



Sharpsburg Town Crier



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THE MIKE ARANT EDITION

Well Done Michael!

Ralph Waldo Emerson famously said, “*the reward of a thing well done is having done it*”. I am sure Mike Arant would concur when it comes to his labor of love as the editor/publisher of the Town Crier. At a chance meeting five years ago on the Antietam Battlefield, I asked Mike to help the Town revive the Town Crier. Reluctant at first, Mike soon embraced the idea and the rest as they say is history. We have had five outstanding years of the Crier. Mike is now stepping down from leading the Crier effort but will still be involved. In recognition of his outstanding contribution to the Town and capturing our history we are naming the 2026 edition of the Town Crier the Mike Arant Edition. Since Michael is fond of everything Italian, we will conclude with *bravissimo* Michael, *bravissimo*!

~ An old story from the past that never gets old ~

Bucky and his visit to Sharpsburg

Reprinted from a previous Herald Mail column

While passing by the Antietam Church of God traveling south on the Harpers Ferry Road, I noticed a young buck standing next to the Church’s sign on a grassy knoll. For a few moments my thoughts turned to Bucky, the near human deer who captured South County’s heart a little over a decade ago. My good friend Pete Water’s suggested we run one of his Bucky articles in the Crier to commemorate Bucky. I thought that was a great idea but I wondered if we had done enough. As Pete said in one of his articles:



“There are a lot of people who never take time to understand or appreciate animals. I suspect that is one of the all-time great failures of civilization; we don’t make enough time to be civil to other humans or animals.”

So, a suggestion: why not publish Bucky’s story as part of our recognition of National Pet Day in April. Nothing fancy, just a day to celebrate the joy animals and pets bring, promote adoption of orphaned pets, and support the Humane Society to demonstrate we understand and appreciate animals and pets. If you are interested in helping organize such a day let us know by emailing or calling the Town. What follows is a two-chapter story published with permission from the Dargan Boy collection by Pete Waters.

A Meat cutter and his friend Bucky

Chapter 1: A Strange Story from South County

There comes a strange story from South County about a Meat Cutter and a deer that must be told. Jeff Shumaker is a meat cutter who works for a local Butcher shop just below Sharpsburg. While he was out driving one night in his truck, his travels took him near Porterstown. As he drove down the road, he noticed an object in the middle of his path. When he stopped to further examine this object, he discovered it was a tiny deer. He searched the area far and wide for the deer's mother but could not find her, so he picked the deer up and laid it alongside the road thinking the mother might come back. He left the area in his truck, but decided to come back a little later to see if the deer was gone. He once again found the deer in the middle of the road and decided to take it home.

After rescuing the orphaned deer, he fed it; watched over it; and nourished it to health. When told that the Department of Natural Resources required a license and permit to keep a deer, he turned the deer loose to fend for itself. Bucky, the name given to the deer, was now on his own. The world seems like a tough place for any orphan to survive especially a deer. Bucky, has taken the initiative, however, to do the very best he can on his own.

Ms. Betty, who operated the Butcher shop, would lay an apple on a post each morning in the event Bucky might get hungry. Thankful for the generosity, Bucky would often stop by. On trips down Harpers Ferry Road, you could see Bucky frolicking with dogs. Rumor has it that he tried to open a checking account at the local bank but was turned down for lack of money. He, too, was a little leery of bankers, I am told.

Another witness suggested that he was most fond of Nutter's Ice Cream shop. Who isn't, I thought. Seems that Bucky even tried to get a job at B and B Automotive only to discover that Ben had earlier accepted the position. Bucky is not a traveling sort of deer for distant lands, but instead chooses to stay close to his South County roots. In that regard, he is like many of the inhabitants who already live there. Bucky was even observed one day joining some local joggers on the Canal towpath. I suppose Bucky sees some benefit to exercise, but he makes no real effort to avoid sweets. He does have a fondness for bananas, apples and fruits so I suppose he keeps a balanced diet of sorts. Unlike his cousins, he seems to like people food more than alfalfa and other greens.

Another rumor suggests that he sometimes tends to sleep under the shade of a swimming pool deck. The Eichelberger's, who live on Harpers Ferry Road, have also installed a big sign advising all travelers on that road to be on the alert for Bucky, the deer.

Although we take every precaution not to hit any deer or animals with our vehicles in South County, it would be nice if all visitors to our beautiful area be cautioned to do the same. Plus, your success will serve to keep your insurance premiums down.

Bucky, for certain, is a most special deer, and Jeff Shumaker, did a noble deed in rescuing this hapless orphan from harm's way. It's the kindness in the human heart that always makes a good story good.

On June 12, 2012, Bucky celebrated his first birthday. Whether or not Bucky lives to a ripe old age will be the subject of great debate.

One thing for sure, *in this life so full of uncertainties*, Bucky has brought a lot of smiles to many faces.

Chapter 2: Remembering Bucky

Almost a year ago, I wrote a column about the meat cutter and his friend, Bucky, a tiny deer rescued from the middle of Porterstown Road by Jeff Shumaker after the little critter's mother had died.

Bucky was to have a most unique life. He became a celebrity to all who intimately knew him. Civilization must have seemed a little odd to this visiting fellow.

His immediate surroundings did not include thistles, oaks and tall grasses of the valley. Manicured lawns, Little League diamonds and concrete walkways were his paths.

His acquaintances included many little kids, parents, grandparents, tourists and residents of South County. It was like a big adoption, and Bucky became the focal point of the community.

Bucky seemed to very much enjoy his status, and I really don't believe he had any specific understanding that he was a deer. He was far more civilized than his roaming peers.

He enjoyed his neighborhood immensely and made regular stops at B&B Automotive, Nutter's Ice Cream Store, the Post Office, bank and the streets of downtown Sharpsburg.

When joggers took to the nearby towpath or came to participate in runs through the historic town, Bucky would do the same. He seemed to love the many aspects of jogging. I think he enjoyed human companionship even more. Bucky had a Facebook page with over 415 friends. He was more popular in the social media than some high school jocks.

The first time I had the opportunity to meet Bucky was on a hot summer day. He was lounging under the shade of a swimming pool deck, and as I spoke to him, he raised his head and peered through the green foliage surrounding his abode almost as if he knew what I was saying. I invited him out of his cool surroundings and offered up a piece of banana. He accepted my invitation, and as he nibbled on the fruit, he enjoyed the massage I applied to his neck and back. Often, people will talk to animals, but few will pause to listen or look for a response. How sad, I thought.

Unlike many of the other deer who would unexpectedly run into your car or jump on your hood, Bucky would merely walk up to peer in your vehicle or get a rub on his head if you stopped by to notice him.

My mom was a passenger in a car and stopped to admire him one day on Harpers Ferry Road. Bucky came over to her window to visit and received a rub as she said hello.

He would often stop by the Eichelberger's on that same road to "thank" them for putting up the road signs to remind visitors to be on the alert for a friendly deer by the name of Bucky.

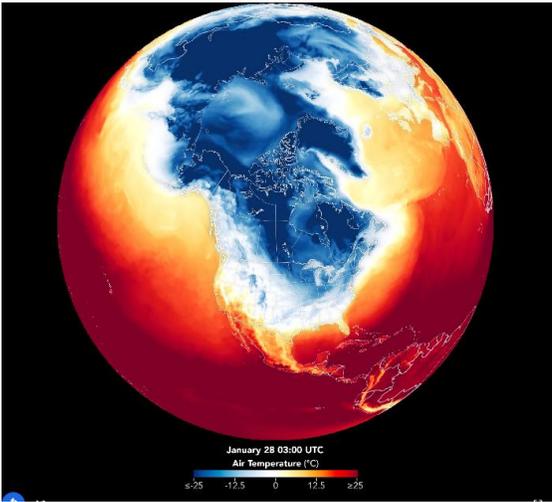
There are a lot of people who never take time to understand or appreciate animals. I suspect that is one of the all-time great failures of civilization; we don't make enough time to be civil to other humans or animals. Voltaire was a famous French writer and philosopher. When I recently read some of his words, I know he had a tremendous fondness for animals. He perhaps described them better than anyone else:

"Animals have these advantages over man: they never hear the clock strike, they die without any idea of death, they have no theologians to instruct them, their last moments are not disturbed by unwelcome and unpleasant ceremonies, their funerals cost them nothing, and no one starts lawsuits over their wills."

I suppose that Bucky must have been familiar with Voltaire's spirit and that description.

Bucky died the other day in the nearby woods of South County. As the last breath left his body, I'm certain his final thoughts were on all those loving folks who made his life something special.

R.I.P., Bucky.



It Takes a Team Effort

2026 Arctic Blast Snow Removal Response

Polar Vortex

What we are experiencing is a weakening of a thing called the Polar Vortex; a large, rotating band of frigid air high above the Arctic. When this happens, cold Arctic air can surge south, plunging large parts of North America into extreme cold. The above NASA satellite imagery shows how huge the air mass is and just how far south the cold air can plunge. This is one of the longest documented cold spells with historically low temperatures ever recorded. Combined with the recent snow fall this event caused a flash freeze of the snow making snow removal grueling.



We would like to thank the remarkable efforts of our team in managing this event. Joe Kudla was instrumental in coordinating assets, Robbie Waters shoveling out individuals, helping coordinate and move snow from Main Street and many other necessary tasks. The leadership and experience provided by our plowing partner B&B Auto under Bryan Gabriel. Our State delegate Bill Wivell jumped in to assist and MDOT district engineer Linda Puffenberger came to our rescue with the snow removal proposal (no cost to Sharpsburg). And of course, without the cooperation of our residents, this snow removal event would not have been possible.

In this edition of the Town Crier, we discuss the importance of operational capacity and how we achieve it. There is no better example than this, the 2026 Arctic Blast snow removal response.





SHARPSBURG...

Just what a small town should be

Town of Sharpsburg 2025 The Year in Review

First of several articles on assessing what is important

2025 was a year of real progress for the Town of Sharpsburg, with a focus on building off a strong foundation for what's ahead and making Sharpsburg "*Just What a Small Town Should Be*".

Municipalities are under a lot of pressure to get things done quickly and correctly, while trying to serve a wide range of people, often with conflicting needs and interests. I thought it might be instructive to explore 2025 in terms of what some municipalities use to assess their progress. Generally, there are four key areas: operational capacity and administrative efficiency, financial health and budgeting, public safety and service delivery, and community engagement. Let's take a brief look at the first two.

We create **operational capacity** by empowering individual council persons to act in an area of citizen need while enabling them with funds, town resources and access to county and state resources. As you review the list of accomplishments below, you will see how well the current council has embraced this operational model. Add to that the **administrative efficiency** of our town and zoning administrators and you have an operationally sound municipal government. Our town zoning administrator is recognized by the courts as a zoning expert and works tirelessly to assure the speed and accuracy of permit approvals.

Sharpsburg town governments **financial health** has always been a top priority for sitting mayor and councils. We finished with a surplus again in 2025 and for the second year in a row successfully completed our annual audit with zero exceptions. As far as I can tell, the only two times this has been accomplished in town history. This means that we are again fully compliant with all accounting and audit requirements. I would like to congratulate our town administrator on her outstanding efforts. Our annual **budget** is fully automated for the first time, broken down by operational area and project, and reviewed monthly at regular council meetings as well as published on the town website and in the Town Crier providing full financial transparency

I am honored to have had the opportunity to work with our council and staff and am especially proud of how we stayed focused in 2025 not taking the bait and getting trapped in pointless arguments. Thank you to everyone who helped make 2025 such a successful year. As we look to 2026, we're excited to keep serving our residents and strengthening our community.

Russ Weaver ~ Mayor

2025 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

PLANNING & ZONING

- New businesses - 4065 Floral & Antietam Institute moved into 101 W. Main
- Comprehensive Plan - Community Survey
- W.C. Historic Preservation Tax Credit MOU
- **Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Zoning Ordinance text amendment requirements per new State Legislation** - During its 2025 session, the Maryland General Assembly passed HB 1466 (“Accessory Dwelling Units – Requirements and Prohibitions”), which codifies state policy supporting development of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), effective October 1, 2025. It also requires that counties and municipalities with planning and zoning authority adopt a local law authorizing ADU development on land with a single-family detached dwelling unit by October 1, 2026. Letter sent to legislators requesting that this legislation not apply to properties within a designated historic district.

PROJECTS

- Started and completed the Historic Park
- Well Project / Water Rebates
- Speed Study @ Main & Church after holding public meetings with both citizens and MDOT
- Big Spring Wall Restoration
- Street and Culvert repairs were made as well as signage replacements
- Purchased and Installed aerator/fountain at the town pond
- W.C. Meter Vault Replace Project
- Charter Review and Amendments
- Periodic street sweeping and leaf removal

FINANCES

- The Towns Financial Audits for the last 2 years have shown that the town is operating positively while maintaining the current tax rate of .35/\$100 of assessed value and remains fully compliant with accounting and audit requirements.
- Received \$370,122 in POS funding for the Historic Park

EVENTS

- Christmas In the Square and Sharpsburg Day – both successful events
- Memorial Day Parade – always the town’s main attraction
- Added an additional Brush collection in the spring (April/October)
- Hometown Hero Banner Program- re-started

2026 Focus/Pending:

- Planning Commission By-Laws
- Sign @ Elementary School
- Lutheran Cemetery
- Special 250 Year Anniversary event
- Expanded Memorial Day Ceremonies
- Revitalization and restructuring of Sharpsburg Museum of History





106 E. Main Street · 301.432.8825
Tues – Thurs: 1:30PM – 7PM
Fri - Closed · Sat - 9:15AM – 1PM
Closed Sunday and Monday

January during library hours: Spice Club: Adobo

January 28 @ 1:30 PM
Homeschool
“Vanderbeekers & the Hidden Garden”

January 27-29 during library hours:
Trade your puzzles for new ones!

February during library hours: Spice Club, Turmeric

February 4 at 2PM
(Snow date February 11 at 2PM)
Walking Historical Figures
Harriet Tubman & Great Grandfather T.H. Barnes.

February 11 @ 5PM
Movie Night
“Freakier Friday”, Rated PG

February 12 from 5 to 7PM
Teen Paint Night
Ages 11-17. Registration Req.

February 25 @ 1:30PM
Homeschool
“Mrs. Frisby & the Rats of NIMH”

February 25 @ 6PM
Gardening Know-How
Coyotes, Bears and Foxes, Oh My!

March 11 @ 6PM:
Share food and recipes including the spices

March during library hours: Spice Club, Lavender

Recurring Events

1st Wed of the month @ 1:00 PM Adult Book Share
Thursdays @ 3:30PM Storytime (Ages 3 and up)
1st Saturday of the month @ 10:00 AM Lego Club



Sharpsburg Church of the Brethren
123 E Main St. Sharpsburg · 301.432.4944

Worship Service: 10AM
Sunday School at 10:30AM

- **Lunch and Fellowship at the Brethren Church**
2nd Wednesdays - Noon to 1:30PM
sharpsburgcob@outlook.com

St. Paul's Episcopal Church
209 W. Main St. Sharpsburg · 301.432.7098
Worship Service: 10AM

- **Open for Silent Prayer**
Wednesdays - 5:30PM to 6:30PM

Christ Reformed Church
117 W. Main St. Sharpsburg · 301.432.6182
Worship Service: 9AM

Sharpsburg Bible Church
5134 General Stuart Ct, Sharpsburg
301-432-5309
Sunday School 9:30 AM
Worship Service: 10:30 AM & 6:00 PM

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

Burnside First Church of God
3904 Mills Rd, Sharpsburg · 301.432.2408
Sunday Worship - 9:00am
Sunday School - 10:15am

NEWS FROM TOWN HALL

106 East Main Street
PO Box 368
Sharpsburg, Maryland 21782
Phone: 301-432-4428



Office Hours
Monday - Thursday
8:30 AM - 3:30 PM
Closed Fridays



Hometown Hero Banners

If you would like to recognize a Sharpsburg Community Veteran/Service member with a Hometown Hero Banner, please contact town hall for more information.

Water and/or Sewer Emergencies

(including grinder pump issues)

Please contact the Washington County Dept. of Water Quality @ 240.313.2600

Trash Collection

Apple Valley Waste collects the town residents' trash early Wednesday mornings.

Containers may be placed at the curb for collection Tuesday evenings. Please note the following 2026 holidays that will be observed by AVW; delaying collection until Thursday. Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas Day.

Streetlight Problem?

If you notice that a streetlight in town is not working properly or it is out, please either email or call town hall with the following information: nearest house address, pole number (if you can find it), and cross street.

Resident Deputy Dakota Watkins

We have been receiving calls at town hall requesting to speak with Deputy Watkins. Please note that he is contracted by the Town through the W.C. Sheriff's Dept. and can be reached by calling the non-emergency number at 240.313.2100. If you have an emergency, please call 911.

Follow us for Updates...

Town meetings, events, cancellations and changes are all posted on the Town's Facebook page
www.facebook.com/TheTownofSharpsburg
and the towns website
<https://sharpsburgmd.com>

The Mayor and Council meet the 1st Monday of the month @ 6PM in the meeting room located on the 2nd floor of Town Hall

Town Administration

Debra Valentine-Smith

Town Administrator

301.432.4428

townofsharpsburg@comcast.net

Tim Lung

Zoning Administrator/Permits

Sharpsburg.md.zoning@gmail.com



Mayor and Council

Russ Weaver - Mayor

Jacob Martz - Vice Mayor

Town Council

Joe Kudla

Anne Marie McCullough

Heather Waters

Robbie Waters

Want to be placed on the Town Crier email list? Send your email to townofsharpsburg@comcast.net