



Sharpsburg Town Crier

Ernie Wetterer

Edition, 2025



Volume 33

October 2025

Number 10

Appearing Smart Can Look Fairly Dumb

You know, as I sit here having a warm piece of my recently baked sour cherry pie à la mode with a tiny flask of my sour cherry brandy, I just had the strangest thought.

Sour cherries are pretty darn good, but “appearing” smart can look fairly dumb at times, too.

Now I know there is a great emphasis placed on education, and there is much to be learned.

To study how to read, write and do math are some very useful subjects, but “how to think” is another matter altogether.

I wonder why they don’t teach the subject of “thinking” a bit more in our schools of higher learning.

Some people can actually appear very smart, but be very dumb at the same time.

I always like to examine seemingly smart people who say some dumb things.

I read one time that “Dumb politicians are not the problem; the problem is the dumb people who keep voting for them.” (Continued on Page 2)

Town Crier: “Passing the Torch...or Bell”

Readers of the Sharpsburg Town Crier are aware that the Editor is stepping down from its Editorship with the turning of the new year. The Crier and the Town need someone to pick up the task. I won’t minimize the effort. My wife says, “Michael, for ten days a month, you’re not really here.” I will admit that it’s a commitment.

I sat down and catalogued some of the things the Crier brings to the town.

It keeps us connected. You cross paths with people and events you might not otherwise know about. The Calendar alone is worth the effort to the community, a one-stop place to know what’s happening, especially Town Council events.

You get spotlights on “local heroes”, the volunteers, small businesses, and those who just quietly give time, talent, light, and love to this place.

The Crier is the town’s memory of this time, an archive. It recalls parts of our past that many folks don’t know about.

It encourages participation. A well-informed town is an involved town; more people show up, speak up, and especially help out. The Crier supports local initiatives and gives visibility



to town projects, events, and causes that need a hand.

The Crier's apolitical stance helps improve trust, communication, and belief in local institutions and in each other.

Editorship of the Crier also gives one personal benefits just by doing it!

You become a "voice" in community life. You know more about what's happening and why and who's doing things ... or not doing things.

You build strong local relationships, everyone from EMS volunteers to town leaders to the gardener who tends the flowers on Town Square. You quickly become a bridge between people. You are a community networker.

You improve your writing, storytelling, organizational, and editing skills. Along the way, you influence how your town sees itself and how it's seen by others.

You get creative satisfaction. Each feature and spot gets the tone and the look you choose.

The Crier leaves a legacy for the future. Descendants will look back and see your hand in the community's record. It's a meaningful civic role, hands-on, visible, and relevant.

You may fairly ask then, why am I departing?

I'll keep it simple.

A person's life journey often takes them on on-way trips, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. One experiences things that compel them to make changes. So it has with me. (A Scotch at Captain Bender's will get you the whole tale.)

In the time I have left, I'll devote it to outreach ministries at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. It's where I believe I'll have the greatest impact on the future of this community.

We are in the midst of great societal change, the biggest since the Roosevelt era. It will take a generation or more for people to accommodate what's coming. I join St. Paul's in assisting people through these times. It is our task; we may not walk away from it. (Come talk to me about these things.)

Regarding the "passing of the Town Crier torch... 'er bell", I'll commit whatever time required to get you started. If you're interested, contact me (marant@comcast.net) or Town Hall. (301-432-4428)

- Editor

Appearing Smart Can Look Fairly Dumb (continued)

Dumbness can be a difficult profession for sure.

Recently, I read where a large California fire that has destroyed more than 7,000 acres of woodland was caused when someone set off a pyrogenic device during a gender revealing party.

I wonder if it was a boy or girl; it was a party to remember for sure. Using a pyrogenic near those dry woods in California was not a smart decision.

Do you remember when Richard Nixon declared, "I'm not a crook"? Maybe he wasn't, but he sure acted like one. A dumb one at that.

Do you remember whether you voted for him?

And Bill Clinton, remember when he had difficulty remembering the meaning of the word "is" when giving his grand jury testimony in the Monica Lewinsky investigation; his response to a question:

"It depends on what the meaning of the word 'is' is." Now how difficult can that one be?

Perhaps it's not altogether the dumb voter.

As a wise man once said: "If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough."

Let me give you a simple test to determine, well, your smartness.

Just answer a few questions for me if you would:

How many times do you press an elevator button to go to a certain floor? Once, more than once, how many times exactly?

Do you wake up and ever think to yourself, Where am I supposed to be today?

Have you ever walked into a room and forgot why you went in there?

Have you ever looked for your glasses when they were propped upon your head or dangling around your neck?

I suppose we all do dumb things on occasion.

Some of them can be humorous while others can be more serious.

George Custer and his 7th Cavalry unit found themselves on the low side of a hill one day with Native Americans swooping down upon them.

I stood one day in that very same spot myself and concluded rather quickly that was a dumb decision made by the lieutenant colonel.

I'm thinking Custer thought the very same thing before his own demise.

NASA knew that the Challenger space shuttle had O-ring problems but would launch the space shuttle anyway killing all seven astronauts aboard.

That for sure wasn't very smart.

The Titanic only had 16 lifeboats, enough for a

third of its passengers; that decision would prove fairly dumb and fatal as well.

In 1937, the Hindenburg, a commercial airship caught fire and was destroyed in 37 seconds, killing 36 of the 97 passengers aboard in New Jersey; the airship was filled with hydrogen, a highly flammable gas, instead of a less-combustible alternative such as helium.

I suppose there are a lot more examples of how dumb decisions can get us into trouble.

When I read about this country's \$30 trillion debt, I find it somewhat strange, awkward and a bit dumb that neither political party sees this debt as a problem or chooses to discuss it with the voters of this country.

Is it fairly dumb to ignore today's growing deficit? Is it conceivable that we can continue to keep adding to this figure without some penalty or calamity somewhere down the road?

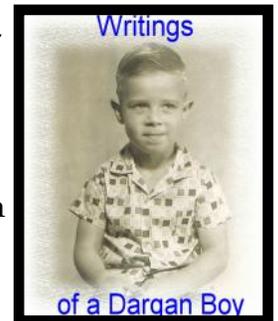
Maybe another journalist one day will write about that decision-making of our current political leaders. I'm more than a little certain that this unattended deficit problem will end up in the "dumb" category of our history books.

As for this old Dargan Boy, I'm thinking William Shakespeare was about right when he offered this conclusion:

"The fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man knows himself to be a fool."

Makes perfect sense to me.

- A Dargan Boy



From the Mayor and Council

Miss Sharpsburg 2026

Do you have a child who would like to represent their home town and become the next Miss Sharpsburg? We are accepting applications for the 2026 candidate.

See poster details on Page 11.

About the Town

Celebrating 50 Years of Service: Darryl T. "Breeze" Benner

Today, we proudly recognize Darryl T. "Breeze" Benner for an incredible 50 years of dedicated service to the Sharpsburg Volunteer Fire Company and the Sharpsburg community.

Since joining the department in 1975, Breeze has been a steady hand, a trusted mentor, and a true example of what volunteer service is all about. His decades of commitment, leadership, and heart have left an enduring mark on our company and the town he's faithfully served for half a century.

Please join us in congratulating Breeze on this remarkable milestone and in thanking him for 50 years of selfless service and dedication to Sharpsburg.

- Sharpsburg Volunteer Fire Company



the Town of Sharpsburg and its library for a wonderful day!

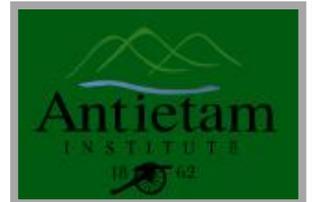
- Ms. Carrie Estell, Washington County Public Schools



Spring Symposium: Antietam Institute

Antietam Institute is already planning next year's events!

Set for April 10-11, 2026, "A Comparison of the Antietam and Gettysburg Campaigns". The symposium will be held at Storer Ballroom at Shepherd University. An optional excursion will be offered on Friday afternoon of the Battle of Fall Waters and the Confederate Retreat from Gettysburg. Registration opens October 5, 2025 antietaminstitute.org/2026-spring-symposium/ (See Poster, Page 12)



Veterans Day



American Legion Unit 236 reminds you of the Veterans Day Ceremony, November 11 at 11AM. See the Poster on Page 11.

- Ms. Ava Gift

Sharpsburg Elementary School Visits Community Playground

The STEP class enjoyed the story walk reading "Spookley, the Square Pumpkin", the playground with all its fun equipment and pavilion. We had lunch, painted pumpkins and enjoyed a square pumpkin snack. Thanks to

Community Calendar (October-November)

Wednesday, October 29 at 6 PM: **Overwintering Your Garden**, Master Gardener Trica
Sharpsburg Library
301-432-8825

October 30 at 3:30PM: **Halloween Party!**
Scary stories, games and a spooky treat!
Sharpsburg Library
301-432-8825

October 31 from 6PM to 8PM: **Trick-or-Treat**
Sharpsburg Town Hall
106 E Main St, Sharpsburg, MD 21782
301-432-4428

November 3 at 6PM: **Town Council Meeting**
Sharpsburg Town Hall
106 E Main St, Sharpsburg, MD 21782
301-432-4428

November 6 at 3:30PM: Special STEM story time in honor of the MD STEM Festival
Sharpsburg Library
301-432-8825

November 11 at 11AM: **Veterans Day Ceremony**
Town Square
gftofgabb@aol.com

November 13 at 3:30PM: **Story Time, National Native American Heritage Month**
Sharpsburg Library
301-432-8825

November 19 at 6 PM: **What Caterpillars Become**, Master Gardener Trica
Sharpsburg Library
301-432-8825

Recurring Events

Second Wednesdays from 12Noon to 1:30PM: **Lunch and Fellowship at the Brethren Church**
123 E Main St.
301-432-4944 / sharpsburgcob@outlook.com

First Wednesdays of the month at 1PM
Adults: Book Share
Sharpsburg Library
301-432-8825

Thursdays at 3:30PM: **Storytime** (Ages 3 and Up)
Sharpsburg Library
301-432-8825

First Saturdays at 10AM: **Lego Club**
Sharpsburg Library

301-432-8825

Area Churches

Christ Reformed Church
117 West Main Street
Sharpsburg
301-432-6182
Sundays: 9AM

United Christian Fellowship
18823 Shepherdstown Pike, Keedysville, MD 21756
301-432-0110
Sundays: 8:45AM Fellowship, 9AM Sunday School, 10AM Worship & Children's Church

Sharpsburg Church of the Brethren
123 E Main St, Sharpsburg
Sundays at 10AM, Sunday School at 10:30AM
301-432-4944

St. Paul's Episcopal Church
209 West Main Street
Sharpsburg
301-432-7098
Sundays: 10AM, Sunday School (Second and Fourth Sundays starting September 25)



Mayor & Councilpersons

Russ Weaver – Mayor

Jacob Martz – Vice Mayor

Joe Kudla

Anne Marie McCullough

Heather Waters

Robbie Waters

(Deborah Valentine Smith – Town Clerk)

106 East Main Street

PO Box 368

Sharpsburg, Maryland 21782

Phone: 301-432-4428

Fax: 301-432-8990

<https://sharpsburgmd.com/>

townofsharpsburg@comcast.net

[https://www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/TheTownOfSharpsburg)

TheTownOfSharpsburg

Zoning Administrator-Tim Lung

Sharpsburg.md.zoning@gmail.com



Ver. 1.0 10/26/24

Attachments:

**SHARPSBURG MAYOR AND COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 6, 2025**

The Mayor and Council of Sharpsburg, MD held their monthly meeting on Monday, October 6, 2025 at 6:00 PM in the Council meeting room of Town Hall located at 106 E. Main Street in Sharpsburg. In attendance were Mayor Russell Weaver, Vice Mayor Jacob Martz, Councilmembers Joseph Kudla (via zoom), Anne-Marie McCullough, Heather Waters and Robbie Waters. Town Administrator Debra Valentine-Smith was also present and Zoning Administrator Tim Lung was present via zoom.

Members of the Mayor and Council and staff met in closed session on Wednesday, September 3, 2025 under Maryland Annotated Code General Provisions Article §3-305(b): (1) to discuss confidential personnel matters regarding an appointee, employee, or official; and §3-305(b): (7) to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice on certain personnel matters. In closed session, legal advice from the town Attorney was received on a confidential personnel matter.

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE by Councilmember McCullough.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA - Motion by Councilmember H. Waters, second by Councilmember R. Waters to approve. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (*comments are limited to 3 minutes*)

- **Erin Short** of 225 E. Main Street inquired about livestreaming the meetings and what platform the town is using. Mayor Weaver stated that the town will entertain the concept and will need further technical support from an expert audio/video group.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Public Hearing Minutes of July 14, 2025. **Motion** by Councilmember H. Waters, second by Councilmember McCullough to approve. Motion carried.

Regular Meeting Minutes of July 14, 2025. **Motion** by Vice Mayor Martz, second by Councilmember H. Waters to approve. Motion carried.

Executive Minutes of September 3, 2025. **Motion** by Councilmember H. Waters, second by Vice Mayor Martz to approve. Motion carried.

Special Session Minutes of September 29, 2025. **Motion** by Councilmember H. Waters, second by Councilmember R. Waters to approve. Motion carried.

Work Session Minutes of September 29, 2025. **Motion** by Councilmember R. Waters, second by Councilmember McCullough to approve. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL REPORTS

July/August/September 2025 Financial Reports - **Motion** by Councilmember H. Waters, second by Councilmember R. Waters to approve. Motion carried.

ZONING ADMINISTRATORS REPORT – Tim Lung

- Responded to inquiries and questions regarding zoning and permitting requirements.
- Received and reviewed Big Spring wall restoration MDE Waterway Construction Permit application.
- Reviewed new state legislation (SB0891, HB1466) regarding Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs).
- Attended MD Dept of Planning ADU seminar (virtual).
- Reviewed revised County Historic Preservation Tax Credit Ordinance and MOU with Town.
- Attended Wash Co. Historic District Commission meeting - Historic Preservation Tax Credit MOU. **Matter will be added to the October work session for further discussion.**
- Completed 2024 MDP annual report for Planning Commission review and approval.
- Drafted Planning Commission Bylaws for review by the Planning Commission.
- Attended Aug 25 Planning Commission meeting
- Investigated and issued notice of violation for weeds at 201 E. Main (now in compliance).
- Investigated and issued notice of violation for weeds at 121 E. Main St. (now in compliance).
- Reviewed and signed off on building permit application at 105 N. Mechanic St.
- Reviewed and signed off on building permit application at 119A E. Chapline St.
- Issued Zoning Confirmation letter for 111 E. Main Street.

- Reviewed County APFO and Excise Tax Ordinance amendments.
- Researched and reviewed MET Easement information.
- Compiled information for MPIA request.
- Attended Sept 29 Mayor & Council Work Session meeting.

MAYORS COMMENTS AND UPDATES

- Preliminary Information Regarding the Future of the Sharpsburgh Museum of History – the Museum Board of Directors is considering finding a professional museum consultant at an anticipated cost of \$10-15,000.00 to assist in developing new operational guidelines, procedures and functions that will include staffing of both professional and volunteers to provide curatorial care and record keeping for the collections and planning for the future. *Letter attached to minutes as point of reference*
- W.C. Meter Vault Replace Project Update – W.C. is currently replacing the water meter vaults and upgrading the surrounding infrastructure but the replacement of the actual water meters is not part of the project as they were replaced approximately 7-years ago and they have a projected life of 15-years.
- Historic Park – A few last-minute details remain – installing flag and light, identification sign in front (contracting for now), placards (first one is complete).
- Lutheran Cemetery – Focal item for this fiscal year. Asking Councilmember McCullough to lead
- Big Spring – Permits wrapping up and begin date now early spring (likely April).
- Community Development/Christmas Tree Lighting/Little Miss Sharpsburg –Great day. Thanks Heather. Now focusing on Christmas lighting and Little Miss Sharpsburg contest.
- Sign at Elementary School – Thanks to R.W. Services for volunteering and removing weeds from flower bed in front of school. We have preliminary permission to place a sign in front of school for Sharpsburg. This item will be rolled into Main Street beautification.
- Main Street beautification campaign kickoff (street scape) - Anne Marie McCullough to lead. Discuss with council and get feedback from community.
- Feral cat concerns- Mayor Weaver stated that there is at least three-(3) colonies of Feral cats in town and he would like to see members of the community support the spay/neuter and release program that is assisted by a local vet.

CORRESPONDENCE/UPDATES:

W.C. 250th Celebration – Municipal Participation – the town is currently looking into the feasibility of a fireworks display for the 250th celebration.

FY27 CPP Grant Submission – an application was submitted to the Community Parks and Playgrounds for the FY27 funding round in the amount of \$156,781.40 to add an inclusive play area and add a pathway throughout the park to better provide ease of accessibility for strollers, wheelchairs, etc.

Canal Towns Partnership Representative – Sharpsburgh, Williamsport and Hancock all border the canal and Sharpsburgh is in need representative for the partnership group.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Fall Brush Collection** – October 13-17
- **Trick or Treat** – Friday, October 31st from 6-8 P.M.
- **Miss Sharpsburg 2026 Contest** – applications have been taken to the elementary school and are due back to the town by October 30th. Interviews will be conducted in November and Miss Sharpsburg 2026 will be crowned at the Christmas Tree lighting event on Friday, December 5th.

COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

COUNCILMEMBER KUDLA

- Update on MDOT progress Main St.
- Street sweep after bulk-awating return call
- MDOT will check grates and culverts after leaves fall- Taylor's TBD
- Signs for Garrison-poles ordered. Robbie putting on schedule to install

VICE-MAYOR MARTZ

- First Committee meeting to begin 2026 Memorial Day planning
- Attended Special Executive Session of Mayor & Council

- Met with FSA Representative to assess situation and discuss remediation strategies for box culvert on Chapline Street
- Met with Huntzberry representatives to discuss outstanding project items and perform walkthrough of Historical Park
- Attended BOCC meeting to discuss issues relevant to Sharpsburg & Memorial Day Parade
- Attended Mayor & Council Work Session

COUNCILMEMBER H. WATERS

- Sharpsburg Days 2025 was a success
- Working on a door decorating contest for the town in December.
- Started working on Sharpsburg Days 2026 for next year, Sept 19, 2026.

COUNCILMEMBER R. WATERS

- DNR application has been submitted for the annual fishing rodeo to be held on Saturday, April 25, 2026
- Stated that the town has approximately 20 poles are available for Hometown Hero Banners and recommended that applications be accepted for banners. **Matter will be added to the October work session for further discussion.**

COUNCILMEMBER MCCULLOUGH – nothing to report.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

M. Deputy Watkins was absent due to a family emergency.

Battlefield Advisory Board – Chris Vincent – the committee met on September 11, 2005 and submitted the following meeting report;

Attending the meeting: Sup. Andrew Banasik, Chris Vincent, George Franks, and Gerald Kendle. Superintendent Andrew Banasik provided an update on park activities and events. On August 6, the Second Lady of the United States, Usha Vance, paid a visit to the battlefield. She was shown around the Visitor Center and given a quick tour of the battlefield.

Staffing – Park Ranger Olivia Black continues to serve as the acting Chief of Education and Visitor Resource Manager. The two seasonal rangers' term will end in December at the Visitor Center.

Visitor Center – The park held a meeting with the contractors that will be working to mitigate leaks into the building. The project date is between Sept. 22 – Dec. 22. During the work the Observation Room and the exhibit area may be closed off.

Katie Poffenberger Property is now serving as the overflow parking area for the Visitor Center.

The Pry House window project is moving to phase II. The Historic Preservation Training Center is moving on to the back side or "L" of the house to work those windows.

The wood shingle roof on the Joseph Poffenberger barn has been replaced with a tin roof and the roof on the Newcomer house has been replaced.

The mowing contract started in June and it has greatly helped the Park staff.

Monument preservation. Park staff and specialized contractors continue to conduct routine monument preservation work in the park. This includes waxing bronze elements, repairing masonry as necessary, and cleaning. All monuments undergo routine maintenance every 3-5 years.

Wayside Project. Planning has begun look at all the waysides throughout the park to evaluate which ones need to be replaced or refreshed based of off new scholarship. The planning will also look to see where new waysides can be installed.

The 35th Annual Memorial Illumination is set for December 6, 2025. Volunteers will work on November 15 to prepare the luminaries. The next meeting is scheduled for December 10, 2025.

Town Crier – Mike Arant; Mayor Weaver reiterated that the last edition of the Town Crier will be in December.

NEW BUSINESS

2026 Snow Removal Bid Review/Award - the current snow removal contract expires on December 31, 2025 and was advertised for bid for 2026 with bids due on October 2, 2025. One-(1) bid was received from the current contractor of B&B Automotive, LLC who also bid on years 2027 and 2028. **Motion** by Councilmember R. Waters, second by Councilmember McCullough to approve and accept the three-(3) year snow removal bid from B&B Automotive, LLC for years 2025 through 2027. Motion carried. *(bid information attached as reference to these minutes)*

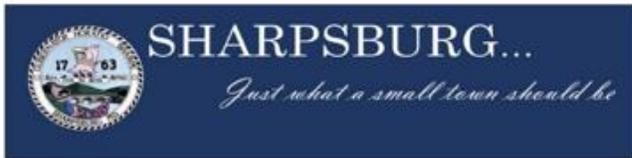
Sharpsburg Community Survey- Brianna Candelaria of the Sharpsburg Planning Commission reviewed with the Mayor and Council the draft survey the Planning Commission has comprised to obtain information from the community necessary to support the update of the Comprehensive Plan. Discussion on a few of the survey questions and whether other questions should be added as well as the method(s) proposed for circulating the survey, which was proposed to include survey monkey, Facebook, the towns website, etc. **Motion** by Councilmember R. Waters, second by Councilmember H. Waters to send out the survey as is. Motion carried.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:25 P.M. with a motion by Vice-Mayor Martz and a second by Councilmember R. Waters. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra A. Valentine-Smith
Town Administrator





MISS SHARPSBURG 2026

Do you have a child that would like to represent their home town and become the next Miss Sharpsburg? We are accepting applications for the 2026 candidate.

Requirements: Any child currently attending 3rd - 5th grade

Must be attending in Sharpsburg School district or home schooled and live in Sharpsburg (or vicinity)

Submissions must include the completion of the questionnaire by the applicant on the back of this form.

Duties of Miss Sharpsburg:

Miss Sharpsburg shall represent the town at the following events:

- Sharpsburg Memorial Day Parade and Laying of the Wreath Ceremony
- Sharpsburg Days
- 250th Celebration
- Any other town events as requested

Miss Sharpsburg must demonstrate good citizenship and be an ample student.

Submission Dates:

- **Thursday, October 30th:** Completed applications must be submitted to the Town Office located on the 2nd floor of Town Hall, 106 E. Main Street
- **Saturday, November 15th:** in-person interviews will be conducted with the top three-3 candidates
- **Friday, December 5th:** Miss Sharpsburg 2026 will be crowned at the Christmas Tree Lighting Event

Contact Information
Sharpsburg Town Hall
townofsharpsburg@comcast.net
301.432.4428

DISCLAIMER: This program or activity is not sponsored by or affiliated with Washington County Public Schools.



VETERANS DAY CEREMONY

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2025, 11:00 A.M.

SHARPSBURG TOWN SQUARE

MAIN STREET, SHARPSBURG, MARYLAND

FEATURING

**AMERICAN LEGION CLOPPER MICHAEL
POST 10 HONOR GUARD**

BOONSBORO SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL CHORUS

SAXOPHONIST MIKE LUSHBAUGH

**VETERANS WILL BE GIVEN SMALL TOKEN OF
APPRECIATION**

COME AND JOIN US IN HONORING VETERANS

**Sponsored by
ANTIETAM UNIT 236 AMERICAN LEGION
AUXILIARY**



Alfred R. Waud sketches of the Shepherdstown Ford in 1862 and the Charge of the 6th Michigan Cavalry at Fall Waters in 1863 (LoC)

SPRING SYMPOSIUM

The Antietam Institute Spring Symposium is set for April 10-11, 2026.

"A Comparison of the Antietam and Gettysburg Campaigns"

Speakers will include:

Dr. James Broomall, Doug Douds, George Franks, D. Scott Hartwig,

Dr. Jennifer Murray, Dr. Carol Reardon, and Dan Vermilya.

Featuring live "Antietam and Beyond Podcast" with

co-hosts Tom McMillan and John Banks.

The symposium will be held at Storer Ballroom at Shepherd University. An

optional excursion will be offered on Friday afternoon of the

Battle of Fall Waters and the Confederate Retreat from Gettysburg.

Registration opens Oct. 5 antietaminstitute.org/2026-spring-symposium/