'Op Center' helps coordinate snow emergency response

The Doyle Report

By Delegate John Doyle

When the Legislature is in session I try to come home most weekends, as we don’t meet on Saturdays or Sundays until the last couple of weeks. Some years the only weekend we meet during the regular session is the 60th day, the last day we are permitted by the state constitution to consider any legislation other than the budget.

Last weekend I stayed in Charleston. Because of the weather forecast I decided it would be sensible to stay put rather than risk coming home late Friday and driving back to the capital city on Sunday. In addition to spending time in my capital office on Saturday and Sunday, I took advantage of the opportunity to look in on the West Virginia Emergency Operations Center. The “Op Center” was buzzing with activity the entire weekend, due to the huge snowstorm the Weather Channel chose to call the “Winter powerhouse.”

The Operations Center is run by the Division of Homeland Security, which is an agency under the Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety. It is housed in the bowels of the capitol building. The center is staffed on these kinds of occasions by a dozen or more people. Some are National Guard soldiers or air warriors, others are State Police troopers, yet others are Emergency Services or Transportation employees. There was even a fellow with the Red Cross. They sat behind computers providing them with real-time information about the storm and its effects.

I learned that at noon on Saturday there were approximately 1,600 customers without electricity in Jefferson County. By 4 pm that number had shrunk to about 800, and by Sunday mid-afternoon it was down to around 300.

I commend Allegheny Power for this splendid effort under extremely trying circumstances.

I was also made aware on Saturday that if road graders were on their way to Jefferson, Berkeley and Morgan Counties, but that they were having trouble getting through. On Sunday I was told that they had made it to the Eastern Panhandle. The grader is the “capital ship” of the snowplow fleet. These ten more than doubled the number of graders available regularly in our three counties.

On Sunday Jimmy Gianato, the Director of Homeland Security, informed me that 48 inches of snow had fallen at Shepherd’s Nest Road, in Shannondale. Eagles’ Nest Road is, at 1,400 feet elevation, near the top of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The highest point of the Blue Ridge is in West Virginia (and there the highest point in Jefferson County) is right at 1,700 feet elevation, just above Shannondale. Jefferson shares this peak with Loudoun County, Virginia. The state line runs along the crest of the Blue Ridge. Governor Joe Manchin called me on Sunday to assure me that everything possible was being done to get Jefferson County out from under the snow. I understand he was traveling to the Eastern Panhandle to assess the situation as this column was being written on Monday. February 8 I will over the next several days be keeping in touch with the governor and with his aides and the heads of the agencies that collaborate in the Emergency Operations Center to make sure Jefferson County doesn’t fall off somebody’s radar screen.

While I’m impressed with the dedication of all the folks who work in the Emergency Operations Center, I don’t think the basement of the capitol is the right location for such an installation. I think it would be even more effective at any of a number of other locations. My first choice would be Yeager Airport. In addition to being Charleston’s commercial airport, Yeager is where the 130th Air National Guard Wing is located. The 130th flies C-130 turbo-prop transport planes. In fact, they use the very same planes that had been used by the 167th Airlift Wing at Martinsburg before the 157th switched to C-5 jumbo jets. The C-130 is a highly effective airplane for response to many kinds of natural disasters. Yeager is less than 10 minutes from the capitol and three interstate highways.
Shepherd University Commemorating Black History Month

Reported by: Jamie Burke  
Tuesday, Feb 16, 2010 @06:31pm

SHEPHERDSTOWN, WV - February is Black History Month, so Shepherd University has organized special events throughout this month to honor those in the African American community.

Podcasts, plays, musical performances, and other events are just some of the ways Shepherd University is observing Black History Month.

Interviews with African American leaders from the local, national, and international community will share their personal experiences as part of the "Spirit of Black History Month."

"It has all kinds of different wonderful celebration items on there, including the podcasts, and so it's just members of the community and some members outside the Shepherdstown community just reflecting what Black History Month means to them and it's importance to them," says Christana Johnson, director of Multicultural Student Affairs for Shepherd University.
Acclaimed pianist performs at CAC
Performance to commemorate Frederic Chopin's 200th birthday

By Ashlie Walter

Published: Tuesday, February 16, 2010
Updated: Tuesday, February 16, 2010

Scott Beard, a nationally recognized pianist, teacher and recording artist, is performing tonight at 8:15 in the Bloch Learning and Performance Hall of West Virginia University's Creative Arts Center.

Beard is also holding a lecture Thursday night for music graduate students at WVU.

Beard first became interested in music as young child when playing a piano owned by his great grandmother, a piano he later inherited.

After his collegiate career, Beard became a music professor at Shepherd University in Shepherdstown, W.Va., where he still teaches piano and classical music courses.

Beard is also the associate artistic director of the Opera Camerata of D.C. and teaches music theater to some of the voice majors at Shepherd.

Beard has received numerous awards during his teaching career.

In 2006, Beard won West Virginia Music Teacher of the Year and was a finalist for the 2009 West Virginia Professor of the Year award.

Beard said the application process for the West Virginia professor of the year award was like a "Miss America" pageant for all the essays and nominations needed for the award.

Beard has also composed some of his own music while working as a church musician.

He released a Christmas CD featuring some of his own compositions. He also has two other CDs: a compilation of Frederic Chopin pieces, and the other a compilation of Theodor Leschetizky pieces.

Leschetizky was a Polish pianist who was influenced by Chopin.

Beard will perform selections from both artists.

Beard is performing this concert as a commemoration of the 200th anniversary of Chopin's birthday.

This event is sponsored by the Music Teachers National Association and is free and open to the public.
Friends of Music presents Chris Vadala in jazz festival concert

Don’t miss an exciting night of jazz, when special guest artist, saxophonist Chris Vadala, joins the Shepherd University Jazz Ensemble on the stage of the Frank Arts Center Theater, Saturday, February 27 at 8:00 p.m. for the Eastern Regional Jazz Festival Concert, sponsored by the Friends of Music.

Throughout the day on Saturday, February 27, one can see the best and brightest in the West Virginia Eastern Regional Jazz Festival as middle and high school students from throughout the region perform starting at 9:00 a.m. in Shepherd University’s Frank Arts Center.

One of the country’s foremost woodwind artists, Chris Vadala is in demand as a jazz/classical performer and educator. He has appeared on more than 100 recordings to date, as well as innumerable jingle sessions, film and TV scores, performing on all the saxophones, flutes, and clarinets. A native of Poughkeepsie, N.Y., he graduated from the Eastman School of Music, earning the honor of the Performer’s Certificate in saxophone as well as a B.M. in Music Education, received an M.A. in clarinet from Connecticut College, and pursued graduate study in woodwinds at Eastman.

Vadala is the Director of Jazz Studios and Saxophones Professor at the University of Maryland. Previous academic appointments include teaching studio woodwinds and conducting jazz ensembles at Connecticut College, Montgomery College, Hampton University, Prince George’s Community College and Mount Vernon College, as well as Visiting Professor of Saxophone at the Eastman School of Music.

The Jazz Program at Shepherd University has an outstanding faculty including Brett Lemley, David Marsh, Cami Mullan, Ron Shaw, Dr. Mark McCoy and Dr. Mark Cook. Each year the group works with a major jazz performer in clinics and concerts. The group has worked with Kenny Werner, Bill Watrous, Paquito D’Rivera, Al Jefferson, Claudio Roditi, Tim Hagans,Hal Galper and Jazzaica Williams. There will be a free master class with Chris Vadala at 6:00 p.m., before the concert on February 27 at the Frank Arts Center.

The Shepherd University Jazz Ensemble has performed throughout the East Coast and Europe and has been a feature band in Jazz Festivals around the globe. Invited to the world-renowned Montreux Jazz Festival in 2003, The Jazz Ensemble played throughout Switzerland and Italy on a 9-day concert tour. In 1999, the band took their Ellington Tour to England and France, and most recently toured England in May 2007. In the United States they have been featured at the Longwood, the Blue Ridge, and The East Coast Jazz Festivals, as well as regional festivals throughout Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Maryland, Delaware and New Jersey.

General admission tickets for the Eastern Regional Jazz Festival Concert are $20 in advance and $25 at the door; $15 seniors, faculty, staff and students 18 and under; free for Shepherd students. For tickets and information call 304-876-5765 or visit www.shepherd.edu.
Shepherd University Wind Ensemble in concert

Shepherdstown, WV — The highly acclaimed Shepherd University Wind Ensemble will perform on Friday, February 19 at 8:00 p.m. at the Frank Arts Center. Free with admission is a pre-concert lecture describing the works beginning at 7:00 p.m. A great way to derive even more enjoyment from the performance, the audience is invited to spend an hour with the conductor and the ensemble learning about and hearing excerpts from the music to follow. The Wind Ensemble will offer an exciting program of music spanning 500 years, and featuring Winds of Nigel by Michael Colgrass. Written in 1985, Winds of Nigel, subtitled “A Musical Fable for Wind Ensemble on the Writings of Carlos Castaneda,” is one of North American composer Michael Colgrass’s most famous works for Wind Ensemble. Considered a beautiful, yet highly challenging piece to perform, Colgrass won the Barlow and Sullivan Awards for the composition. Based on the writings of Carlos Castaneda, the work consists of seven movements, the work has been likened to a painting (or a set of seven paintings) in a fine art gallery.

American-born Canadian composer Michael Colgrass began his musical career as a percussionist and jazz drummer in Chicago and then New York. As a performer, he worked with musical icons including Dinah Washington, the Modern Jazz Quartet, Stravinsky, the New York Philharmonic, the American Ballet Theatre, and the original West Side Story Orchestra on Broadway. His composition teachers included Darius Milhaud, Lukas Fias, Wallingford Riegger and Ben Weber. In 1978, he won the Pulitzer Prize for Music for the orchestral version Deja Vu and in 1982 he received an Emmy Award for the documentary “Soundings: The Music of Michael Colgrass.” Colgrass continues to work as a composer, also doing workshops internationally in performance technique and psychology. He has been commissioned by groups including the New York Philharmonic, the Boston Philharmonic, the Toronto Symphony, the National Arts Centre Orchestra, the Canadian Broadcast Corporation, the Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society and the Brighton Festival in England.

The Shepherd University Wind Ensemble, comprised of music majors, is the premier wind group of Shepherd University and each year the audition becomes more competitive.

In 2001, the group accepted an invitation from the Lord Mayor of Dublin to tour Ireland and perform throughout the country, including stops in Cork, Limerick, Waterford, Tramore, and Dublin. In 2002, their outstanding recording of Barnes Symphony No. 3 garnered them an invitation to be a part of the 2002 season in Carnegie Hall.

The well-attended concert received a standing ovation and was well received by the New York audience. Last May the SU Wind Ensemble performed on a 10-day concert tour of Munich, Salzburg, Vienna and Prague.

Admission and seating for the Wind Ensemble concert is on a first come-first serve basis and advance sales or reservations are not available.

The box office will open one hour prior to each performance. General admission is $10, $5 for students 18 and under, and free to Shepherd students with Ramblin’ ID and Friends of Music MAC Cardholders. For more information call 304-876-5555 or visit www.shepherd.edu/musicweb.
Shepherd University students volunteer in snow storm

Shepherdstown, W.Va. — At least 15 residents of the Eastern Panhandle continue to dig their way out of some of the worst snowstorms in years, students from Shepherd University are leading the way in efforts to help Jefferson County residents.

On Tuesday, eleven students from the Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity helped shovel snow from fire hydrants in Shepherdstown, clean a path for a local homeowner, and assist the Red Cross in moving Jefferson County residents from their homes to Covenant Church by shoveling snow to clear walkways.

Holly Frye, Director of Student Community Services and Learning at Shepherd University, helped coordinate the efforts with the club.

"Shepherd University students are known for their volunteer spirit," Frye said. "Whenever there is a need in the community, our students are ready to help. All it took was one call and I had 15 volunteers ready to go."

The original goal for the students was to offer help shoveling snow for Shepherdstown residents who were unable to do so themselves. However, after speaking with the town's Fire Chief, Ross Morgan, it was discovered that uncovering town fire hydrants was also a priority.

The group also received a call from the Jefferson County Emergency Operations Center asking for assistance in moving the remaining snow.

"It's always special when students, who could stay in their warm homes, choose to help others," Frye said. "The guys had a great time. Lots of bonding took place while the work was completed. Lots of snow balls were thrown, lots of bluefingered fingers were developed. I believe whenever our students get out of their "comfort zone" to help others, they see a part of the community that they most likely haven't seen before."

The students received a call from Shepherd University's Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity providing a large amount of service to the community. Josh Nichols, a member of the fraternity, holds a leadership position with Shepherd's Relay for Life event, which benefits the American Cancer Society. Nichols is also planning to participate in an Alternative Spring Break trip where students will help construct a home for Habitat for Humanity in North Carolina. The Office of Student Community Services and Learning at Shepherd coordinates both community service initiatives, such as the one in which the Lambda Chi Alpha students participated, and service learning initiatives with faculty to achieve or enhance the learning outcomes of a particular course.

According to the Cooperation for National and Community Service, service learning offers unique opportunities for young people to get involved with their communities in a tangible way by integrating service projects with classroom learning. Students not only learn about democracy and citizenship, they become actively contributing citizens and community members through the service they perform.

To learn more about service learning programs at Shepherd University, contact Holly Frye by emailing hfyre@shepherd.edu. For more information, visit www.volinterrv.org or call Volunteer West Virginia, the state's Commission for National and Community Service, at 304-558-0111.

Shepherd geo-history presentation rescheduled

SHEPHERDSTOWN, WV—The Shepherd University School of Business and Social Sciences and the School of Natural Sciences and Mathematics are sponsoring a lecture by Dr. William Therriault on his work titled "Geo-History Project of Jefferson County," at the Robert C. Byrd Center for Legislative Studies at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, March 9.

Therriault, who works closely with the Historic Landmarks Commission and the Harpers Ferry Historical Association, will illustrate the application of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technologies to historic source materials, such as old plat maps, surveyor notes, and manuscript census returns, a pioneering means of digitally preserving and mapping the county's history.

"Students and faculty are interested in history and historic preservation, environmental studies, and geography may find this particularly interesting for its high-tech approach to traditional methods," said Dr. Ann Legred, dean of the School of Business and Social Sciences.

The event is free and open to the public. For more information, contact Dr. Legred at 304-876-5011.

Shepherd club sponsors presentation

SHEPHERDSTOWN, W.Va. — Shepherd University's Sustainable Agriculture Club will be sponsoring a presentation by Shepherd Ogden, renowned organic gardener and founder of the Princess Street Demonstration Garden, at an inaugural meeting of the Shepherdstown Community Garden Club on February 21 at 5 p.m. in the Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church at 101 West Washington Street. The presentation will be followed by a discussion on organizing and funding of a community garden.

The event is free and open to the public. Gardening experience is not required.

If you are unable to attend but are interested in becoming a part of building a community garden, contact Robby Glenn at rj Glenn51989@gmail.com or call 304-839-9317.

SU debate and forensics team wins

SHEPHERDSTOWN, W.Va. — Shepherd University's debate and forensics team won nine awards in Charleston, South Carolina on January 26-30. Two Shepherd debate team members won awards.

Amy Joy Haggard, of Hedgesville, won five awards: first place in Poetry Interpretation, second place in Communication Analysis, fifth place in Improv, fourth place in the Lincoln-Douglas Debate, and third place in the Pentathlon.

Matthew Leonard, of Wheeling, won four awards: fifth place in Poetry Interpretation, third place in Communication Analysis, third place in the Lincoln-Douglas Debate, and sixth place in the Pentathlon.

Shepherd University received sixth place for the Team Award.

University of Charleston, Bloomsburg University, Brooklyn College, Randolph-Macon College, Fayetteville College, Susquehanna University, and Alderson Broaddus College also participated in the tournament.
Shepherd to host College Goal program

BY ERIENNE GREENE
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

SHEPHERDSTOWN — The first West Virginia College Goal Sunday will take place this weekend, and the event is designed to help prospective students tackle the often complex financial aid application process.

The event will be held at 17 sites around West Virginia, including Shepherd University from 1 to 5 p.m. this Sunday.

Slated to be held at Shepherd University’s White Hall in rooms 204 and 209, the College Goal Sunday is an opportunity for students and parents to have financial aid experts provide free assistance in filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, the cornerstone of the higher education financial aid application process.

According to Angela Holley, statewide coordinator for the program, the FAFSA is a crucial step for all college students who plan to apply for federal, state, institutional, and private aid.

College Goal Sunday was created by the Indiana Student Financial Aid Association with funding from the Lilly Endowment Inc. and supplemental support from the Lumina Foundation for Education.

Holley said that the grant writing process necessary to establish the nationwide program began about two years ago.

“We all sat down at the table together as a team, along with some financial aid experts around the country, to plan how to take this event and make it a success in our state,” Holley said. “Although it’s born in effect throughout the country for several years, this is the first time it’s occurring in West Virginia.”

It really came out of a desire to see more students gain access to the financial aid available to them, she said.

“The federal government has worked very hard to simplify the overall financial aid process,” she said. “Since it does change year to year, families need to find this time can be an intimidating process, but that can be barrier.”

Holley said officials want to “remove that barrier.”

See SHEPHERD B2

Shepherd

From Page B1

“We have some great experts throughout the various colleges to assist and walk people through that process, so people are getting assistance from folks who work with us every day and who know the answers to the tough questions,” she said.

Individuals who plan to attend college and would like help with completion of the FAFSA or would like answers regarding general financial aid questions are encouraged to attend.

Also, interested students and parents are asked to bring their Social Security numbers, 2009 Federal Tax Return, W-2, other income records, driver’s license and other valid ID to the session.

Holley advocated that the more income information that families can provide, the more likely they will be able to submit their FAFSA on the day of the event.

All information shared is protected by privacy laws.

She said it’s important to note that those who do not yet have their federal taxes done can still attend and participate in the event.

“Obviously, it’s critical that they do that prior to March 1, particularly if they’re interested in the Promise Scholarship.”

Free refreshments and giveaways will be available at the event.

This year’s efforts in West Virginia are coordinated by the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, the West Virginia TRIO Association and the West Virginia Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators with funding by a grant from the Lumina Foundation.

More information about College Goal Sunday and specific time and site information is available at www.colleageoalSunday.wv.org.

The site coordinator for Sunday’s event in Aurora Perry, who can be reached at (304) 876-5725, or aperry@shep.wvu.edu.

-- Staff writer Erienne Greene can be reached at (304) 263-8531, ext. 183, or egreene@journal-news.net.
Shepherd announces
‘Spirit of Black History’

Shepherd University announced lineup of special events as part of its “Spirit of Black History Month” programs reflect the diversity and celebration of the month. Activities include a full production of the play “Big River,” an Afro-Brazilian Dance performance by Sui Da Bahia Capoeira, and a series of interviews with everyone from Hilary Shelton, Director of NAACP Washington Bureau, to Reggae artist Ziggy Marley, which will be aired on the University’s Web site and radio station WSHC-89.7 fm.

“The theme that weaves through all of our programs is that we must find ways to come together,” says Christina Johnson, director of the University’s Multicultural Student Affairs and Disability Support Services, adding, “That means we must get closer to each other and to understanding more of ourselves.”

With that in mind, the University has opened up discussion groups and online forums where everyone from community members to students and their parents can discuss issues of diversity, multiculturalism, and the African American experience.

Johnson also points out that the events were created collaboratively, bringing together faculty, students, staff and those in the Shepherdstown community. The Black History Month events also had full support from the President’s Office, where senior level staff was directly engaged in many of the activities.

“Black history has a dynamic in our courses and programming. We recognize the inherent value in observing Black History Month,” says Shepherd University President, Dr. Suzanne Shipley. “This region is rich in examples of leadership we can learn from and honor. It’s something that will last a student’s a lifetime.”

According to Dr. Shipley, developing the cultural empathy of students is of paramount importance for their personal and professional development.

“Employers regularly point to cultural understanding as essential to success in the workplace. Our students will only be truly successful in life if they have this.”

The community is also invited to attend the performances and join the online conversation. For more information, visit www.shepherd.edu.
Should W.Va. have more prisons, or save money?

By Delegate John Doyle

West Virginia has about 5,000 people presently incarcerated in state prisons. Since the prisons are at capacity about another thousand are housed in regional jails. The Division of Corrections estimates that we'll need space for an additional 1,500 prisoners over the next half dozen years. Unless something else is done, we'll need to build enough new prisons for 2,500 inmates (the 1,600 in regional jails plus the 1,500 new ones) quite soon. This will cost us between $30 million and $40 million. Governor Joe Manchin has what I think is a better idea. He's proposed that we send fewer people convicted of crimes to prison and make greater use of probation, fines, electronic incarceration and other forms of community corrections. Joe Martin, who was Secretary of Military Affairs and Public Safety During the administration of Governor Bob Wise (and who was Majority Leader of the House of Delegates before that), used to say “we should be locking up people we’re afraid of, not people we’re simply mad at.” I’ve always agreed with that.

There are plenty of crimes for which perpetrators could be effectively punished without sending them to prison. This would save lots of money. We need to save the public’s money (particularly these days, since we have a hole in our budget). The state’s ten regional jails were not built to hold people for long stays. Jails are, by definition, places where people usually stay for short periods of time (no more than a year, usually much less than that). Jails are intended to hold people who have been charged with crimes but haven’t had their trials yet. They’re also for people convicted of relatively petty crimes for which sentences are short. Putting more hardened criminals in regional jails (which we’re doing now) is very bad public policy, to my mind. It’s not a good idea to put a reasonably decent person who’s committed one minor crime in the same institution with professional lawbreakers.

Under current West Virginia law, parole is considered a violent crime punishable by a minimum of ten years, with no maximum. The first conviction will get you at least the minimum ten and the second might get you much more. Forging a check the third time gets you imprisoned for a minimum of several years, even if none of the checks was more than twenty bucks.

To me, neither of these types of crimes justifies the sentences mandated under West Virginia law. The public would be better served by punishing those convicted of such offenses with either fines (which could be quite large in some cases) or community service (which could be for thousands of hours for multiple offenses).

To compound this situation every one of West Virginia’s 55 counties is complaining to the state (which runs the regional jails) that they need more jail space because West Virginia counties were under federal court order to upgrade their county jails (every county had one). The legislature came up with the regional jail system to absorb the counties of the expense of building new county jails or modernizing the existing ones to federal standards. The state was to run the new regional jails and charge the counties the exact cost of maintaining them and housing the prisoners. Clearly, the counties are better off than they would have been had the state refused to take over the responsibility of building and managing local jails.

But they still have a legitimate gripe about jail costs because West Virginia allows counties very few sources of local funding.

The Legislature has already caused the state budget to be significantly increased over the last twenty years or so by insisting on longer and longer prison terms for many crimes. Let’s get real.

Delegate John Doyle, D-Jefferson, represents the 57th District in the West Virginia House of Delegates.
Shepherd University School of Business and Social Sciences and the School of Natural Sciences and Mathematics are holding a lecture by William Theriault on his work titled “Geo-History Project of Jefferson County” at the Robert C. Byrd Center for Legislative Studies at 7 p.m. March 9.

Theriault, who works closely with the Historic Landmarks Commission and the Harpers Ferry Historical Association, will illustrate the application of Geographic Information Systems technologies to historic source materials, such as old plat maps, surveyor notes and manuscript census returns—a pioneering means of digitally preserving and mapping the county’s history.

“Students and faculty in history and historic preservation, environmental studies and geography may find this particularly interesting for its high-tech approach to traditional methods,” said Ann Legreid, dean of the School of Business and Social Sciences.

The event is free and open to the public. More information is available by contacting Legreid at (304) 876-5011.
Shepherd to host Richmond Ballet

SHEPHERDSTOWN – The Performing Arts Series at Shepherd University will sponsor a special performance by the Richmond Ballet at 8 p.m. March 5 in the Frank Center Theater.

The 22 dancers will present works from the company's acclaimed repertoire. During its visit, the company also will present educational performances for the local children, conduct master classes and hold open rehearsals.

Richmond Ballet was founded in 1957 by dance enthusiasts as a performance outlet for students. It existed as a small civic company until 1975 when the School of Richmond Ballet was created.

Richmond Ballet's mission is to awaken and uplift the human spirit, both for audiences and dancers, and it is dedicated to the promotion and continuing evolution of the art form of ballet.

The company has commissioned 30 new works from choreographers from around the world.

Richmond Ballet's Shepherd performance will feature "Ancient Airs and Dances" choreographed by Richmond Ballet's artistic director set to Italian and French lute songs orchestrated by Respighi, "Misa Criolla" by William Soleau with music by Ariel Ramirez and "Vestiges" by Colin Connor, music by Michael Nyman.

The ticket prices are $25 for the general public; $20 for senior citizens and Shepherd staff; $10 for children under 18; and free for Shepherd students with valid Rambler ID. Tickets can be purchased at the Shepherd University Bookstore on the ground floor of the Student Center, by calling (304) 876-5219 or going online at www.shepherdbook.com.
Free Financial Aid Workshop
to be held February 25, 2010

Shepherd University financial aid administrators will be presenting a free workshop on Thursday, February 25 from 4-6 p.m. in Fairmont, Grafton, and Philippi to assist students and families in completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the first step in receiving financial aid to attend colleges or universities.

The Fairmont workshop will be held at the North Central West Virginia Community Action Association Marion County office at 1304 Goose Run Road.

The Grafton workshop will be held at the North Central West Virginia Community Action Association Skills Enhnacement Center at 20 E. Main Street.

The Philippi workshop will be held at the North Central West Virginia Community Action Association County Office at Rt. 2 Belington Road.

Shepherd University Financial Aid Director Sandra Oertly-Bennett and Associate Director Joyce Cabral will be answering questions about the FAFSA and assisting students and families in completing the application at the Fairmont site and via satellite in Grafton and Philippi.

For more information or to register for this workshop, contact the Skills Enhancement Center at 304-265-3200 or e-mail sec@ncwvcaa.org.

North Central West Virginia Community Action Association, Inc. is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to helping individuals and families reach their highest levels of social and economic independence, while assisting the nine-county service area communities to become stronger partners.

Collaborating with local, state, and national agencies, the association provides a broad range of direct, anti-poverty services for moderate to low-income customers and their communities.

The association maintains an on-going commitment to reduce the effects of poverty and to empower individuals, families and communities to meet the challenges of today and the changes of tomorrow.
Shepherd hosts seminar Mar 31

SHEPHERDSTOWN, WV—Shepherd University will host “What’s New in Robotics Research? From Manipulator Arms to Intelligent Robot Colonies,” a seminar presented by Dr. Gordon K. Lee, professor in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at San Diego State University. The seminar will be Wednesday, March 31 at 9 a.m. in the Robert C. Byrd Science and Technology Center, room 108. This seminar is supported by Shepherd’s Center for Teaching and Learning and the NASA WV EPSCoR.

Dr. Lee received his Ph.D. from the University of Connecticut in 1978. From 1978 through 1989, Dr. Lee was at Colorado State University in the Department of Electrical Engineering where he became a full professor and later the director of the Institute for Robotic Studies. In 2000, Dr. Lee joined San Diego State University where he was an associate professor in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering. He is now a full professor in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering.
Shepherd to host graphic design show

SHEPHERDSTOWN — Shepherd University Department of Contemporary Art and Theater will host an opening reception for the first Shepherd AIGA Student Group Graphic Design Show at 5 p.m. Monday in the Fraak Center Gallery. The show will run through March 26. Pieces in the show range from posters and packaging to children’s books and editorials. The design show features work by graphic design students and members of the AIGA group including Chardonna Willis, Kayla Stukey, Vu Ngo, Jamie Smith, Alex Coblentz, Dan Jae Smith, Domenica Queen, Emily Garcé, Jennifer Tyler, Julianne West, Xiaofei Ji, Sarah Kuhns, Ryan Gilligan, Jenna Zelkowski, Cory McNamee, Justin Queen, Elaine Spivey, John Embrey, Renee Sustarich and Mike Hall.

— From staff reports
About a week ago the House of Delegates passed an amendment to the state constitution that would allow counties the flexibility of eliminating personal property taxes on businesses.

If passed by the Senate, the amendment would have to be approved by a majority of the state's voters at this year's general election. If that happens, the legislature would be required to pass enabling legislation before any county could take advantage of the amendment.

Should the Legislature so act, each county would be free to implement the provisions of the amendment, should it so choose. The decision to implement or not would be made by the county commission.

Clearly, many things would have to happen before business personal property taxes would be affected. Even if the proposal clears all the obstacles outlined above, only newly purchased business personal property would be eligible for exemption. So any county that would choose to implement the provisions of the amendment would see its property tax revenues decline gradually over time. There would be no precipitous decline.

Many states tax the real property (land and buildings) of businesses. But very few tax business personal property (equipment and inventory).

Businesses generally prefer taxes that are simple to understand and pay. Paying business personal property taxes tends to be complicated.

Furthermore, West Virginia often gives a tax credit for much or all of the value of the personal property of a business it is trying to recruit.

Sometimes the state buys the equipment of a company and leases it back to the company, thereby exempting the business from the tax. Quad Graphics, in Martinsburg, is an example of a business that has such an arrangement. West Virginia does this to overcome the objections to the personal property tax of businesses it's trying to persuade to locate here.

We still have a more complicated system than those states that have no business personal property tax.

The net result of the current state of affairs is that we end up not getting very much money from the business personal property tax (since we give so many credits against it) and we're still not as attractive to business as we would be if we simply did away with the tax.

I voted for the proposed amendment because I think we need to streamline our business tax structure and because I think counties need more flexibility. This amendment does both.

I do think that any county that decides to exempt business personal property from taxation should have an alternate tax available to implement in its place. I think business taxes should be simplified, not reduced.

Again, the reason the business personal property tax discourages business from locating in West Virginia is not the amount of money, which is a pitance relative to other taxes on business. The objection to this tax from many businesses is its complicated nature.

If the proposed amendment makes it to the voters and is approved, and I'm still in the Legislature next year, I will insist on making at least one alternative tax available to county governments that is not available now before I vote for legislation necessary to implement the provisions of the amendment.

Some constituents have contacted me opposing this amendment because they think it's intended as a giveaway to the coal industry. Actually, the intent is to help West Virginia diversify its economy so we're not so dependent on coal for employment and revenue.

— Delegate John Doyle, D-Jefferson, represents the 57th District in the West Virginia House of Delegates.