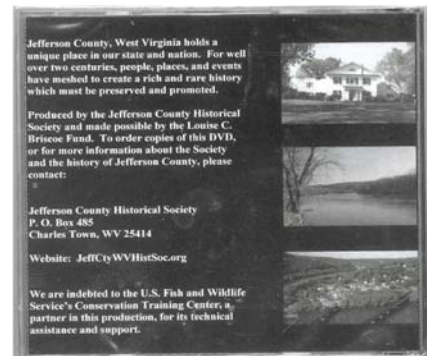
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Annual Membership (\$15) **Life Membership (\$150)**
 Mail checks to: Membership Secretary, Jefferson County Historical Society
 Mail to: P. O. Box 485, Charles Town, WV 25414
 Already a member? Mail next year’s dues after January 1st



The Society produced the VHS videotape, **“Between the Shenandoah and the Potomac,”** a number of years ago. It is a visual history of Jefferson County. The same production is now available in DVD. It can be purchased at area locations for \$9.95. See below for mail ordering



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