GREATFORDOWNS — Mark McCoy, chairman of the Department of Music at Shepherd University, was appointed dean of the School of Music at De-Pauw University in Greencastle, Ind., effective Aug. 1. McCoy has been at Shepherd for 16 years. He is an alumnus of Shepherd University, earning his bachelor's degree from the university before moving on to the Peabody Conservatory and Texas Tech for his graduate degrees.

Shepherd Student a Poster Winner

A Shepherd University graphic design student has been named the top winner in a poster contest put on by the Blue Ridge American Institute of Graphic Arts.

"Unity" was the theme of the contest and the design created by Wheeling senior Jenna Zelekowsk was out over more than 200 entries submitted from across the country, according to university officials.
W.Va. backs lower hours for graduation

by The Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) - West Virginia's Higher Education Policy Commission is pushing public colleges and universities to lower the number of credits it takes to graduate.

The commission says requiring students to complete 120 credit hours to earn a bachelor's degree will get more students through college and lower the amount of debt many take on to pay for schooling.

Shepherd University announced plans to make the change last month. Marshall University Provost Gayle Ormiston says the school already has lowered its requirements to 120 hours for most programs.

Kathy Balter, the commission's senior director of academic affairs, says the state won't compromise quality, but just wants a new way to help students complete college.
College Credit Changes in West Virginia

W.Va. backs lower hours for graduation

Reporter: Associated press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — West Virginia's Higher Education Policy Commission is pushing public colleges and universities to lower the number of credits it takes to graduate.

The commission says requiring students to complete 120 credit hours to earn a bachelor's degree will get more students through college and lower the amount of debt many take on to pay for schooling.

Shepherd University announced plans to make the change last month. Marshall University Provost Gayle Ormiston says the school already has lowered its requirements to 120 hours for most programs.

Kathy Bulter, the commission's senior director of academic affairs, says the state won't compromise quality, but just wants a new way to help students complete college.

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) - West Virginia’s Higher Education Policy Commission is pushing public colleges and universities to lower the number of credits it takes to graduate.

The commission says requiring students to complete 120 credit hours to earn a bachelor’s degree will get more students through college and lower the amount of debt many take on to pay for schooling.

Shepherd University announced plans to make the change last month. Marshall University Provost Gayle Ormiston says the school already has lowered its requirements to 120 hours for most programs.

Kathy Butler, the commission’s senior director of academic affairs, says the state won’t compromise quality, but just wants a new way to help students complete college.
W.Va. backs lower hours for college

CHARLESTON (AP) — West Virginia's Higher Education Policy Commission is pushing public colleges and universities to lower the number of credits it takes to graduate.

The commission says requiring students to complete 120 credit hours to earn a bachelor's degree will get more students through college and lower the amount of debt many take on to pay for schooling.

Shepherd University announced plans to make the change last month. Marshall University Provost Gayle Ornstein says the school already has lowered its requirements to 120 hours for most programs.

Kathy Butler, the commission's senior director of academic affairs, says the state won't compromise quality, but just wants a new way to help students complete college.
Shepherdstown, WV (Vocus/PRWEB) April 04, 2011

The Contemporary American Theater Festival (CATF) at Shepherd University has announced the 2011 five-play repertory for its 21st season of producing and developing new American theater. SEASON21 will feature new plays from Kyle Bradstreet, David Mamet, Sam Shepard, Tracy Thorne, and Lucy Thurber. The four-week festival, consisting of 93 performances, will be held July 8 – 31.

In addition to the plays – produced in rotating repertory, which allows audience members to see all five shows in just two days – the 2011 Season will also feature free lectures, discussions, stage readings, music, and art exhibits. Plus, patrons have the opportunity to purchase tickets to audience immersion events including lunches with artists and breakfast with the Theater Festival’s producing director.

"The five plays of the 2011 Contemporary American Theater Festival repertory have serious velocity," said CATF Founder and Producing Director Ed Herendeen. "They explode, they needle, they breed, and they will give you room to reflect and dream. Our audience has an appetite for daring new plays that celebrate and challenge the human experience. This year’s repertory consists of five extraordinary voices of the stage that exemplify the breadth of the American playwright. These plays are funny, intelligent, and compelling: and they explore the power and beauty of language and storytelling," he continued.

The 2011 repertory includes regional premieres of plays by two Pulitzer Prize-winning playwrights, two world premieres (including a CATF commission), and a second production. The plays are:


Prague – the city of ghosts – is the lingering backdrop for three wounded voices, all clamoring to be heard, all indelibly bound to each other. The characters – Samuel, an exiled patriarch and disgraced academic; his son, Charles, a zealot barely clinging to his faith; and Anna, the beautiful expatriate whose life has been upended – find themselves in a crumbling church where memory and consequence collide. Kyle Bradstreet’s poetic new play creates a landscape for people with nothing left to lose, and only the past to regain.

Race by David Mamet. Directed by Ed Herendeen.

Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright David Mamet tackles America’s most controversial topic in a provocative new play of sex, guilt, and accusation. Two lawyers find themselves defending a wealthy white executive charged with the crime of raping a black woman. Mamet turns his jagged spotlight on the quest for truth in a world full of lies. This high-voltage, incendiary drama rips the cover off of what is thought – but never said – along the vicious path to justice.

Ance of the Moon by Sam Shepard. Regional Premiere. Directed by Ed Herendeen.
Old friends reunite over bourbon on ice to reflect upon the shadows of their lives. Fifty years of love, friendship, and rivalry are put to the test at the barrel of a shotgun in this gritty new play by Pulitzer Prize-winner Sam Shepard. The characters are older and the booze goes down a little harder as Shepard spins a poignant hangdog tale of remorse and regret for two men at the twilight of life's journey into night.

*We Are Here* by Tracy Thorne, 2nd Production. Directed by Lucie Tiberghien.
Playwright Tracy Thorne braids the joyful past with the devastated present as three generations of a family endure unimaginable loss with compassion, humor, and song. This is a story about a modern family coping with the death of a young son. Strong-willed, smart, funny, each member must find the way to peace and redemption in a world built on love and survival.

*The Insurgents* by Lucy Thurber, World Premiere. Directed by Lear deBessonet.
John Brown. Harriet Tubman. Timothy McVeigh. Nat Turner. All deeply religious. All heard voices from God. All were extremely patriotic and loved their country. And all believed in violence. Their stories and unique historical markers meld into a contemporary family's quest for identity and survival. In this CATF Commission, Off-Broadway sensation Lucy Thurber fearlessly tackles the often fine line between martyrdom and terrorism. (Supported, in part, by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts; commissioned by the Contemporary American Theater Festival.)

Single ticket prices to the 2011 repertory are $52. Four-show and five-show ticket packages (CAT Cards) are available, ranging from $100-$225. Discounts for students, seniors, active military personnel, and groups are also offered. For the Theater Festival Box Office, which is open off-season Monday to Friday from Noon to 5 p.m., call 800-999-CATF (2263) or visit http://www.catf.org.

Over the last 20 years, the Contemporary American Theater Festival at Shepherd University has become a leading center for the production and development of new plays, having fully staged 85 American works, including 32 world premieres, by 60 different playwrights. With a budget of more than $1 million, the Theater Festival sells 11,000 tickets each summer, bringing patrons and visitors to West Virginia's Eastern Panhandle from 33 different states. A 2008 economic impact survey reported that the Theater Festival generates more than $2 million for the local economy each season.

Speaking about the Theater Festival's unique home in Shepherdstown, Herendeen said: "Our geography plays an important role in our success. We live in the oldest town in West Virginia doing the newest plays in America. This vibrant community – steeped in history and filled with great architecture, dining, lodging, and shopping – has proved to be the perfect setting for our company of artists. Shepherdstown is the summer home of the American theater."

A 501(c)3 nonprofit, the Contemporary American Theater Festival enjoys major grant support from the State of West Virginia, The Ted Snowton Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, The Weissberg Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, The Nora Roberts Foundation, and the West Virginia Humanities Council. The 2011 Season would not be possible without Shepherd University which has hosted the Theater Festival since 1991.

Complete SEASON21 information – including playwright bios, schedule, photos, and ticketing – is available at http://www.catf.org. Social media connections can be made at twitter.com/thinktheater and facebook.com/CATFatu.
Shepherdstown theater festival reveals lineup

By The Associated Press

SHEPHERDSTOWN, W.Va. — The Contemporary American Theater Festival at Shepherd University has unveiled its lineup for summer 2011.

The 21st season features plays from Kyle Bradstreet, David Mamet, Sam Shepard, Tracy Thorne and Larry Thurber. The four-week festival offers a total of 93 performances July 8-31.

Patrons can see all five shows in two days. The festival also offers free lectures, discussions, readings, music and art exhibitions.

Producing Director Ed Hermonée says festival goers hunger for daring new plays that celebrate and challenge the human experience. He calls this year's batch funny, intelligent and compelling.

They are: Bradstreet's "From Prague," Mamet's "Race," Shepard's "Ages of the Moon," Thorne's "We Are Here" and Thurber's "The Insurgents."

Single tickets are $22. Packages range from $100 to $225.
W.Va. theater festival unveils summer 2011 lineup

April 05, 2011 @ 09:43 AM
The Associated Press
Herald-Dispatch.com

SHEPHERDSTOWN, W.Va. (AP) — The Contemporary American Theater Festival at Shepherd University has unveiled its lineup for summer 2011.

The 21st season features new plays from Kyle Bradstreet, David Mamet, Sam Shepard, Tracy Thorne and Lucy Thurber. The four-week festival offers a total of 93 performances July 8-31.

Patrons can see all five shows in two days. The festival also offers free lectures, discussions, readings, music and art exhibitions.

Producing Director Ed Herendeen says festivalgoers hunger for daring new plays that celebrate and challenge the human experience. He calls this year’s batch funny, intelligent and compelling.

They are: Bradstreet’s “From Prague,” Mamet’s “Race,” Shepard’s “Ages of the Moon,” Thorne’s “We Are Here” and Thurber’s “The Insurgents.”

Single tickets are $52. Packages range from $100 to $225.
Lineup for WV American Theater Festival Unveiled

SHEPHERDSTOWN, W.Va. (AP)
The Contemporary American Theater Festival at Shepherd University has unveiled its lineup for summer 2011.

Posted: 4:00 AM Apr 6, 2011

The Contemporary American Theater Festival at Shepherd University has unveiled its lineup for summer 2011.

The 21st season features new plays from Kyle Bradstreet, David Mamet, Sam Shepard, Tracy Thorne and Lucy Thurber. The four-week festival offers a total of 93 performances, July 8 through 31.

Patrons can see all five shows in two days. The festival also offers free lectures, discussions, readings, music and art exhibitions.

Producing Director Ed Herendeen says festival goers hunger for daring new plays that celebrate and challenge the human experience. He calls this year's batch funny, intelligent and compelling.

They are: Bradstreet's "From Prague," Mamet's "Race," Shepard's "Ages of the Moon," Thorne's "We Are Here" and Thurber's "The Insurgents."

Single tickets are $52. Packages range from $100 to $225.

©2011 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.
SU receives $10,000 grant

Shepherd University has received a $10,000 grant from the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission through the Consortium for Internationalizing Higher Education.

In February 2010, Shepherd began a campus-wide initiative, under the direction of Dr. Mark Stern, professor of political science, to expand internationalization with the assistance of the American Council on Education. According to Stern, the goal of the planning grant, which will be matched by 50 percent by Shepherd, is to lead to a formal exchange program of faculty and students between Shepherd and partner institutions at the University of Laval in Quebec and the University of San Marcos in Peru. In addition, the grant will allow implementation for an internationalization community in Shepherd’s residence halls and common learning areas.

According to Dr. Rachel Ritterbusch, associate professor of French, the grant will allow Shepherd to integrate faculty research and diversity with international content.

Ritterbusch said that establishing connections with schools in Quebec and Peru will encourage student and faculty exchange programs. This partnership will also enable Shepherd students to complete a program of study at a host institution.

International housing will be available on Shepherd’s campus starting in the fall of 2012 for students majoring in modern languages, giving them a viable immersion experience in existing on-campus housing. Students will commit to speaking only the target language while in the residence and will be supported by native-speaker assistants who will live with the students.
Shepherd Wind Ensemble in concert April 15

The Shepherd University Wind Ensemble will perform on Friday, April 15 at 8 p.m. at the Frank Center Theater, offering a preview of some of the pieces to be performed on their upcoming tour of Spain in May.

Free with admission is a pre-concert lecture describing the works beginning at 7 p.m. The audience is invited to spend an hour with the conductor and the ensemble learning about and hearing excerpts from the music to follow.

Admission and seating for the Wind Ensemble concert is on a first-come, first-served basis. 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 Rambler ID and Friends of Music MAC Cardholders.

For more information, call 304-876-5555 or visit www.shepherd.edu/music.

Shepherd University stages honors art exhibition

The SU Department of Contemporary Art and Theater will present its annual Student Honors Art Exhibition on Tuesday, April 12 through Monday, May 2 in the Frank Center Gallery. An opening reception will be held Tuesday, April 12 from 5-7 p.m. The reception is free and open to the public.

The SU art department focuses on contemporary fine arts in a variety of media fields including photography, graphic design, painting, sculpture, printmaking, and art education. The student honors art exhibition highlights the diversity of student interests and examples of art created during the academic year. Participants in the exhibition have been selected through a juried process, and cash prizes will be announced and awarded at the reception.

For more information about the Shepherd Dept. of Contemporary Art and Theater, programs, and faculty visit http://www.shepherd.edu/artweb/.
SU art student, professor receive Addy Awards

Shepherd University's Melissa Scotton, assistant professor of art in the Department of Contemporary Art and Theater, and John Parks, senior graphic design major from Warrenton, Virginia, received honors at the American Advertising Federation (AAF) of the Greater Frederick's Addy Awards at the Holiday Inn Conference Center in Frederick, Maryland, on February 26.

Scotton received a Silver Addy award for the recruitment materials she designed for the Department of Contemporary Art and Theater. The materials, which were designed in coordination with other faculty in the department, will be used at opera houses and sent to high schools for recruitment.

Parks, who was the only Shepherd student to enter the competition against 19 other students and 70 entries, received a Gold Addy award for his beer packaging design entry, which he designed in his Advanced Design course at Shepherd. Parks also received the Best in Show award overall. His Gold Addy makes him eligible to compete in the National AAF competition in New York City.

John Parks

Melissa Scotton
The Shepherd Three, the faculty wind trio from Shepherd University, will present a spring benefit concert on Sunday, April 17 at the Shepherdstown Train Station. The concert, part of the Shepherdstown Chamber Music Series, will begin at 7 p.m.

Shepherd adjunct faculty members Anne Muaro (flute), Greg Shook (oboe), and Richard Połonchak (bassoon) form the Shepherd Three. They will be joined by Laura Renninger (piano and harpsichord), dean of teaching and learning and head of music history at Shepherd. The concert will feature special guest Mason Ellsworth on recorder.

Ellsworth studied bassoon in high school with Richard Połonchak and was prepared to enter Shepherd University's 2008 freshman class when he suffered a traumatic head injury in an automobile accident. The Shepherd Three has given several benefit concerts to help raise funds for Ellsworth's medical expenses. Ellsworth has now regained the ability to play his recorder and will "jam" with the trio in a special segment of the concert.

Suggested donation is $10 and all proceeds will go to the Ellsworth Family Fund to help with medical expenses for Mason Ellsworth. Ellsworth will have his original artwork on display and available for purchase at the event.
Amy Poehler, Tom Hanks, and Denzel Washington

are all speaking at college graduations. Who would you have picked for your commencement?

by Hillary Busis
Categories: Amy Poehler, Denzel Washington, Not Jon Hamm, Parks and Recreation, Things That Are Awesome!, Those Crazy Kids!, Tom Hanks

I am incredibly jealous of Harvard’s class of 2011. No, not because they go to a famous school in Boston (well, not in Boston, but nearby. No, not Tufts!), or because they’ve got two glorious months of college left before they’re thrust out into the real world. Instead, my jealousy stems from the fact that those lucky Ivy Leaguers have scored an amazing Class Day speaker. Amy Poehler, star of Parks and Recreation. This is possibly the best thing to potentially ever happen to anyone anywhere in the history of the universe.

But Harvard’s graduation isn’t the only commencement that’s getting an injection of star power this year. Here’s an incomplete list of the boldfaced names that will be orating before cap and gown-clad masses come May:

Tom Hanks (Yale)
Denzel Washington (Penn)
Stephen Colbert (Northwestern)
Barack Obama (Miami Dade College)
Michelle Obama (Spelman College, which also plans to give honorary degrees to Debbie Allen and Phylicia Rashad)
Mayor Michael Bloomberg (Princeton and GW)
Bill Clinton (NYU)
Malcolm Gladwell (Cooper Union)
Alton Brown (New England Culinary Institute)

Jim Lehrer (Shepherd University)

And those are just the ones that have been announced already. Though there's a severe Alec Baldwin deficiency here, it's an enviable list otherwise. Which got me thinking — who do you wish had spoken at your college graduation? Personally, I can't imagine a speaker much better than Poehler, unless Bossypants Tina Fey or my number one friend crush Mindy Kaling decided to throw their hats into the commencement speech ring. And I'm certainly not still bitter that the affiliated college across the street snagged Meryl Streep for their Class Day the same year I graduated. Nope. Not bitter at all. How about you, PopWatchers? Who would have been your dream commencement speaker? And which of the stars listed above do you think is going to give the best speech?
Forged in War: West Virginia’s History Forever Tied to Civil War

Next week marks the 150th anniversary of the war that divided America and created West Virginia.

By Mike Ruben
Email | Other Stories by Mike Ruben

Widowed mother of nine, Anna Staats Smith watched three sons march away to the Civil War. Two proudly wore Confederate gray as they left their Jackson County farm, but her youngest served in Union blue.

Brothers Frederick, 21, and Addison, 19, enlisted with Company G, 17th Regiment of the Virginia Cavalry soon after the onset of the war.

"We were Virginians," Addison later expressed in a diary detailing his war experience.

Younger brother Clay joined the fray two years later, signing up with the Federal Home Guards in July of 1863, shortly after the Battle of Gettysburg and one month following West Virginia statehood.

Although cognizant that Clay’s motivation was likely aimed at protecting the family and its belongings from pro-Union retaliation, Addison was infuriated.

"I did not think that I had a relative or friend on earth that wanted my name placed alongside of those that disgraced themselves and posterity in deserting the flag of the country in an hour of trial," Addison expressed in a letter sent home. "God forbid that I ever should. Rather, let my bones bleach upon the battlefield. I despise the selfish and cowardly man that thinks more of his property and little affairs at home than he does of his honor, his country and his principle."

"It is all or none with us," he continued in the letter forwarded from Lewisburg. "If we gain our independence, which I have not the least doubt, we will be happy with little."

Addison, who had suffered a near-death bout with measles shortly after joining the Rebel army, changed his attitude considerably after the death of his older brother, Frederick, who had ascended to the rank of Major, died one day after being shot during the Battle of Monocacy, Md.

"Many have fallen, and among them rests my dear brother, who fell with his saber drawn leading a charge," Addison wrote home from Blue Sulphur Springs.

Another of Addison’s friends from home, Absalom Casto, was severely wounded by a rifle ball entering at the heel and exiting through his in-step. A field surgeon amputated his mangled foot.
With a string of early war Confederate victories, Addison boasted of gaining weight from being a well-fed soldier. His later letters, though, document a much bleaker outlook. By the winter of 1864, he requests family to forward essentials of gloves and socks.

Grieving the death of Frederick and the imminent defeat of the Confederacy, Addison reached out to Clay, who had recently married. The reconciliation is apparent in a letter to his sister that was dated Feb. 8, 1865 -- two months and one day prior to General Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox Courthouse, Va.

"Give (Clay) my warmest wishes and congratulations and hope him nothing but peace and happiness," Addison wrote. "Also, give him the love of his rebel brother."

**America/Western Virginia Divided**

The Civil War was a brutal, bloody, brother-versus-brother conflict that tore the nation apart. Forged in its midst on June 20, 1863, was the state of West Virginia.

The Civil War claimed more than 623,000 lives, according to the U.S. Military History Institute. Forces were often deployed with outdated strategies that did not take into account advancements in weaponry. More soldiers died in the Civil War than in World War I (116,708), World War II (407,315), Korea (36,914) and Vietnam (58,169) combined.

Mark Snell, director of the George Tyler Moore Center for the Study of the Civil War in Shepherdstown, noted that residents of buffer states Maryland, Kentucky, Tennessee and Missouri were dramatically divided by the war. None, he said, was more torn than West Virginia.

The Center's research indicates an equal number of approximately 20,000 West Virginians fought for each side.

The region's most noted war figure was Thomas Jackson. A native of Lewis County, Jackson attended West Point and was on the faculty of Virginia Military Institute when the war stared. He gained the nickname "Stonewall" during the Battle of Bull Run.

Jackson explained his battle strategy: "To move swiftly, strike vigorously, and secure all the fruits of victory is the secret of successful war."

Accidentally wounded by his own troops during the May 1863 Battle of Chancellorsville, Jackson died a week later from complications after his left arm was amputated.

General Robert E. Lee noted, "He has lost his left arm, but I (have lost) my right."

"Families and communities were torn apart as some sided with the secession and others with the Union," said Snell, author of the soon-to-be published "Mountaineers are Always Free -- West Virginians and Their Civil War."

"There were not a lot of really big battles fought in West Virginia," he noted. "But the ones that were fought here were strategically important."

George B. McClellan was hailed as a hero in the North after prevailing in a string of relatively minor Union victories in Barbour and Randolph counties in 1861. He was quickly promoted by Lincoln only to be relieved of his duties shortly thereafter for his lack of aggressiveness.

"There was a lot of guerilla warfare," Snell continued. "A lot of family members were shooting at
each other. That's one of the untold stories of the Civil War. It was really bloody, nasty stuff."

Snell cited a newspaper account of a 1862 incident in Braxton County. A Union patrol on horseback was monitoring the area when one of its young soldiers became ill with dysentery, a common war-time ailment. Unable to continue, he was left behind under the care of family loyal to the Union.

As his condition improved, the private followed instructions by attempting to rejoin his regiment. Asking for directions proved to be a deadly mistake. Secessionists directed him down the road and promptly notified the local pro-rebel mob of his whereabouts. The 16-year-old soldier was ambushed, hacked with scythes and beheaded.

Learning of the incident, members of the 11th West Virginia Infantry were summoned to retaliate. Col. Daniel Frost, a former Virginia legislator who was elected Speaker of the House of the pro-Union Restored Government of Virginia, led the troops as they tracked down the bushwhackers to gain their revenge.

According to the newspaper story, several of those directly involved were executed by hanging while others were sentenced to a Columbus, Ohio, penitentiary. Their horses were confiscated and their homes were torched.

The Center, which is affiliated with Shepherd University, is based in a historic home formerly occupied by the family of actress Mary Tyler Moore. She donated the property with the stipulation that it carry her father's name.

Building a comprehensive database on every West Virginian who fought in the Civil War is the Center's mission. Information on 20,000 soldiers has been researched and entered into the database.

Based on information collected about the 7th West Virginia Infantry, the average soldier was a 5-foot, 7-inch, 21-year-old farmer. On June 20, 1863, the date associated with West Virginia's birthday, the soldiers had joined forces with the Army of the Potomac and were heading toward Gettysburg, Pa.

The 35th Star

Factors igniting the war included an 1859 raid on the Federal Arsenal at Harpers Ferry by radical abolitionist John Brown, who hoped to spark an uprising by slaves, and the 1860 election of President Abraham Lincoln.

As Lincoln called for volunteers to quell the rebellion in South Carolina, a majority of Virginia legislators were shifting their allegiance to the Confederate States of America.

Already simmering over political and economic differences, two-thirds of the delegates from western counties voted against leaving the Union. Soon after leaving Richmond, many of the western delegates gathered in Clarksburg to discuss their future.

The burning question was if Virginia could secede from the Union, could western Virginia secede from Virginia?

Conventions were organized in Wheeling resulting in the creation of the Restored Government of Virginia, a legal maneuver dodging the U.S. Constitution's requirement for a new state to first gain approval from the original state. The Restored Government essentially granted permission to itself to form West Virginia.
The proposal cleared Congress on a 23-15 vote in the Senate and a 96-55 vote in the House of Representatives. Lincoln signed the bill into law on Dec. 31, 1862 approving West Virginia as a state loyal to the Union.

"Some theorize that West Virginia was nothing more than a thorn in the side of the Lincoln administration," Snell said of the president's efforts to bring all of Virginia back into the fold. "On the other hand, he knew there were 20,000 Union soldiers recruited from those western counties."

He was also planning his 1864 re-election bid.

"He was torn about it," author and Director of Archives and History Joe Geiger said of Lincoln's dilemma. "He sent the bill to his cabinet members for their opinion as to whether or not it was constitutional. They were split 3-3. He viewed the Restored Government as a model for how the country could come together again when the war ended."

On Oct. 24, 1861, residents of 39 western counties approved the formation of a new Unionist state without abolishing slavery although only 4 percent of Virginia's slaves were in the western counties.

There's reason to question the validity of the lopsided statehood election results (18,401 "For" to 78! "Against"). Union troops were stationed at many of the polls to "discourage" Confederate sympathizers from participating. Voter turnout in some counties was as low as 5 percent.

"Many of the Confederates were still away at war," Geiger said. "People were boycotting the election. It was oral voting with Union soldiers lounging about. The election took in a lot of counties that were overwhelmingly Confederate."

In the end, 50 counties were selected for inclusion. Five counties -- Mineral, Grant, Lincoln, Summers and Mingo -- were formed after statehood.

Snell and Geiger are among the historians who speculate West Virginia would not exist today had the Civil War been avoided.

"Virginia would have had to grant permission," Geiger said. "I can't envision that it would have granted permission to give up such a large section of land and that many people."

"We can't predict what might have happened," Snell added. "My educated guess is 'no' because West Virginia would not have had the votes."

The Aftermath

Internal strife in the mountains hardly ended with the armistice at Appomattox. Boundary, political and financial disputes were unresolved.

What factors led to West Virginia's unusual shape? Maintained from the Old Dominion were the northern (Mason-Dixon Line) and western (Ohio River) boundaries with Pennsylvania and Ohio, along with its southern boundary with Kentucky.

Many of the eastern and southern counties did not support statehood, but were included for economic or military purposes. The mountains west of the Blue Ridge provided a natural defense against Confederate invasion. The Eastern Panhandle was included to insure the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, essential to the economy and troop movements, did not enter Virginia.

Questioning the validity of the local elections, Virginia sued to have Jefferson and Berkeley counties
returned. In 1871, the U.S. Supreme Court awarded both counties to West Virginia.

Even before the war ended, pro-Union leaders in the new state were taking steps to punish those who had aligned with the Confederacy. For instance, residents were required to swear they had not taken up arms against the Union in order to vote or hold public office.

The law was changed in 1872, leading to sweeping changes in the makeup of state government. West Virginia’s Capitol in Wheeling was soon relocated to Charleston. Southern sympathy proposals to change Grant County to Lee County and Lincoln County to Davis County were rejected.

Financial debates between state governments lingered for years. Fifty-two years after statehood, the U.S. Supreme Court rendered a formal judgment in favor of Virginia. The $4 million ruling carried 4 percent interest from 1861 until 1891 and 3 percent interest from 1891 until its 1915 decision for a total in principal and interest of $12,393,929.50. The Court further ruled the amount should draw 5 percent interest until paid.

Lawmakers instituted a Virginia Debt Sinking Fund in 1919, authorizing a general property tax to retire the debt. Final payment was made in 1939.
Shepherd University student takes first place in contest

SHEPHERDSTOWN — Shepherd University student Jenna Zelkowski, a senior graphic design major from Wheeling, took first place in the second annual Blue Ridge American Institute of Graphic Arts Poster Clash contest. The first-place prize also included a copy of Adobe Creative Suite 5 software.

This year’s theme for the contest was unity. More than 200 entries were submitted nationwide, with applicants from Temple University’s Tyler School of Art, Penn State University and Colorado State University.

Poster Clash is an interactive poster contest designed to integrate professional and public opinion, culminating with a live competition. A panel of judges evaluates all entries and chooses 64 posters to compete in the Poster Clash. The public was able to cast votes in a match-up of the contenders online, narrowing the selections down to 16 finalists. The last round of voting took place at the Main Event, on March 24 at the Delaplaine Visual Arts Education Center in Frederick, Md.

“It is wonderful to see Jenna’s hard work and dedication pay off with this award. She is an enthusiastic and passionate designer who approaches her work with wit and whimsy. In addition to her strong concepts, she has a command of typography and composition. It is great to see her nationally recognized for her talent; it is much deserved,” said Kristin Kaineg, assistant professor of art at Shepherd.

Zelkowski said that finding out she had won was surreal. “I don’t usually win (competitions) and awards. This will be the first real award on my resume. It was an exhilarating ride. I feel really fortunate to be a part of it.”
University receives $10K grant

Shepherd University has received a $10,000 grant from the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission through the Consortium for Internationalizing Higher Education.

In February 2010, Shepherd began a campuswide initiative, under the direction of Mark Stern, professor of political science, to expand internationalization with the assistance of the American Council on Education.

According to Stern, the goal of the planning grant, which will be matched by 50 percent by Shepherd, is to lead to a formal exchange program of faculty and students between Shepherd and partner institutions at the University of Laval in Quebec and the University of San Marcos in Peru. In addition, the grant will allow implementation for an internationalization community in Shepherd’s residence halls and common learning areas.

According to Rachel Ritterbusch, associate professor of French, the grant will allow Shepherd to integrate faculty research and diversity with international content.

Ritterbusch said that establishing connections with schools in Quebec and Peru will encourage student and faculty exchange programs. This partnership will also enable Shepherd students to complete a program of study at a host institution.

International housing will be available on Shepherd’s campus starting in the fall of 2012 for students majoring in modern languages, giving them a viable immersion experience in existing on-campus housing. Students will commit to speaking only the target language while in the residence and will be supported by native-speaker assistants who will live with the students.

In the fall of 2011, Satellite Communications for Learning Associated World TV will be installed online throughout the campus. According to Ritterbusch, SCOLA will be available in campus computer labs as well as televisions in the Student Center and the residence hall for international language housing. SCOLA is a nonprofit educational organization that receives and re-transmits television programming from around the world in native languages.

Ritterbusch said that what makes Shepherd unique for internationalization is that it is close to major hubs of the Baltimore-Washington, D.C., metro area, but still has a small town feel.

— From staff report
Shepherd hosts Connections Day

Students advised by industry leaders, hear from local state representative

Delegate Tiffany Lawrence delivers the keynote address.

Shepherd University Alumni Association hosted the 2nd annual Professional Connections Day in partnership with the School of Business and Social Sciences and Career Services April 5.

This year's keynote speaker was Delegate Tiffany Lawrence, a 2004 graduate of Shepherd College and marketing and public relations manager for Hollywood Casino at Charles Town Races.

Lawrence encouraged students to leave their mark wherever they go and whatever they do. “Fall in love with the process of life and the results will follow,” Lawrence said in a press release. “You’re not going to do whatever you want to do more than just having the title. Life is too challenging for external rewards to sustain us. The joy is in the journey and the doing. Find something you love; that’s my challenge to you today.”

According to Victoria Bubba, director of career services, 140 students were registered for the day.

Speakers at this year’s event included Mark Baldwin, city manager for Martinsburg; Rob Hoxton, president, senior wealth management adviser and CEO of Hoxton Financial; Stephen Lynch, president of McShea & Co., Inc.; Sandy Spenuagle, founder and CEO of Platinum PR; and Blake Truman, general manager, Verstandig Broadcasting.

Topics for this year’s sessions included workplace communications, career development and small business entrepreneurship.

“I like the idea of sharing with the students the career path I took and the life lessons I’ve learned,” said Spenuagle, a 1995 graduate of Shepherd and current member of the Alumni Association Board of Directors. “I make mistakes every day and I try to learn from each one of them.”

Truman of Verstandig Broadcasting based in Harrisonburg, Va., and a 2004 graduate of Shepherd, said he was happy to be able to come back.

“Some of the most helpful advice I got came from events like this,” Truman said. “I appreciate the opportunity to do the same for current students.”

Lynch, of McShea Residential Services, Inc., in Frederick, Md., said that he thinks that Professional Connections Day is a great way for alumni to give back to the college and to give advice to students entering the workforce.

“We can pass on our experience so they don’t feel so intimidated,” Lynch said. “To have someone come back and prepare you is helpful.”

Cait Baker, a senior business administration major from Purcellville, Va., said that it was nice to talk to people who have taken different career paths, because each one has a different perspective to share.

“This year was excellent for networking. There were lots of great tips and it showed us a taste of what business seminars are like so we know what to expect,” said Josh Nichols, senior accounting and business major of Winchester, Va.

“Professional Connections Day is intended to inform our students on important aspects of career development, inspire them with real-life stories of success, and give them opportunities to network and perhaps to develop long-lasting relationships with representatives from business and government,” said Ann Legreid, dean of the School of Business and Social Sciences.

This truly is one of the main visions of Shepherd: to take our strong liberal arts background and connect the different things you’ve learned for career preparation, so that there isn’t a big jump for you as you transition into the workforce,” said Suzanne Shipley, president of Shepherd University told the students attending the event.

“This is a major component of making your transition seamless.” — From staff reports
West Virginia senatorial districts discussed

Last week we talked about what the new map of House of Delegates districts might look like for the Eastern Panhandle after the Legislature completes the required redistricting. Now let’s take a look at the State Senate.

All representative districts (federal, state and local) must be drawn every 10 years so that they comply with the “one-person, one-vote” requirement laid down by the U.S. Supreme Court in the 1960s. Every now and then a district will be found to have gained or lost such a small number of people (compared to the gain or loss of the total population of a state or local jurisdiction) that the lines for that district need not be redrawn. But this is rare.

West Virginia has 17 state senatorial districts, each with two senators. Presently the district including Jefferson County also includes most of Berkeley County. Jefferson constitutes about 37 percent of this district, which grew from 111,000 in 2000 to 149,000 in 2010 (almost 34 percent). Since the county only grew by 2.5 percent during that time, our Senate district is way overpopulated now.

The “optimal” population for a senatorial district is now 139,000 (up from just over 106,000 in 2000). The optimal population is the number of people a district would have if all districts were of exactly equal size. Federal court guidelines require that the smallest district in a legislative body be no smaller than 90 percent of the largest district. If the spread were in equal 5 percent each way from the optimal number the greatest number of people a senatorial district could have for this year’s redistricting is 134,450, and the smallest number is 103,550.

So Jefferson County will be approximately half of a senatorial district for this year’s redistricting. Depending on what the population of the new district is Jefferson could comprise anywhere from 47 to 51.5 percent of it. The next district over will be trickier to draw.

That district is now comprised of the southwestern corner of Berkeley County and all of Morgan, Hampshire, Hardy, Pendleton, Randolph and Pocahontas counties, plus portion of Grant and Upshur counties. Pocahontas, Randolph and Pendleton counties each cover a very large land area and have relatively few people for their size. They are collectively the heart of the Monongahela National Forest. This will change considerably, and will assuredly not include the residences of either of the two senators currently representing the district. One new senator will be elected in 2012 and the other in 2014, since state senators serve four year terms and those terms are “staggered.” Walt Helmick of Pocahontas County, who was re-elected in 2010, will continue to represent all of the current district until 2014, since these districts are election districts (redistricting does not take effect for a district until the next election after the redistricting is completed).

The portion of Berkeley County not included in the senatorial district with Jefferson will comprise a senatorial district with all of Morgan and all of Hampshire, plus either all of Hardy or a part of Mineral. The land area covered by this district will be less than half of the land area covered by the current district, since it will no longer have Pocahontas, Pendleton or Randolph.

Anywhere from 44,000 to 54,000 of Berkeley County’s people could be included in the district with Morgan and Hampshire. That depends on course on how much of it is included with Jefferson. This decision will then dictate what additional territory will be placed in the Berkeley-Morgan-Hampshire district. The major changes must be made in Kanawha County, the state’s largest in population and the location of the state capital, Charleston. Kanawha has long had four state senators elected from within its borders. It has two districts, but the county is not divided. Each district covers the entire county, one being superimposed on the other. Voters choose a senator from one and a senator from the other every two years. Kanawha County’s leaders have steadfastly opposed dividing the county geographically. Kanawha’s population has now dropped to the point where it can no longer support two full senate districts. Our state’s constitution says that in any state senate district covering more than one county both senators may not reside in the same county.

So Kanawha will no longer have four senators residing within its borders. In order for Kanawha to keep three of them as residents the geography of the county will have to be divided, and one of the districts will have to include territory from a neighboring county. One of the senators elected would have to reside in that neighboring county. Were both districts to continue to cover the same territory, then only two senators could reside in Kanawha. So I think the good folk of Kanawha will agree to territorial division.

Many argue that a rule requiring certain representatives to live in a certain county is a violation of “one-person-one-vote.” All of Cabell County’s population of 96,000 is included with 6,000 people of Wayne County (whose total population is 42,000). Yet one senator from that district must reside in Wayne. This provision of our state constitution will continue unless and until a federal court says otherwise.

Next week we’ll take up the redistricting of our state’s three members of the U.S. House of Representatives.
University radio show strives for hip-hop glory

Originally published April 10, 2011

By Adrienne Lawrence

SHEPHERDSTOWN, W.Va. -- This story is brought to you by baby lotion.

"If you are ashy, get some lotion on those elbows," Richard "Webb" Shedd said, laughing, while he and Travis "Big T" Arrington introduced their show’s news segment. Shedd and Arrington are radio personalities on 89.7 WSHC. Shepherd University owns the station in Shepherdstown, W.Va.

Shedd and Arrington won Radio Show of the Year during the eighth annual Southern Entertainment Awards in Memphis, Tenn., for their 5 to 7 p.m. Tuesday show, "Da SouthernBoi Hr." Arrington was also nominated for No. 1 Male Personality of the Year; he lost to Greg Street with V103 in Atlanta.

To be put in the same category with Street was an honor, Arrington said. If Street endorses an album, the artist is a star, Arrington said.

Shedd and Arrington were nominated for the awards by listeners. Once nominated, people with valid email addresses could vote once per category (there were 70 categories in all). To help get the word out about their nomination, Shedd and Arrington paid for an advertisement and rented a billboard on Winchester Avenue and Route 9 in Martinsburg, W.Va.

They also own SouthernBoi Entertainment, a company they founded to help them pursue a rap and hip-hop career.

"We wanted to be our own company to have control over our music," Arrington said.

He said hip-hop isn't just music; it encompasses clothing, food and is a way of life.

"We want to showcase hip-hop in a good light," Arrington said.

They started the show at the end of 2001. It was Shedd's idea. Shedd and Arrington were attending Shepherd University and needed a way to get the word out about their music.

"We just want to get our hands on everything," Arrington said.

While on-air, Shedd keeps an eye on the sound levels and runs the sound boards, making sure nothing is too loud or quiet for the audience and that songs play in the correct order and on time. Arrington answers the phone, watches their Twitter feed for questions, conducts interviews and checks his phone for friends' questions via text message. All that while the music plays loudly in the station.

It is organized chaos.

But it works.

"Everything we do, we do it together," Arrington said.
Todd Cotareave, chief operating officer for WSHC, said the "Da SouthernBoi Hr" is the most popular show on the station. There are almost 90 deejays during 72 hours of live broadcasting, Monday to Friday with an occasional weekend show.

"They are guys who work their butt off all the time," Cotareave said about Shedd and Arrington. "Whenever I see someone putting as much as they can into (a radio show), I do whatever I can to help them."

Cotareave said the "Da SouthernBoi Hr" is so popular the station had to improve its online programming and hardware for the live feed on the website.

"I'm very impressed with these guys and what they've done," he said.
Shepherd to hold groundbreaking ceremony

A groundbreaking ceremony for Phase II of the Center for Contemporary Arts at Shepherd University will be held on Thursday, April 14 at 5:30 p.m. on West Campus.

The three-story, 25,000-square-foot facility will include a theater that will provide the Contemporary American Theater Festival with a new performance space; four classrooms—one general classroom, two computer labs, and a multipurpose classroom/rehearsal space; an art gallery; a noon shop; a prop shop; a sculpture studio; lobby and related support and common space; outdoor work area; and a gray water system. The roof will be standing-seam copper, and the exterior will be clad with copper shingles. The project has been designed to meet LEED Silver Certification.

The building is designed by Holtzman Moss Bottino Architecture of New York City. The firm served as the architect for the first phase of the three-phase project.

State bond funding of $11.3 million for the project has been matched with $2.08 million in private funds from supporters of Shepherd University’s Create the Future campaign and the Contemporary American Theater Festival.

Speakers at Thursday’s ceremony will include Shepherd University President Suzanne Shipley, Dr. Richard Helldobler, vice president for academic affairs; Dew Benedict, dean of the School of Arts and Humanites; Mary Clare Eros, chair of the Shepherd University Board of Governors; Edie King, principal of Holtzman Moss Bottino Architects; and Keny Allen, president of the Contemporary American Theater Festival’s board of trustees, member of the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, and vice chair of the Create the Future Campaign.

Dates: April 13, 2011
Publication: The Spirit of Jefferson

Shepherd presents Dr. David Gordon on April 14

The Shepherd University’s Faculty Research Forum will present “Teresa Teng: From Asia’s Diva to YouTube Sensation” by Dr. David Gordon, associate professor in the Department of History, Thursday, April 14 at noon in the Scarbororough Library, room 256.

Teresa Teng is the best known and beloved singer in the history of modern Asia. Raised on the island of Taiwan, Teng became popular among teens when she began singing pop standards for Chinese audiences in Hong Kong and Southeast Asia. Thereafter her popularity spread to Japan and mainland China. Dr. Gordon’s presentation will use analysis, anecdotes, and YouTube clips to shed light on a figure who accumulates ever greater attention in East Asia as the years pass.

For more information about the Shepherd Faculty Research Forum, visit http://www.shepherd.edu/asweb/rf/.

SU theatre to present ‘Mankind’

The Shepherd University Rose Mechanicals Medieval and Renaissance Players will present “Mankind,” a medieval morality play, along with original one-act plays written by Shepherd creative writing majors. “Mankind” will be held in Reynolds Hall on Friday, April 1 and 15, at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, April 9 and 16, at 7:30 p.m.; Wednesday, April 13, and Thursday, April 14, at 8:45 p.m.

Ticket prices are $5 for the general public, $2 for students, and free for Shepherd students.

For more information, contact Betty Elyeat at 304-876-5308 or bellye@shepherd.edu.
Panel discussion
to be held today

SHEPHERDSTOWN — The Shepherd University Common Reading program will host its final panel for the 2011-12 academic book “Survival of the Prettiest” by Dr. Nancy Etcoff at 7 p.m. today in the Robert C. Byrd Center for Legislative Studies auditorium. A reception will be provided in the lobby of the Center for Legislative Studies. The event is free and open to the public.

During the panel, Shepherd faculty will speak on the “Perspectives of Beauty.” They will discuss beauty and how it is expressed in their discipline or area of study. Members of the panel are Dr. Julia Sandy-Bailey, Dr. Larry Corpus and Dr. Heidi Harrahan. An audience discussion will follow the panel presentation.

More information is available by contacting Judi McIntyre at 304-876-5396 or jmcintyr@shepherd.edu.
Virginia Universities  A Place where Careers and Opportunities Meet - by Ivancho

Often dubbed as the land of founding fathers of United States, Virginia and West Virginia have been forefront in the race of education as well. Apart from the school educational system, the college and higher education front is changing for better.

To understand the college and university based educational prospects of a large state, it is always better to distribute the facets into aspects and smaller areas.

Starting with small colleges and universities of Virginia, top ranked institutions in the State of Virginia include the college of William and Mary (public Research University based out of Williamsburg), Roanoke College in Salem and the Shenandoah University situated in the Winchester area of Virginia. Hollins University of Roanoke and Sweet Briar's pride, the Sweet Briar College also are known for their educational excellence.

Now talking about large 4 year universities, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, State University of Blacksburg and the Virginia State University based out of Petersburg lead the race. Charlottesville based public research university, the University of Virginia is also considered as one of the best large 4 year universities in the state.

Later there is a mad rush for the top slot in the 2 year colleges category. Richard Bland College, Central Virginia Community College from Lynchburg and Danville Community College (Danville) compete fiercely with other popular colleges like J. Sergeant Reynolds Community College of Richmond and Martinsville's Patrick Henry Community College. Virginia Community College System in itself offers a varied scope of learning and education known beyond the state's boundaries.

Now talking about West Virginia, West Virginia University gets a special mention whenever the dialogue moves towards education in the West Virginia region.

The University of Charleston and Shepherd University (formerly called Shepherd College) of Shepherdstown are leading the fray, closing followed by the Concord University, a public liberal arts based institution in Athens. Wheeling Jesuit University, a co-educational Roman Catholic university is also known for the values, ethics and life's principles it offers to its students.

All in all, Virginia and education rhyme well, more so when the song of higher education is played.

Often dubbed as the land of founding fathers of United States, Virginia and West Virginia have been forefront in the race of education as well. Apart from the school educational system, the college and higher education front is changing for better.

The historical land of Virginia is an open ground in terms of education career opportunities and training aspects. Virginia Universities command entry into many top university based lists, to learn more on these aspects, you can log on to an unprejudiced college and university directory.
CHARLESTON, W.Va.—A majority of college freshmen say they are interested in graduate school, but only a quarter of them actually continue their education, say members of a new group working to increase post-graduate studies in the state.

The West Virginia Association of Graduate Schools, which consists of graduate deans from West Virginia University, Marshall University, Fairmont State University, Mountain State University, Shepherd University, the University of Charleston and West Virginia Wesleyan College, met earlier this month to discuss goals.

The group's mission statement is broken up into six bullet points, consisting of:

Producing leaders in the private sector, government and education.

Contributing directly, through research and creative activity, to the economic growth and reputation of the state.

Attracting state-of-the-art facilities and programs in research and development, transportation, health care and the private sector to West Virginia.

Providing licensure, certificate and degree programs necessary to sustain high standards in K-12, community college and higher education.

Providing high-quality opportunities for West Virginia students to earn a terminal degree in their field of choice.

Promoting the means by which graduate and professional education can improve the future of West Virginia.

"Those are very general points, but they all reflect in a very general, broad way of what we're all about," said Donna Spindel, dean of Marshall's graduate college.

"Mountain State is a private institution and so is West Virginia Wesleyan and that's one of the really neat things about this organization because all of us are very different," Spindel said. "But what connects us all is our delivery of graduate education."

She began gathering deans for the association last fall after a meeting of the Council of Graduate Schools because she wanted a panel focused specifically on promoting graduate programs in West Virginia, not just on a national level.

Despite the general nature of the mission statement, William White, dean of graduate studies at Mountain State University, left the panel with one statistic at the meeting in April, said Kathleen Long, who represents West Virginia Wesleyan's graduate school.

"Educating high school students as well as freshmen about what is involved with graduate school is important because 60 percent of all freshmen say they are interested in graduate school, but only 25 percent enroll," Long said. "So they need mentoring."

The association has been primarily sharing administrative and enrollment experiences.
Van Dempsey, the interim dean of graduate studies at Fairmont State University, finds the amount of information swapping enlightening in terms of which direction he should take his graduate school.

"If nothing else, it accomplishes collective information - we know more about what will be going on at other institutions by looking at how programs might complement each other as opposed to competing against each other," Dempsey said.

West Virginia exhibits some duplication in terms of graduate programs with pharmacy schools established at WVU, UC and another on the way at Marshall.

WVU also recently announced it would establish an entire school dedicated to public health, and Marshall announced a short time later that it was attempting to form an undergraduate public health program.

"They may be out there coincidently bumping into each other. Not that competition is a bad thing: some is good if the competition elevates the quality of the programs," Dempsey said.

The group will meet again in September or October, this time with graduate student representatives in attendance along with all of the deans.
CATF Announces 2011 Play Line Up, Schedule

Plays by David Mamet, Sam Shepard and others will be performed at the nationally renowned festival in July.

By MISTY HIGGINS

For The State Journal

SHEPHERDSTOWN — The Contemporary American Theater Festival, or CATF, at Shepherd University has announced the five-play lineup for its 21st season, consisting of 93 performances during the four-week festival from July 8-31.

This year's repertory features new plays from Kyle Bradstreet, David Mamet, Sam Shepard, Tracy Throne and Lucy Thurber. In addition to the plays, the 2011 season will also offer free lectures, discussions, stage readings, music and art exhibitions.

Patrons also will have the opportunity to purchase tickets to audience immersion events, including lunches with artists and breakfast with the theater festival's producing director, Ed Herendeen, who currently is in New York City for casting.

These events are part of a movement over the past several years to engage patrons in contemporary theater, said James McNeel, director of development and marketing for the CATF. One of those offerings, "Lunch & Art" will take place four times during the course of the festival.

"Humanities at the Festival" will give patrons and the public free access to readings, post-show discussions and other events that are supported through a grant from the West Virginia Humanities Council.

"What separates us from a lot of theaters is that at the CATF, we truly are a destination type show. The patrons are here, and they are really getting immersed in the experience," McNeel added, noting the "Think Theater" theme of the CATF. "We want people to talk about theater, about the process, about what they are seeing. We want patrons to absorb the whole experience."

The plays are produced in rotating repertory, which allows audience members to see all five shows in just two days, according to a news release from the CATF. The repertory includes regional premieres of plays by two Pulitzer Prize-winning playwrights, two world premieres, including a CATF commission and a second production.

The five plays are "From Prague," a world premiere by Bradstreet, "Race" by Mamet and "Ages of the Moon" by Shepard, all directed by Herendeen. Lucie Tiberghien will direct "We Are Here" by Thorne, which is in its second production. Lear deBessonet will direct Thurber's world premiere of "The Insurgents."

"The five plays of the 2011 Contemporary American Theater Festival repertory have serious velocity," said Herendeen, CATF founder. "They explode. They needle. They bleed, and they will give you room to reflect and dream."
According to Herendeen, the CATF audience has an appetite for daring new plays that celebrate and challenge the human experience.

"This is a pretty exciting season," McNeel said. "We are thrilled with the lineup and are expecting the best season yet."

The plays will be produced in one of three theaters on the Shepherd University campus. Currently, 400-seat, 195-seat and 90-seat theaters comprise the venues for the productions. A new theater that is part of a multi-phase, public and privately funded project will break ground this week and open the 2013 season, McNeel said.

Single ticket prices for 2011 are $52. Four-show and five-show tickets packages are available for $100 and $225 respectively. Discounts are available for students, seniors, military personnel and groups.

During the past 20 years, the CATF has staged 85 American works, including 32 world premieres, by 60 different playwrights. The festival has a budget of more than $1 million and sells 11,000 tickets annually, drawing patrons and visitors to the Eastern Panhandle from 33 states. A 2008 economic impact survey reported that the CATF generates more than $2 million for the local economy each season.

Herendeen attributes the location of Shepherd University, which has hosted the festival since 1991, for much of the CATF's success.

"Our geography plays an important role in our success. We live in the oldest town in West Virginia, doing the newest plays in America. This vibrant community steeped in history and filled with great architecture, dining, lodging and shopping, has proved to be the perfect setting for our company of artists. Shepherdstown is the summer home of the American theater."

The Theater Festival Box Office is open off-season Monday through Friday from noon to 5 p.m. for the purchase of tickets. To purchase tickets, call 800-999-2283. Visit www.catf.org for information on the upcoming season including playwright bios, schedule and photos.
Phase II of Shepherd University's Contemporary Arts Building Underway

SHEPHERDSTOWN, WV - Thursday Shepherd University broke ground on phase two of its Contemporary Arts Building.

Phase two of three of the Contemporary Arts Building is underway to help Shepherd University expand its visual arts department.

It will add an additional 26,000 square feet to the front of the building and will include a new studio theatre, four graphic arts classrooms, and a sculpture studio.

The school received almost $12 million from the state and more than $2 million from private donations for the addition.

"This will be a great expansion of our modern arts program," says Dr. Suzanne Shipley, President of Shepherd University. "We'll have an art gallery, we'll have scene and set design for our theatre program. What I'm really excited about is the whole second floor is graphic art and graphic design."

The new addition is expected to be in use by the fall semester of 2013.
Shepherd professor is moving on

D. Mark McCoy has been the chair of Shepherd’s music department for 15 years

BY MATT ARMSTRONG
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

SHEPHERDSTOWN — Sining in his first-floor office in Shepherd University’s Fine Arts Center on April morning, D. Mark McCoy reflected on his tenure as the chair of the university’s music department.

McCoy, originally from Buckhannon, recently accepted an offer to become dean of the DeTone School of Music at DePauw University, a small liberal arts institution in Greencastle, Ind.

“I’ve loved every minute of my time at Shepherd.... I’m very proud of the team here,” McCoy said.

After earning an undergraduate degree from Shepherd, McCoy attended the Peabody Institute for a master’s degree in conducting and then Texas Tech University for a doctorate in composition. McCoy worked at Shepherd for a year before applying for his current position.

Additionally, his academic interests include the study of music education, with a focus on music therapy.

While at Shepherd, McCoy has been instrumental in the development of several music programs, including the Shepherd University Orchestra and the Shepherd University Wind Ensemble.

Shepherd Relay For Life set for Friday

SHEPHERDSTOWN — Shepherd University’s 10th annual Relay for Life will be held Friday, and organizers are prepared to roll out the red carpet for cancer survivors with this year’s theme, “Light—Camera—Take Action.”

Holly Frye, director of student community services and service learning, is extending an open invitation to community members to attend and participate in this year’s event. According to Frye, this year’s Relay for Life fundraising efforts will be $400,000 since the annual event began in 2003.

“The students never stop amazing me with their commitment.”

“We are excited to welcome all of our community members to the annual event,” Frye said. The students are always amazing at the event, and we are thrilled to have them here.

The event will feature a variety of activities, including live music, food, and games.

Shepherd votes for ‘This I Believe’

SHEPHERDSTOWN — The Shepherd University faculty, staff and students, as well as Shepherdstown community members, voted for “This I Believe,” edited by Jay Allison and Dan Giedeman, as Shepherd’s Common Reading selection for the 2011-12 academic year.

The book features 80 Americans, from the famous to the unknown, completing the thought, “This I believe.”

The book features Colin Powell, Gloria Steinem, and others. The book is available online at www.shepherd.edu/thisibleven.
McCoy

FROM PAGE B1

facilitated by a faculty member, recalled some of the favorite memories he has collected at the university while conducting the Wind Ensemble, Shippensburg's premier concert ensemble. "It was a great evening," McCoy said. "I remember standing on stage, just as the last note of the program lingered in my head, realizing that the wind ensemble had come full circle. McCartney and I had worked so hard, and now we were going to celebrate this incredible achievement.

"The Wind Ensemble also features wind instruments from all over the world, and it's incredible to see how well they all come together.

"I'm very proud of the ensemble. They are a group of outstanding musicians, but they understand when it's time to work together as a team. They are students from all over the world, and they work incredibly hard. I feel proud to be a part of this incredible group of people.

"Since becoming the director, there's been a lot of good here at Shippensburg's music department. It's been hard to say goodbye to this place.

"Shepherd's music department has grown "by leaps and bounds", in both quantity and quality, and the university has gone from being a small college to a comprehensive university with a variety of programs and degrees.

"One of the major challenges the music department has faced is funding, but we've been lucky to have had some great support from Shepherd's support for local nonprofit organizations."

Shepherd University Friends of Music, McCoy added. "There's also a challenge, of course, when you're really trying to attract the best students. McCoy said that "That's just a reflection of the challenge, which is to attract a lot of really good students. McCoy said that "Shepherd is committed to providing a great education for its students, and we're proud of the opportunities we're able to provide here at the university.

"While we're not actively applying for grants, we're always working to improve the student experience and the quality of life on campus.

"The Wind Ensemble will have its final concert at 8 p.m. today, and we're excited to see how the students do. McCoy said that "It's been a great experience for me, and it's been great to see the students grow and develop over the course of the semester. McCoy said that "It's been a real joy for me, and it's been a great experience for everyone here at Shepherd. I'll always be a Proud Ram!"

Mark Cook, a faculty member and Shepherd's music department chair, said in an email Wednesday that McCoy will be missed by the faculty and community.

"Mark has been so much a part of our Shepherd community and he's made a real difference in the lives of our students. He's a great mentor and a great supporter of our students. Cook said that "His contributions to the Music Department, the university and the arts are truly appreciative. We'll miss him dearly, but we know he'll continue to be an inspiration to us all."

McCoy will conduct his last concert with the Wind Ensemble on Shepherd's campus at 8 p.m. Friday at the Frank Arena Center. General admission tickets are $10; $5 for faculty, staff, and students 18 and younger; and free for Shepherd students and members of the military MACC card holders. Admission and seating are on a ticketed basis, and the Department of Music can be contacted at 717-486-5555 for additional information.

Shepherd University Department of Music

FROM PAGE B1

Relay

FROM PAGE B1

event include raffles, cake walks, bake sale, a silent auction, face painting and more.

As of Monday, 711 participants have registered for Friday's event, making up more than 50 teams. Their total is $43,000, which has been raised toward the $80,000 goal.

Organizers have teamed up with the "paint-the-town purple" in honor of Relay For Life. Continuing through Saturday's event, purple ribbons will be on parking meters and on shops, and purple donation feet will be for sale around town to display in shops and on windows.

"It's all about bringing the community and camps together," Frye said.

Sponsors for this year's Relay For Life include Welsh Sound, Hollywood Casino at Charles Town Races, Bavarian Inn, Prettyman Broadcasting, STULZ Air Technology Systems Inc., Walkers Shortbread, Shepherd University football team, Pepsi, Shepherd University Dining Services, The Picket, Shepherd University Wellness Center, the Shepherd University Police Department and Shepherd University.

Activities kicked off SUNDAY with the survivor's brunch and will continue with registration and campsite setup at 7:30 p.m. Friday. Events continue with the torch run on German Street at 4 p.m.; survivors' lap at 6 p.m.; the luminaria ceremony (weather permitting) will be held at 10 p.m.; and the fight back ceremony at 5 a.m. Saturday. The last lap will be made at sunrise.

These events will be held on the Shepherd University campus at 9 p.m. Friday at the Frank Arena Center. General admission tickets are $10; $5 for faculty, staff, and students 18 and younger; and free for Shepherd students and members of the military MACC card holders. Admission and seating will be on a first-come, first-served basis, and the Department of Music can be contacted at 717-486-5555 for additional information.

More information is available by calling the Office of Student Services and Service Learning at 717-486-5402 or visiting www.shepherd.edu/relayforlife.

— From staff reports
Phase two of art center under way at Shepherd

Building continues university’s plan for Center for Contemporary Arts

BY TRICIA FOLKS
OXFORD NEWSPAPERS

SHEPHERDSTOWN — Shepherd University officials broke ground Thursday for phase two of the Center for Contemporary Arts, a three-story, 26,000-square-foot building that will cost almost $14 million in state bond and private matching funds.

Dow Benedict, dean of the School of Arts and Humanities, highlighted the features of the building, designed by Holzman Moss Bottino of New York City. The modern facility, which will be Silver LEED certified, will include a theater for performance space for the Contemporary American Theater Festival, a general class room, two computer labs, a multipurpose room, an art gallery, sculpture and print studio, a sculpture studio, among other things.

Eddie Kueg, principal of Holzman Moss Bottino, said the new building will foster shared learning and experimentation while providing an atmosphere for collaboration. His company also constructed the Phase I building, which was completed four years ago.

Sanya Evinisto, professor of art, currently teaches in the facility built during Phase I.

University and state officials break ground on the new phase of the Center for Contemporary Arts Thursday on Shepherd University’s West Campus. The new building will meet the U.S. Green Building Council’s standards for LEED silver certification.

Phase Two

"The connection between the students and the professionals has created great educational opportunities for the art students," she said. "It's been a joy to work in this building.

Evinisto believes the Phase Two building will only "deepen the offering" for Shepherd students, faculty, professionals and community members alike once complete.

"It really is a lovely collaboration for the students and the professionals at large," she said.

Benedict said it will be the first time in 20 years that the entire art department is housed in one location. He said the benefit of this is that artists today — no matter what discipline — feed off one another.

"Photography major Jessica Peters agrees. "From an art standpoint, it's really important to interact with each other," she said.

"It's a lot of going back and forth, back and forth," she said of the current building location.

Joshua Zelenka, a photography major, is excited to see the next phase of the center.

"It really justifies the department," he said, noting that students now have space to work in — such as graphic design and sculpture — and students like they never did before.

And both Peters and Zelenka agreed it was nice to see the community accept a contemporary structure in such a historic town.

"I'm glad Shepherdstown isn't limiting the school," Peters said.

Community support has been a big part in seeing the project come to fruition.

Jenny Allen, a member of both the CAFF and Higher Education Policy Commission, spearheaded the Create the Future campaign, the effort between the CAFF, Shepherd and the citizens that raised the just over $2 million in matching monies for the CCA.

"I was so proud to work on this," Allen said.

Shepherd President Suzanne Shipley said Allen had "outflung optimism" throughout the donation campaign.

"The arts are very important to the life of a liberal arts university like Shepherd," Allen said.
By Tyler Miller
Special to The Chronicle

Shepherd University's 9th Annual Relay For Life celebration will take place today, April 15, at 4 p.m. on campus at the Midway next to the Student Center.

The event will last 14 hours until sunrise on Saturday morning at 6 a.m. The annual event is held to raise money and awareness for cancer research through the American Cancer Society.

There are 57 teams registered for the event with 771 individuals participating. So far the university has been able to raise $43,116.56 for this year's event, and since the first Relay For Life held at Shepherd in 2003, the university has raised more than $400,000, according to the university's latest press release.

"The students never stop amazing me with their commitment," said Holly Frye, director of student community services and service learning at Shepherd.

The theme for the event is "Lights, Camera, Take Action," and all cancer survivors attending will be honored as the "stars" of the evening because they provide hope to us all, Frye said.

Fundraisers will be held throughout the day including everything from a bake sale, silent auction, balloon animals in the color of cancer awareness ribbons, a He-dancing station, face painting and more. Participants can also purchase a luminary online or at the event in memory or in honor of someone they love who has fought cancer. The luminary ceremony will take place at 10 p.m., where each name will be read aloud to a silent crowd.

Registration is still open and the cost is $10; participants will receive a t-shirt, dinner and entertainment all evening.

For more information about how to register, participate or donate to Shepherd University’s Relay For Life event visit www.shepherd.edu/asla or call 304-876-5480.
Major surgery needed for congressional district

For the last 20 years Jefferson County has been in the same congressional district as Charleston. Most people here do not understand why and many question it.

The district officially the "second" of West Virginia's three U.S. House of Representatives districts) borders the Ohio River (Mason County) in the west and Lowcomi County, Va., in the east. The Charleston media, being extremely geographically challenged, says the district runs "from the Ohio to the Potomac." Actually, reaching the Potomac only gets one two-thirds of the way across the district. I say the second congressional district runs "from the depths of the Ohio to the peaks of the Blue Ridge." West Virginia covers the entire territory of the Ohio River from the mean water mark on the Ohio side, similar to Maryland's ownership of the Potomac. Since Ohio's state song, "Beautiful Ohio," was actually written about the river, I consider that Ohio's state song is actually about West Virginia.

But I digress.

Our being lumped in with Charleston dates from the year 1992, our state last lost a congressional seat. We had six seats in the 1950s, dropping to five in 1962 and four in 1972.

Perhaps we can do major surgery on our congressional districts this year, perhaps not. Here are what I believe to be the most likely scenarios for congressional redistricting this year.

The second district is too big by about 30,000 people and the third is too small by about that number.

The simplest change would be to move Mason County (population 26,000) from the second district to the third. The territory of the second would still go from the Ohio to the Blue Ridge, since it would retain Jackson County.

Many Eastern Panhandle folks would oppose this because we would still be in a district with Charleston. I'm not so sure that's a good idea now, even though I was adamantly opposed to us being in the same district 16 years ago.

What's changed? First, we've grown and they haven't. Second, losing Mason County shifts the population even more toward us.

Congresswoman Shelley Moore Capito, who lives in Charleston, is a popular incumbent; through most of the district and I suspect she can run well in the future. But there's rampant speculation that she wants to run for either Governor or U.S. Senate soon. If she were to give up her seat in a new second district that has lost Mason County, my money says her replacement would come from Martinsburg.

Political considerations are always important in redistricting. The advantage to Democrats (who have big majorities in both houses of the Legislature) of this change is that it helps them keep their seats.

The solution would be to move the Eastern Panhandle with the Northern Panhandle. It connects the two panhandles with Vetor, my own district now represented by Rahall.

Much of the decision will, I believe, hinge on how much growth legislators collectively will expect our state to have over the next ten years.

In order to keep three congressional seats we will most likely have to grow by at least 150,000 people (presuming the nation grows by the same 5.7 percent it grew by from 2000 to 2010).

It's taken the last thirty years to grow by about 150,000, so if we keep that pace we'll lose a congressional seat in 2010. If that's true, we should wait until 2020 to make a major change.
Shepfest set to feature alumna

The will hold its annual spring Shepfest concert from 2 to 6 p.m. Sunday on the East Campus Midway on King Street by Ram Stadium.

The Program Board is excited to announce that Shepfest 2011 will feature the amazing hip-hop group Black Violin, as well as Grammy-nominated artist and Shepherd alumna Carolyn Malachi.

To most people, jazz, hip-hop, funk and classical are musical genres. To Black Violin, they're nothing but ingredients. They have performed with musicians as diverse as Pitbull, Aretha Franklin and the Eagles. This will mark Black Violin's second Shepfest performance.

See Shepfest — page 23

from page 13

visit to Shepherd following a sold-out performance at the Franks Center Theater in August.

Shepfest will mark a triumphant homecoming for 2011 Grammy-nominee Carolyn Malachi who is 2006 alumna of Shepherd University. A Washington, D.C., native and great-granddaughter of legendary jazz pianist John Malachi, she was born from musical roots but did not grow into her talent until 2005 when she was a junior at Shepherd.

Malachi's first two albums were a saluting call for women's empowerment and creativity: "Revenge of the Smart Chicks" and "Revenge of the Smart Chicks II." After the release of her first album, Malachi founded Smart Chicks, Inc. and its flourishing Smart Chicks Network which aims to develop visibility and leadership opportunities for women in the arts. Malachi's sound is a genre-bending blend of jazz, pop, R&B and spoken word.


The show will also feature two student bands who won coveted spots on the Shepfest roster: the Battle for Shepfest in February and Perpetual Wetness in March.

Until now, Shepfest has been a great opportunity for students to compete in a variety of ways: from academics to arts to athletics. The program board is excited to see this year's Shepfest event and for the first time, the Black Violin, a jazz and classical music group, will be performing.

Shepfest will also feature carnival amusements including a Rock Climbing Wall, inflatable trampolines, live music classes, and more.

Dates: April 15, 2011
Publication: The Shepherdstown Chronicle

Shepfest
CATF Announces 2011 Play Lineup, Schedule

By MISTY HIGGINS

SHEPHERDSTOWN — The Contemporary American Theater Festival, or CATF, at Shepherd University has announced the five-play lineup for its 21st season, consisting of 53 performances during the four-week festival from July 6-31.

This year's repertory features new plays from Kyle Bradford, David Mamet, Sam Shepard, Tracy Throne and David Kaynor. In addition to the plays, the 2011 season will also offer free lectures, discussions, stage readings, music and art exhibitions.

Patrons also have the opportunity to purchase tickets to special immersion events, including hushees with artists and breakfasts with the theater festival's producing director, Ed Herendeen, who currently is in New York City for casting.

These events are part of a movement over the past several years to engage patrons in contemporary theater, and James McNeel, director of development and marketing for the CATF, one of those offerings, "Lunch & Art," will take place four times during the course of the festival.

"Runnies at the Festival" will give patrons and the public free access to readings, post-show discussions and other events that are supported through a grant from the West Virginia Humanities Council.

"What separates us from a lot of the other arts is that at the CATF, we truly are a destination type show. The patrons are here, and they are really getting immersed in the experience," McNeel added, noting the "Think Theater" theme of the CATF. "We want people to talk about theater, about the process, about what they are seeing. We want patrons to absorb the whole experience."

The plays are produced in rotating repertory, which allows audience members to see all five shows in just two days, according to a news release from the CATF. The repertory includes regional premiers of plays by two Pulitzer Prize-winning playwrights, two world premiers, including a CATF commission and a second production. The five plays are "From Prague," a world premiere by Brundstreet, "Race" by Mamet and "Age of the Moon" by Shepard, all directed by Herendeen. Lucia DerSoushamd will direct "We Are Here" by Thorne, which is in its second production. "Lear" and "Cactus II" will direct Therbe's world premiere of "The Insurgents."

"The five plays of the 2011 Contemporary American Theater Festival have serious velocity," said Herendeen. CATF founder. "They explode, they teeter, they bleed, and they will give you room to reflect on drama."

According to Herendeen, the CATF audience has an appetite for daring new plays that celebrate and challenge the human experience.

"This is a pretty exciting season," McNeel said. "We are thrilled with the lineup and are expecting the best season yet."

The plays will be produced in one of three theaters on the Shepherd University campus. Currently, 400-seat, 450-seat and 90-seat theaters comprise the venues for the productions. A new theater that is part of a multi-phase, public and privately funded project will break ground this week and open in 2013, McNeel said.

Single ticket prices for 2011 are $42. Four-show and five-show ticket packages are available for $100 and $225, respectively. Discounts are available for students, seniors, military personnel and groups.

During the past 29 years, the CATF has staged 80 American works, including 32 world premiers and 60 playwrights. The festival has a budget of more than $1 million and sells 1,000 tickets annually, drawing patrons and visitors to the Eastern Panhandle from 33 states. A 2006 economic impact survey reported that the CATF generated more than $2 million for the local economy each season. Herendeen attributes the location of Shepherd University, which has hosted the festival since 1981, for much of the CATF's success.

"Our geography plays an important role in our success. We live in the oldest town in West Virginia, doing the newest plays in America. This vibrant community steeped in history and filled with great architecture, dining, lodging and shopping, has proved to be the perfect setting for our company of artists. Shepherdstown is the summer home of the American theater."

The Theater Festival box office is open off-season Monday through Friday from noon to 5 p.m. for the purchase of tickets. To purchase tickets, call 1-800-999-2233 or visit www.catf.org for information on the upcoming season, including playwright bio, schedule and photos.
Statewide Collegiate Business Plan Winners Named

By HEATHER RICHARDSON
For The State Journal

MORGANTOWN — Good ideas are the foundation of entrepreneurship. But what separates a person with an idea from a true entrepreneur?

For many young entrepreneurial hopefuls, funding is the missing link between their dreams and reality. Turning an idea into a viable business requires money — something that isn't particularly easy to come by in today's delicate economic climate.

But for West Virginia college students, there is a program designed to reward good ideas and hard work with the necessary funding to get their businesses off the ground.

Enter the West Virginia Statewide Collegiate Business Plan Competition, a program that spans the academic year and serves as an economic engine for the state by turning the entrepreneurial aspirations of college students into reality.

This year, 115 teams submitted business ideas in September. Judges narrowed the pool of candidates during three rounds of interviews.

Last weekend on the campus of West Virginia University, the nine teams left standing presented their business plans to 20 state and national business leaders. The panel of judges awarded each of the two winning finalist teams with a $10,000 check to use to start their business.

The third and final round of the BPC brought nearly nine months of hard work to a close for nine teams of college students from WVU, Shepherd University, University of Charleston and Potomac State College of WVU. The nine teams were divided into two categories based on the nature of the business ideas: lifestyle and innovation and hospitality and tourism.

Third-year WVU College of Law student Grant Bayerle was the winner in the lifestyle and innovation category, securing $10,000 plus $7,000 in legal, accounting, printing, and incubator services to support his new business venture, CardRecs.

Bayerle's business is designed to revolutionize the method in which military veterans retain valuable and confidential records. Instead of running the risk of misplacing hard copies, they can request a credit card-sized, USB-applicable VetRecs card through his online CardRecs system.

While Bayerle said he is excited to use his money to start his business, the check wasn't the most valuable part of the BPC process.

"I feel like I can take an idea and turn it into something great," said Bayerle. "All of the information I picked up along the way is invaluable."

WVU agri-business major John Elias and horticulture major Stephen Redmond took home the prize in the hospitality and tourism category for their business, Appleseed's Farm and Market.

Appleseded's Farm and Market produces and sells homegrown fruits and vegetables through direct marketing outlets that include roadside stands, local farm markets and a storefront location.

For Elias and Redmond, the process was a learning experience they didn't quite expect.

"It's like we crammed an entire entrepreneurial education into nine months," said Elias. "It forced us to think of our idea in entirely new ways."

The program's value is evident to the 130 business professionals involved in the process each year, especially Small Business Development Center state director Kristina Oliver, who is an integral part of the competition from round one to the finals each year.

"This competition grows entrepreneurs who will turn the tide of economic development for our great state," said Oliver.

"Entrepreneurship is the game-changer for economic development in West Virginia," she continued. "Initiatives like this and the individuals who participate are creating West Virginia's future resources. We mine coal in West Virginia and that's great, but our second-most nationally known resource can be entrepreneurial gold."

And the competition is on its way to making Oliver's hope a reality. While the competition has produced 10 winners in its five-year span, the number of businesses that have formed in the state as a result of the competition is nearly double.

"Whether they win or not, these finalists take away the business experience of a lifetime," said WVU Entrepreneurship Center director Mindy Wall. "They have the support to proceed with their ideas regardless because of the connections they've made and the knowledge they've acquired."
Gat Creek Crafts Strong Business with Handmade Furniture

By MISTY HIGGINS
For The State Journal

BERKELEY SPRINGS — Fifteen years ago, Charleston native Gat Caperton was looking to buy a small manufacturing operation in his home state when the opportunity to purchase a Berkeley Springs furniture factory presented itself.

Caperton said the usual assumption is that someone in his position had been born into the business. He said he had no lineage in the industry and no real affinity for fine furniture, noting he earned a “B” in high school shop class. But, he said, as far as manufacturing went, furniture was a very cool.

Despite not having a background in furniture, Caperton has settled in and built a surviving business for himself and his 110 employees even in a struggling economy. The business has a solid foundation of great craftsmanship and excellence in design, as well as a dedication to environmental management and safety practices.

“We like to say surviving is the new thriving,” Caperton said.

As CEO of Gat Creek, located in Berkeley Springs, Caperton heads up the 100,000-square-foot, $11 million manufacturing company he describes as a world-class operation that produces handmade antique reproductions and contemporary designs.

Prior to his purchase, the company had built antique reproductions for 40 years. Many of those employees from the former Tom Seely Furniture remain.

Gat Creek is an American producer of solid wood furniture that uses sustainable sourced wood coming from Appalachian forests and other nearby locations. Under Caperton’s direction, craftspeople build more than 20,000 oak and cherry pieces yearly. Each piece takes up to 28 days to complete and when finished is signed by the craftsman. The pieces are then sold online or at more than 300 retailers along the East Coast.

More than 95 percent of raw materials are sourced from within a 350-mile radius of the award-winning factory. Gat Creek works exclusively with domestic hardwoods that are harvested by suppliers that meet state and national standards for land and timber management.

For more than a decade, Gat Creek has been a successful domestic operation. The company has recorded growth over the past two years, and Caperton said executives are close to closing a deal that will export to a showroom in China.

“We have been fortunate to continue to be competitive as the industry opens up to worldwide competition,” Caperton said.

At the base of his business are people, not furniture. Caperton said, "We are focused on people," he said. "People make our furniture."

Strong employee benefits programs, best management practices and a commitment to safety help to attract and retain employees who come mostly from the region, including Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania. Many have been with the company for decades.

“I grew up in West Virginia, and I take great pride in owning a West Virginia company that employs West Virginia people. It’s nice to be someone who helps support the community and provides jobs,” Caperton said. “It’s definitely a source of pride.”

And it’s not just the West Virginia economy that benefits from buying the American-made furniture produced in Berkeley Springs.

During his years in business at Gat Creek, Caperton said furniture imports from China have grown from 10 to 70 percent. The company has been featured on “ABC World News with Diane Sawyer” in its “Made in America” segment highlighting the amount of foreign-produced furniture in many American homes.

Buying American products creates jobs, Caperton said.

“One of the great ways to make this economy grow is to buy American.”
Shepherd breaks ground for arts center's 2nd phase

By The Associated Press

SHEPHERDSTOWN, W.Va. — Shepherd University is beginning construction of the second phase of its Center for Contemporary Arts.

The center’s first building was completed four years ago. The Journal of Martinsburg reports that Shepherd officials broke ground Thursday for the second building.

The second building will be a three-story, 26,000-square-foot facility.

The nearly $14 million project will be paid with state bonds and private matching funds.

School of Arts and Humanities dean Dow Benedict says the building will include a theater for performance space for the Contemporary American Theater Festival, a general classroom, two computer labs and an art gallery.