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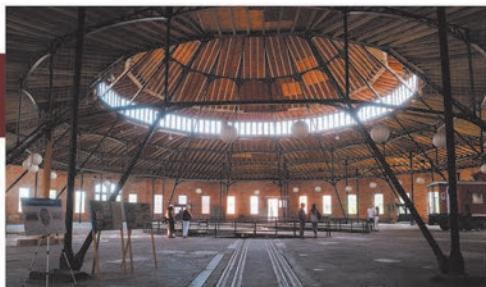


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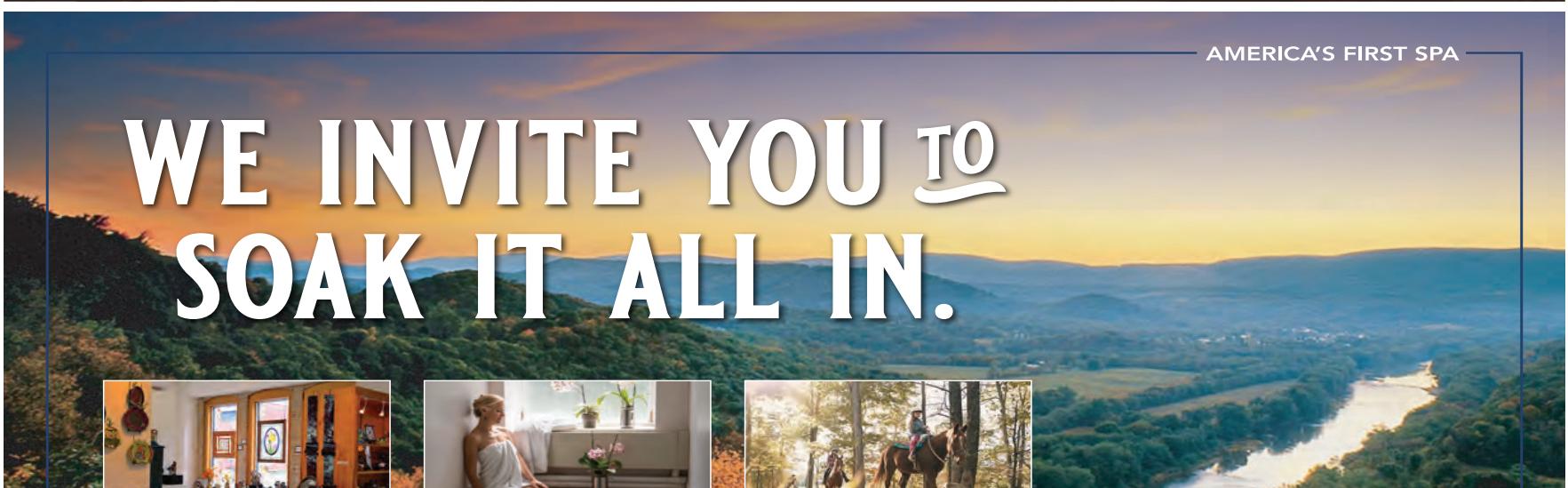


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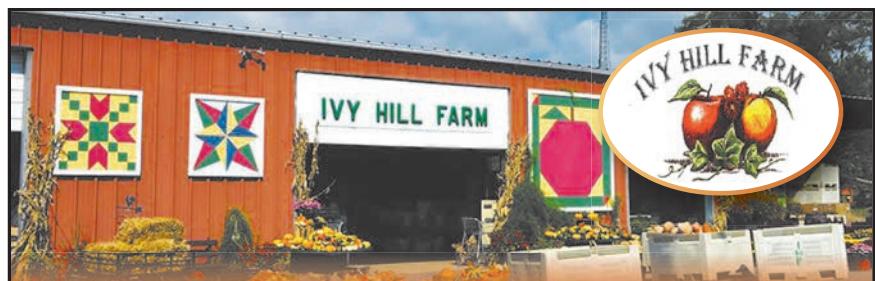


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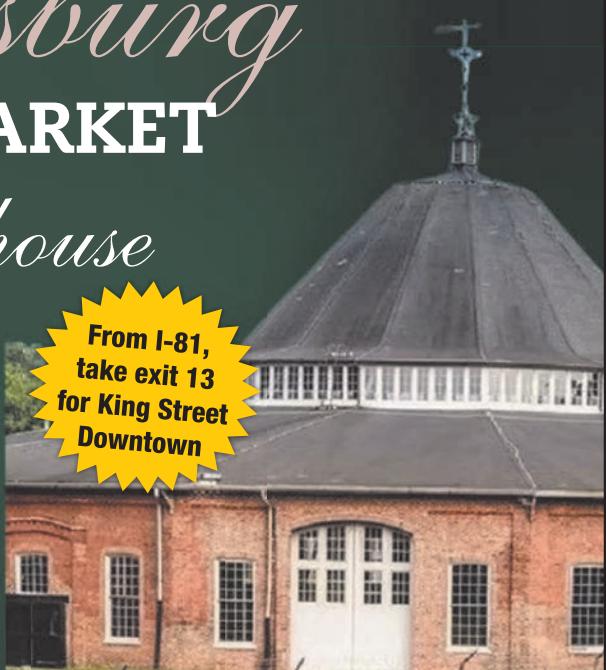
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Winding Through Wine Country

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY KATE McDERMOTT

With **history, horses** and **vintage charm**, western Loudoun County, Virginia, offers visitors much more than its stunning vineyards.

Last year, Loudoun County celebrated its 40th anniversary as a mecca for wine lovers. And with good reason: The county has more than 50 wineries, as well as 30 breweries and several distilleries.

But during a recent visit, I decided it might be wise to check out some of the county's other attractions before I sampled too many of its libations.

I started in Luckett's, where the Luckett's Store, The Cottage, On a Whim, Rust & Feathers, and Hummingbird's Nest showcase eclectic collections of old and sometimes new merchandise that includes everything from vintage linens and buttons to new or newly refurbished upholstered furniture—and my personal favorite, ice skates.

Growing up as the sixth of seven children, one of my most fervent desires was to have my very own figure skates—not a pair I had to wait for a sibling to outgrow. If only I'd known about the antique stores of Luckett's. There were white skates, black skates, skates that still had their blade covers. Oh, to be young again!

Shelving my Olympic figure skating aspirations, I drove south on Route 15 to Morven Park, the former home of Virginia Gov. Westmoreland Davis and his wife Marguerite in the early 1900s. The 1,000-acre property is now a privately owned park and equestrian center that is open to the public 365 days a year.

The park will hold its annual Spring Horse Trials March 29 and 30. If you go, be sure to leave time to visit the Davis' circa-1784 mansion that looks like something right out of "Gone with the Wind." Today



WILD HARE ADVENTURES

it's a museum that provides great insights into the property's history, its owners and the building's lavish furnishings, including tapestries that date to the mid-1500s.

Take the 60-minute tour to learn how the Civil War impacted the property and to get information on Morven Park's 246 Years Project, which is dedicated to documenting and honoring enslaved men, women and children. (See sidebar.)

Just 10 miles farther south on Route 15, the gardens and buildings of Oatlands date to the early 19th century and provide another

glimpse of life during plantation-era Virginia. The gardens and grounds are open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and the Visitor Center and mansion will reopen for the season March 29.

No trip to western Loudoun County would be complete without a stop in Middleburg, known by many as America's "Horse and Hunt Capital." The scenery alone makes it worth the trip, with acres and acres of sprawling horse farms, split rail fencing and expansive estate homes.

ABOVE: Wild Hare Adventures near Philmont can host specialized theme parties, Alpaca Yoga or Alpaca picnics. Tours of the farm include meet-and-greets with the llamas and other farm animals.

LEFT: At Creek's Edge Winery in Taylorstown, the wines may get first billing, but the stunning architecture is a star in its own right. Check out the rustic tasting room, bridal loft and barrel room and then head outside to relax in Adirondack chairs that line the creek's edge.

~SEE NEXT PAGE~



SHUTTERSTOCK

Morven Park's 246 Years Project strives to collect the forgotten and missing histories of slaves for their ancestors.

FORGOTTEN NO MORE

BY KATE McDERMOTT

From 1619 to 1865, the millions of Africans who were held as slaves in the United States were considered the legal property of their owners. For their descendants, searches to learn more about their ancestors often hit a dead end, since as property, slaves' names were not included on most government records like census, birth and death registers.

Morven Park's 246 Years Project seeks to find the missing pieces of slaves' lives and ensure they are properly recorded and saved for future generations. By mining the archives of historic sites, community history organizations and local courts, the 246 Years Project will amass this information into a free, digital database to help slaves' descendants build their family trees and learn their history.

"The 246 Years Project has uncovered untold stories of strength, resilience and persistence, and we know there are thousands more," said Stacey Metcalfe, executive director/CEO of Morven Park. "The database provides a platform for truth-telling, memorialization and reconciliation for the millions of enslaved men, women and children whose names and life stories deserve to be known."

To learn more and donate to support the initiative, email 246Years@MorvenPark.org.



The original wood floors and cabinets of Nichols Hardware in Purcellville are a far cry from today's big-box home improvement stores. The store has been in continuous operation since 1914.

But since the closest I've ever gotten to riding a horse was the carousel at the county fair, I decided to check out the quaint shops and eateries of "downtown" Middleburg. Anchoring this approximately four-block stretch is the Red Fox Inn & Tavern. The property dates to 1728, but its menu is totally modern. I passed on a flight of caviar and instead opted for crispy roasted chicken with roasted pears, shallots and apples. If I thought I could have pulled it off with no one else noticing, I would have licked the plate clean.

Fully sated, it was time to call it a day. And there was no better place to do that than at the farm at Wild Hare Adventures in Purcellville. My accommodations were an entirely charming circa-1920 Sears, Roebuck & Co. kit house on the farm, complete with two bedrooms, a lovely porch and a fireplace. There were even two (literally) farm-fresh eggs in the fridge for breakfast.

But perhaps even better than the accommodations were my neighbors: 12 chickens, a rooster, two turkeys, Pumbaa the Pig (for the record, Timon was nowhere to be found) and eight alpacas.

Property owner Jeen-Marie Belson said the farm's long-necked residents are both curious and a curiosity. "They are great ambassadors and super-friendly. If they realize you have treats, they will be all in your business," she joked. The alpacas have proven to be such a hit that Belson hosts alpaca picnics (bring your own or she'll provide)



Purcellville's Bia Kitchen is a slice of the Emerald Isle in Purcellville.

and even alpaca yoga. "They won't climb on your back, but they will be right out there with you, watching what you're doing," Belson said.

As much as I hated to leave my new friends, it was time to do some more exploring. I headed west of Round Hill to Bear's Den in Bluemont, an official hiker hostel. With Bear's Den Rock at an elevation of 1,350 feet, this is a great place to get sweeping westward views of the Shenandoah Valley and Blue Ridge Mountains. It's also just steps from the infamous "roller coaster" section of the Appalachian Trail, where steep drops and



The charming cottage at Wild Hare Adventures farm features a stone fireplace, a fully equipped kitchen and two bedrooms.

~CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE~

inclines test the mettle of even the most experienced hikers. Being that I am neither—a hiker nor experienced—I chose to simply enjoy the views.

I then heard the siren call of consignment stores, so it was on to Purcellville. I scored big at Re-Love It and The Clothing Closet, but struck out at Another Turn Tack Shop, but only because I am not in need of a used horse saddle. The shop features both new and consigned goods and the staff was exceedingly hospitable despite my ignorance of the equestrian term “tack.”

As the terminus of the Washington and Old Dominion (W&OD) Trail, many cyclists refuel at Purcellville institutions such as Monk's BBQ or Magnolias at the Mill, but the lovely women at Another Turn Tack Shop suggested Bia Kitchen. This relative newcomer to Purcellville's dining scene features bar furnishings, millwork, art and light fixtures that were custom-crafted in Drogheda, Ireland. As for the food, well, let's say the house-made chips and Irish cheddar fondue demanded seconds.

North of Purcellville on state Route 287, the delightful village of Waterford, itself a National Historic Landmark, offers a walking tour of more than 20 properties that tell the story of this tiny little hamlet that seems almost unchanged from its 18th- and 19th-century roots.

I couldn't finish my swing through western Loudoun County without stopping at a winery. I chose



Former Virginia Gov. Westmoreland Davis and his wife Marguerite, who lived at Morven Park, graced the cover of *The Loudoun Times* in 1917.

Creek's Edge in Taylorstown, near Lovettsville. Located along Catoctin Creek, it's a great place to enjoy a picnic on the grass or a flight on the deck. Don't miss the sweeping spiral staircase that's housed in a silo with an interior that looks like the inside of a wine barrel.

With something for lovers of wine and whiskey, horses and history, antiques and agriculture, western Loudoun County is a great place to shed the winter blues and spring to life.



Kate McDermott is freelance writer living in Frederick, Maryland. She's the author of "From the Brink to Brilliant: The Revitalization of Downtown Frederick, Maryland" and a diehard travel enthusiast.

Catch These Events

If your day—or weekend—trip falls on any of the dates below, be sure to stop by these classic Loudoun County events.



SHUTTERSTOCK

Middleburg Spring Races

April 19, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

36800 Glenwood Park Lane

Virginia's oldest steeplechase, and one of the social events of the year, dates to 1911. Today's participants "Race to Give" to support local organizations, including Inova Health System, the National Sporting Library and Museum and the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation. Get more information and purchase tickets at middleburgspringraces.com.

Lovettsville Mayfest

May 17, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.,

11 Spring Farm Drive

Lovettsville's town green comes alive with family-friendly entertainment, activities and goods from local artisans and vendors. Everyone will enjoy playing the classic picnic games and the live music. See lovettsvilleva.gov/mayfest-2025.

18th Annual Western Loudoun Art & Studio Tour

June 6-8, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Take a free, self-guided driving tour through scenic western Loudoun County to see artists where they work, view live art demonstrations, and experience one-on-one interaction with professional and emerging artists. For details, visit wlast.org for details.

ON THE COVER:

Doukénie Winery, located in Hillsboro, is a farm winery set on 365 acres alongside the Blue Ridge Mountains.

CREDIT: ALAMY/DOUGLAS GRAHAM



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8 PM - MIDNIGHT
\$24 ADVANCE
\$29 AT THE GATE



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FRI, MAY 2 • 4 PM - 5:30 PM
The premier kids races in the area!
\$25 BY APR 1 • \$30 APR 2 - APR 27
\$35 APR 28 - MAY 4



80S DANCE PARTY

FRI, MAY 2 • 8 PM - MIDNIGHT
FEATURING
"THE DELOREANS"
\$34 ADVANCE | \$39 AT THE GATE



SPORTS BREAKFAST

SAT, MAY 3 • 8 AM - 11 AM
FEATURING
SPORTS CELEBRITIES
\$29 CHILD RES | \$44 ADULT RES
\$132 VIP EXPERIENCE



10-K RACE

SAT, MAY 3 • 8:30 AM
Enjoy the Festival, while running a 10K through downtown Winchester.
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\$50 APR 28 - MAY 4



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SAT, MAY 3 • 8 PM - MIDNIGHT
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4 Romantic

Things to Do This Spring

BY ELLYN WEXLER

Spring is the perfect time to explore Martinsburg in Berkeley County with your significant other. From nature trails to fine dining, here are five romantic experiences to enjoy this season.

1 Stroll through Yankauer Nature Preserve.

Reconnect with nature and each other at the Yankauer Nature Preserve. Take a leisurely walk through its vibrant spring wildflower trails and enjoy birdwatching at the dedicated stations amid the 104 acres of historic farmland. Overlooking the Potomac River, it's a serene spot for couples who love the outdoors.

438 Whiting's Neck Road, Martinsburg

681-252-1387

potomacaudubon.org (Search the preserve.)



WIL HERSHBERGER

2 Enjoy an out-of-town date night.

Start with a romantic dinner at Brix27, where you can enjoy delicious American cuisine and an extensive wine list. Then, catch a classic or contemporary film at Berkeley Plaza Theatre for an old-school date night.

Brix27:

131 N. Queen St., Martinsburg

304-616-1628

brix27.com

Berkeley Plaza Theatre 7:

267 Monroe St., Martinsburg

304-263-9303

www.berkeleytheatres7.com

Yankauer Nature Preserve is full of trails where you can revel in the natural beauty of springtime.



COURTESY BRIX27

Brix27's menu features dishes with locally sourced ingredients, and boasts a "snobbishly selected" wine list. And while the menu may rise to the level of fine dining, Brix27 likes to think of it as "fun dining."

3 Explore Queen Street's visual art.

Celebrate your shared love for art at two destinations on Queen Street. Visit the Queen Street Gallery's two spaces to browse an eclectic mix of local and international artwork and glass creations. Or, for a seasonal highlight, check out the 15th Annual Art and Earth Juried Exhibit at Berkeley Art Works, running from April 16 to June 14. This exhibit features art reflecting themes of nature, the environment and Earth Day, providing a thought-provoking and romantic art experience.

Queen Street Gallery:

213 N. Queen St., Martinsburg

304-263-9495

facebook.com/QueenStreetGallery

Berkeley Art Works:

116 N. Queen St., Martinsburg

304-620-7277

berkeleyartswv.org

4 Unwind and pamper yourselves.

Relax and rejuvenate with your partner at one of Berkeley County's spa destinations. Visit Touch of Grace Spa and Salt Cave for a calming session in their therapeutic salt cave or indulge in a couples' massage.

Alternatively, head to Serenity Day Spa & Salon for luxurious treatments like facials, body wraps, and massages tailored for couples. Both options

provide the perfect setting for relaxation and connection.

Touch of Grace Spa and Salt Cave:

970 Foxcroft Ave., Ste. 104, Martinsburg

304-263-3070

Serenity Day Spa & Salon:

226 N. Western Ave., Martinsburg

304-263-4200

serenitydayspa.salon



The Martinsburg Farmer's Market at the Martinsburg Roundhouse features fresh local produce.

Budget-Friendly Stops

BY ELLYN WEXLER

From its rich history and vibrant community to its stunning natural beauty, Berkeley County bursts with affordable events and attractions.

Whether you're browsing local markets, joining lively community celebrations, stepping back in time or embarking on a geocaching quest, this area promises budget-friendly adventures for everyone this season.

For that step back in time, visit the **General Adam Stephen House**, a historic site dating to the late 18th century. This free attraction offers self-guided tours that provide a glimpse into the life of Adam Stephen, the founder of Martinsburg and a Revolutionary War general. Explore the restored rooms and immerse yourself in the area's fascinating history. Call 304-267-4434.

Kick off your spring adventure at the **Martinsburg Farmer's Market**, located at the historic Martinsburg Roundhouse. Open Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. beginning April 19, the market features fresh produce, handmade goods and local treats. Soak in the lively atmosphere while

supporting local farmers and artisans. Admission is free, and shopping is optional!

Celebrate Earth Day April 19 at 10 a.m. with a special event hosted by the Martinsburg Farmer's Market at the Martinsburg Roundhouse at 100 E. Liberty St. The event will focus on environmental stewardship, with cleanup drives, tree planting and sustainability workshops. It's an engaging way to honor the planet while connecting with the community. For more information, visit roundhousewv.com/farmersmarket.

Berkeley County is recognized as the geocaching capital of the U.S., offering a vast network of geocaches for adventurers of all levels. This modern-day treasure hunt can be enjoyed in the county's parks, trails and historic sites, blending technology with outdoor exploration.

Geocaching is a fun, low-cost activity that's perfect for families, friends or solo explorers. The **Berkeley Gadgets GeoTour** features unique gadget caches created by renowned cache creator WVTim. For details, call the Martinsburg-Berkeley County Convention & Visitors Bureau at 304-264-8801.



SHUTTERSTOCK

3 Family-Friendly Places to Eat

BY ELLYN WEXLER

With mouthwatering comfort food and kid-friendly menus, these three restaurants stand out as family favorites in Berkeley County.

The Cider Press Restaurant

This deli offers a fresh twist on classic fare with creative sandwiches and fresh salads. The kids' menu caters to picky eaters. Cider Press features:

- Fresh, locally sourced ingredients
- Spacious outdoor seating
- Healthy options for both kids and adults

178 Pilgrim St., Inwood (inside Taylor's Farm Market)
304-400-6178
ciderpressdeliandgrill.com

Firebox 55

Why families love it:

- Kid-friendly menu: Firebox55 offers a variety of options that cater to children, including classic BBQ sandwiches, macaroni and cheese and fried chicken sandwiches.
- Family atmosphere: The welcoming, casual environment makes it a great spot for family meals and gatherings.
- Delicious sides and desserts: It offers crowd-pleasers like sweet potato fries, macaroni and cheese, and desserts like oatmeal cream.

Meridian Parkway, Suite 112, Martinsburg
304-262-5555
firebox55.com

Kitzie's Restaurant & Lounge

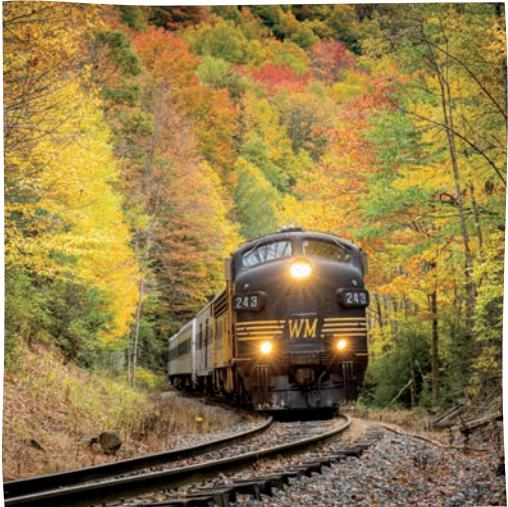
Kitzie's Restaurant & Lounge is a casual, family-friendly spot known for its generous portions. With a menu featuring hand-cut steaks, seafood and a variety of comfort food classics, there's something for everyone. The kids' menu includes options like cheeseburgers and chicken tenders, making it an easy choice for family outings. Families will love:

- More classic fare like burgers, chicken dishes and sandwiches
- Cozy, updated dining room
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1545 Rock Cliff Drive, Martinsburg
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kitziesrestaurant.com



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5 Fun Things to Do With Kids



LEESBURG FLOWER & GARDEN FESTIVAL

Check out the Garden Patch at this year's Leesburg Flower & Garden Festival for kid-friendly performances and activities.

BY ELIZABETH STINNETTE

1 Get out the wiggles at Up! Ultimate Adventure Park.

If your kids are itching to get outdoors, but there's still a nip in the spring air, the whole family will love Up! Ultimate Adventure Park in Ashburn. The facility's mix of 36 themed climbing walls (you can climb everything from the Empire State Building to Big Ben), zip line, ropes course, slides and arcade games provides active fun for all ages. In the adjacent lounge and café, you can monitor the fun and grab a snack or meal.

20051 Riverside Commons Plaza,
Ste. 136, Ashburn
703-547-4572
upultimateadventurepark.com

2 Grow your child's green thumb at the Leesburg Flower & Garden Festival.

Scheduled for April 26 and 27, this festival might be just the place to get your kids interested in gardening. It's free to visit, with local vendors selling plants and putting on landscaping displays. Children especially will enjoy the Garden Patch Family Area with crafts, and parents can enjoy the rooftop beer garden. The event kicks off at 10 a.m. both days.

Downtown Leesburg
leesburgva.gov (Search the festival.)



ELAINA FINKELSTEIN

With 17,000 square feet of amusement, including a rope course and massive cargo net, Up! Ultimate Adventure Park provides active fun for kids of every age.



THE SASSY ASS

Register to listen to a story time and meet miniature donkeys on April 12 at The Sassy Ass.

3 Meet miniature donkeys.

Founded by a miniature donkey enthusiast who got her first pet donkey at age 7, The Sassy Ass in Hillsboro provides visitors of all ages the chance to visit with, pet and learn about donkeys on a picturesque farm. It's open by appointment only; families are welcome to book private, hour-long encounters. Register for a special story time on April 12 to read with a donkey and get a book and coloring pages.

14010 Mountain Road, Hillsboro
571-251-0358
thesassyass.com

4 Frolic outdoors at Claude Moore Park.

With its 357 acres of meadows, wooded trails and ponds, Claude Moore Park is the perfect place to enjoy a gorgeous spring day. Bring a picnic, take a leisurely hike or challenge your family to scale the indoor climbing wall at the recreation center.

46105 Loudoun Park Lane, Sterling
571-258-3600
loudoun.gov/claudemoorepark

5 Dip into Purcellville's ice cream scene.

Purcellville is home to two iconic ice cream shops. As soon as the weather warms up, the classic Gruto's in downtown attracts a line of folks looking for their delicious brand of soft-serve treats and friendly service. Nearby, Tipped Cow Creamery offers a rotating mix of homemade ice cream and ice cream cakes.

Gruto's:
141 W. Main St., Purcellville
540-338-7276
Grutos.com

Tipped Cow Creamery:
251 N. 21st St., Purcellville
540-441-3835
Tippedcowcreamery.com

Loudoun County, Virginia

Trails to Hike or Bike



ABOVE: At Loudoun 1725 Gravel Grinder, to be held June 8, riders can explore Loudoun's historic gravel roads. RIGHT: At the new Sweet Run State Park, well-marked trails take hikers through 11 miles of beautiful countryside.

BY ELIZABETH STINNETTE

While Loudoun is famous for the Washington and Old Dominion (W&OD) Trail, a biking and walking trail that begins in Purcellville, the county is also home to several other excellent trails for your next adventure on foot or bike. If you're yearning to get outdoors this spring, check out these trails recommended by locals.

Loudoun's gravel back roads

Local enthusiasts swear by Loudoun's historic gravel roads for an unparalleled biking experience. Stretching more than 300 miles and dating to the 1700s, these roads are now dotted with large homes, picturesque farms and historic stone walls.

On June 8, join the Loudoun 1725 Gravel Grinder event in Middleburg for a chance to experience these western Loudoun roads on a preplanned route with rest stops. There are options to embark on a 40-, 60- or 80-mile route, with an optional post-ride meal. For more information, call 703-338-3965.

Sweet Run State Park

Opened in October 2023, Sweet Run State Park in Hillsboro is already winning acclaim for its lovely trails, which wind past the remains of a 19th-century farm com-

munity. Visitors will enjoy its 11 miles of hiking trails and 9 miles of equestrian trails, cross streams and beautiful mountain and forest views in this 884-acre park. Like most Virginia State Parks, there's a parking fee, but annual passes are available—and if you hold a Loudoun County library card, you may borrow a pass from any branch. To find out more, call 540-668-6230.

Red Rock Wilderness Overlook Regional Park

Looking for a gorgeous panorama of the Potomac River? With 67 acres and several trails, this little-known gem tucked on the edge of Leesburg provides an easy yet rewarding walk in the spring. Previously owned by a Loudoun industrialist in the 1800s, the area still features remains of several buildings. Winding nature trails lead to a raised overlook of the Potomac lined with trees on both sides. To begin your journey, call 703-779-9372.



SWEET RUN STATE PARK

Hit These Local Pubs

BY ELIZABETH STINNETTE

With Loudoun's vibrant wine and brewing scene, it's little wonder the county is home to some inviting pubs popular with locals.

1 Out west in Round Hill, **More Better** offers German-American fusion cuisine inspired by the owners' German background. They have a large selection of German beers on draft, as well as pet-friendly outdoor seating and weekly live music. Check out the menu at morebetterbeer.com.

2 If you're curious about the local music scene, **Spanky's Shenanigans** in Leesburg is the place to be. A favorite of locals, Spanky's is an Irish pub with an outdoor patio and live music on weekends. Get info on upcoming performers at spankyspub.com.

3 It's all in the name for **The Ashburn Pub**, a Loudoun staple since 1995 and the parent business of the newer The Purcellville Pub. The Ashburn sports bar hosts regular events, such as a karaoke night on the first Tuesday of the month, and sports a menu of homemade favorites. Find that menu and get more information at theashburnpub.com.



THE ASHBURN PUB

Enjoy delicious homemade pub fare and drinks at The Ashburn Pub, a favorite of Loudoun locals.

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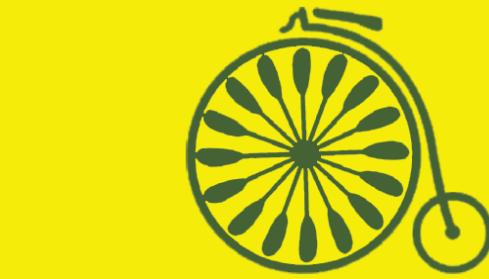
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5

Spring Outdoor Adventures

BY KATE McDERMOTT

Take advantage of the longer days and warmer temps to shop, smell and survey your way to adventure in Frederick County.

1 Key City Thrift Expo

Get thrifty at the inaugural Key City Thrift Expo. Bring your friends, reusable shopping bags and creativity as you scour the wares of more than 40 vendors April 6 from noon to 5 p.m. VIP early access is \$25 and includes one ticket for a beer from Olde Mother Brewing Co., and general admission is \$10. A \$5 Twilight Pass is good for 3 p.m. admission.

The Great Frederick Fairgrounds, Building 7
797 E. Patrick St., Frederick
301-624-1700

2 Bird watching nature outings

Nothing says spring like the return of the songbird (and other well-loved avians). The Audubon Society of Central Maryland will host free nature outings amid the 140 acres of trails and meadows of the Fred Archibald Wildlife Sanctuary in New Market April 19 and June 21 from 9 to 11 a.m. Survey the skies for spring migrants, including warblers, vireos, scarlet tanagers and Baltimore orioles.

6011 Boyers Mill Road, New Market
centralmdaudubon.org/events-2



3 America 250 History Fair

Join the Daughters and Sons of the American Revolution and the Frederick Historic Sites Consortium at noon April 27 for a free "Walk Through History." Exhibits from local history organizations, museums and reenactors will highlight the role that Maryland and Frederick County played in the birth and development of the United States.

Carroll Creek Linear Park, Downtown Frederick
301-606-8332

4 Lavender festival

Experience the aromatic allure of the 2025 Maryland Lavender Festival at Springfield Manor Winery Distillery Brewery June 21 and 22. Stroll through vibrant lavender fields, enjoy live music and explore artisan vendors. Between making bath salts or paint with watercolors, indulge in wine, beer or spirits, including the award-winning Lavender



CLARA NIEL

A couple wanders through the rows of lavender at the 2023 Maryland Lavender Festival.

Gin and Lavender Vodka. Plants, dried lavender and freshly cut lavender bundles will be available for purchase. Tickets must be bought in advance.

11836 Auburn Road, Thurmont
springfieldmanor.com/lavender-festival

5 Vintage Vehicles in the Valley

Check out a variety of classic cars, from Model A's and Model T's to muscle cars, hot rods, motorcycles and even tractors June 7 from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Vintage Vehicles in the Valley. Free to attend. Enjoy live music and vote for your favorites. There will even be an enclosed tricycle trek for the kiddos.

Behind Town Hall at 31 W. Main St., Middletown
301-371-6171
mainstreetmiddletown.org



MAIN STREET MIDDLETOWN, MD INC.
Check out classic cars in Middletown this June.

Fun After Dark: Popular Nightlife Spots

By KATE McDERMOTT

When the sun goes down, Frederick County's nightlife heats up with dancing, live music under the stars and even sporting activities.

X-Golf Frederick in the Westview Promenade in Frederick allows people to test their swing in high-tech golf simulators in between enjoying fresh food and drinks from Birdies Bar & Grill. But you don't have to be an aspiring golfer to compete. Play trivia or just cheer for your favorite team on their big-screen TVs.

X-Golf Frederick is open until 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday and is also available for private events. Learn more at xgolffrederick.com.

Touting itself as "Frederick's First Music-City Inspired Restaurant & Bar," **Bentztown** at 6 S. Bentz St. hosts line dancing every Wednesday night with Sharon Grimet of Sharon's School of Dance. The fun gets started at 7:30 p.m. and everyone from novices to enthusiasts can join the fun. If you'd prefer to just watch, you can always enjoy the music and sweet Southern fare.

There's a \$10 cover charge that includes your first beer, rail cocktail or soda. Visit bentztown.com.

From live music to literature readings, swing dancing to salsa, down-



FILE PHOTOS

town Frederick's award-winning **Sky Stage** continues to be a venue that lights up the night. Located at 59 S. Carroll St., Sky Stage has won national accolades for its creative reuse of a pre-Revolutionary War building that was damaged by fire in 2010. As the structure has no roof, it's literally a spot for entertainment under the stars.

The 2025 schedule will be updated as new performances are added. Visit skystagefrederick.com.



ABOVE: Sharon Grimet, left, of Sharon's School of Dance, and Gerald Roberts give instructions for a line dance during the debut line dancing class at Bentztown in January.

LEFT: Ana Powell prepares to swing at the ball while practicing in a bay at X-Golf Frederick.



FILE PHOTO

Kelly Craemer, left, and Abby Feuerherd paddle in a tube on the Potomac River in Point of Rocks last summer.

Where to Float Your Boat

By KATE McDERMOTT

Want to get out on the water this spring? Don your U.S. Coast Guard-approved life vest and check out these popular canoeing and kayaking spots in Frederick County.

Potomac River: The 6 miles of mild rapids and steady current of the Potomac River from the Brunswick Family Campground to Point of Rocks attracts lots of kayakers and tubers.

Monocacy River: The Monocacy River stretches from northern Frederick County to Dickerson in Montgomery County. Put in at any number of spots

along its 58-mile run, including the boat ramp at Pinecliff Park, to float through the Monocacy National Battlefield.

State Parks: Greenbrier and Cunningham Falls state parks each offer calm lakes ideal for canoeing. Greenbrier on South Mountain has a 42-acre man-made lake.

The lake at Cunningham Falls State Park is in its William Houck Area, about 3 miles west of Thurmont on Route 77. With rentals available at each site, both parks are great places for canoeing novices to get their feet wet.

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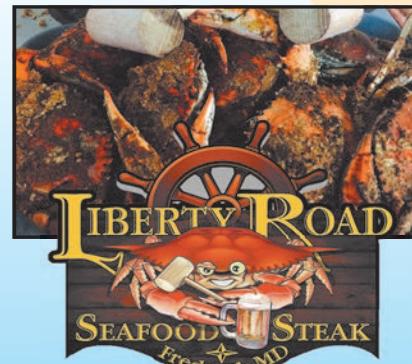
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Where to Go Birding



WIL HERSHBERGER

Looking good and down to warble, the Eastern bluebird is among the birds you'll find in the Jefferson area.

BY CHRIS SLATTERY

Some hobbies are complicated: There's equipment to buy, facilities to rent, supplies to stock up on, and a skill level to start from or achieve.

Then there's birding.

"You don't even need a pair of binoculars, honestly," said Katelyn "KC" Walters, the associate director of conservation and operations for the Potomac Valley Audubon Society (PVAS).

Walters' organization is a great place for anyone to begin their birding adventure in Jefferson County. They lead local bird walks at their own nature preserves as well as at locations like the USGS Eastern Ecological Science Center, which isn't open to the general public, and also can facilitate trips farther afield.

Once a birder is properly situated in Jefferson County, with its abundance of open water and preservation lands, the secret weapon for identifying feathered friends in their natural habitat is easy to access.

"As much as we'd like to get people away from screens, it's important to have your phone," said Walters. "Lugging around a bird book isn't that much fun; you can have information at your fingertips using birding ID apps."

She suggested the Merlin app, which helps identify different kinds of birds by listening to the sound they make. And she also warned that some days are better than others when it comes to birding; just about all of them hunker down for some nest rest when it rains, and songbirds go quiet on windy days. Bigger birds of prey, like ravens, vultures and hawks, however, like to go out in gusty weather. "You'll get some really cool acrobatics when it's windy," Walters promised.



WIL HERSHBERGER

The field sparrow is small in stature with a conical beak. It's known for the white rings around its eyes.



WIL HERSHBERGER

The American goldfinch is mostly active during the day. Its song sounds like "po-ta-to-chip," according to National Geographic.



POTOMAC VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

The blue dots on the map show popular birding spots in Jefferson County. The green dots are preserves owned and operated by the audobon society; they are typically more developed and have field trips and special events throughout the year.

Where to go? That's easy. "In Jefferson County, the Cool Spring Preserve is a birding hot spot," she said. "Great diversity, great migration."

With its 63 acres of forest, creek, meadow and marsh, the preserve offers experienced and amateur birders the opportunity to observe species that can't be found at a feeder or in a park.

Walters also recommended the "amazing" hay-strewn battlefields at Harper's Ferry, Shannondale

Springs Wildlife Management Area, and a handful of other areas, many on private or preserved property that's accessible only through PVAS bird walks. PVAS, Walters said, is "free and open to the public. "We have some amazing birders that love to share their adventures and their observations with others," she said. "That's why they do this."

For information on birding in Jefferson County, visit potomacaudubon.org.

5 Things for Families to Do

BY CHRIS SLATTERY

Wild, wonderful Jefferson County, West Virginia, is a popular place to immerse your family in the richness of both nature and history. With a variety of activities that cater to both educational pursuits and recreational enjoyment, it's ideal for families looking to explore and create lasting memories. So, pack up the family, a picnic—or an overnight bag—and head to any (or all) of these five destinations.

1 Heart of the trail: Harpers Ferry

Harpers Ferry National Historical Park offers views of three states—which is cool, but nothing compared to the beauty and history around every corner. This is where the abolitionist John Brown staged his famous raid in the run-up to the American Civil War, and it brings together history, recreation and nature at the confluence of the Shenandoah and Potomac rivers and the halfway point of the Appalachian Trail.

Harpers Ferry
304-535-6029
nps.gov/hafe

2 Friends in high places: River Riders Family Adventure Resort

Up in the canopy or right on the river, spring is the best time for an action-packed adventure. River Riders Family Adventure Resort offers white-or-flat-water tubing options plus rafting, kayaking, stand-up paddle and more. Or try zip lining through their 5-acre park, an aerial adventure with something for just about every age and adrenaline level.

408 Alstadt's Hill Road,
Harpers Ferry
304-535-2663
riverriders.com



River Riders will guide the whole family on a rafting or tubing trek in Harpers Ferry. They offer both white water and flat water excursions.

3 Old World wonder: Bavarian Inn Resort & Brewing Company

With its storybook charm and cascading infinity pool 101 feet above the Potomac, the Bavarian Inn is a must-see. The perfect base for outdoor adventuring, the inn has been a tradition in the county for 45 years. Today it offers not only accommodations, but also restaurants, and even a brewery.

164 Shepherd Grade Road,
Shepherdstown
304-876-2551
bavarianinnww.com

4 Between the lines: Books galore and a library, too!

The goal of the Shepherdstown Public Library is to inspire a lifelong love of reading and literacy in the kids who come through its doors, so you can always find programs there, from nature and STEM clubs to special story times and one-time special events.

Jefferson County also offers two fun, funky bookstores—Fuzzy Dog and The Four Seasons—with books for kids and grownups, too.

Shepherdstown Public Library:

145 Higbee Lane, Shepherdstown
304-876-2783
sheplibrary.org

Four Season Books:

114 W. German St.,
Shepherdstown
304-876-3486
fourseasonsbooks.com

Fuzzy Dog Books & Music:

201 E. Washington St.,

Charles Town

304-867-9321

fuzzydogbooks.com

5 Sport of the future: Disc golf at Sam Michaels Park

The legendary beauty of West Virginia lends itself perfectly to family fun, and the disc golf course at Sam Michaels Park, with its 15 targets in meadows, fields and wooded areas, lets everyone enjoy the outdoors together. It's easy to learn: Throw your flying disc or Frisbee from tee to target in as few moves as possible for the win.

Sam Michaels Park
235 Sam Michaels Lane,
Shenandoah Junction
304-728-3207

3 Spots to Eat With the Kids

BY CHRIS SLATTERY

When you're looking for the perfect picnic or the glory of country comfort food, visit these venues.

1 Battle Grounds Bakery & Coffee

For breakfast and lunch, grab a quick smoothie or substantial sandwiches made with natural ingredients on fresh-baked bread. Indulge in pastries, ice cream and smoothies, and check out the handmade local crafts for a true taste of small-town charm. Battle Grounds Bakery hits the spot whether you sit inside at the counter, outside on the patio, or pick up your order and head out into the countryside.

180 High St., Harpers Ferry

304-535-8583

battlegroundsbakery.com

2 Bolivar Bread Bakery

In the little town of Bolivar, this woman-owned, small-batch, artisanal bakery serves up Wild and Wonderful Sourdough, maple butter biscuits and breads and pastries that change with the seasons. Watch the bakers in action, order up cinnamon buns and coffee to go, and take your picnic basket to the next level.

914 Washington St., Harpers Ferry

304-535-8108

bolivarbread.com

3 Bistro 112

In a quirky historic home with a lovely outdoor garden, you'll find elevated-yet-accessible delights like French onion soup and steak frites, as well as soups, sandwiches, desserts and take-out selections. The kids' menu at Bistro 112 goes from peanut butter and jelly to salmon, with lots of good stuff in between. Bon appetit!

112 W. German St., Shepherdstown

304-876-8477

bistro112.com



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301 W. Washington St., Charles Town, WV 25414
304-500-4325 | hello@gotohealing.com



5 Sunny-Day Excursions

BY TABITHA REEVES

1 Break out the skateboard at Jim Barnett Park.

A recent addition at Jim Barnett Park is a skate park featuring obstacles for skaters of all experience levels, which is typically open daily during daylight hours. While you're there and on the hunt for activities, you could also stop by the disc golf course, pickleball courts or Wilkins Lake for fishing.

1001 E. Cork St., Winchester
winchesterva.gov (Search for the park.)

2 Fly kites at the annual Kite Fest.

Go fly a kite at Kite Fest at the Historic Kernstown Battlefield. It will be held April 13 from 1 to 4 p.m., and there will be an egg hunt, too.

610 Battle Park Drive, Winchester
fcva.us (Search the event.)

3 Take an art walk at the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley.

The Museum of the Shenandoah Valley is home to a 90-acre art park where the experience of an art gallery and outdoor hike collide. The trails are free to visit and are open 7 a.m. to dusk. The property also features 7 acres of gardens, which you can experience in bloom this spring with tickets that are \$12 per adult, but less for seniors and youth.

901 Amherst St., Winchester
themsv.org

4 Browse boutiques and dine alfresco downtown.

Looking to soak up the weather and perhaps do a little shopping and grab a bite to eat? Try a day focused on the Loudoun Street Mall in historic Old Town Winchester. Once you've shopped to your heart's content and dined outdoors, you can check out the Shenandoah Valley Civil War Museum. Visit shenandoahatwar.org. Check out visitwinchester.va.com for more about downtown Winchester.

5 Explore farm markets.

For another indoor-outdoor adventure, follow a farm trail of 10 Frederick County farm markets. Some specialize in apples and peaches, while others offer meats, honey and more. To kick off the trek, visit one the stops and snag a passport. Earning stamps from each farmer means



FILE PHOTO

Downtown Winchester's Loudoun Street Mall, which boasts numerous shops, restaurants and other attractions, is the perfect destination for a springtime outing.



SHUTTERSTOCK

Fly your kite with fellow enthusiasts this April at Kite Fest in Winchester.

winning a prize at the Winchester-Frederick County Visitors Center.

Visitors Center
1400 S. Pleasant Valley Road, Winchester
thefarmexplorer.com



FILE PHOTO

Willow Hollifield of Front Royal tries out the skate park at Winchester's Jim Barnett Park.

Frederick County & Winchester, Virginia



JEFF TAYLOR

Atlantic Aesthetic performs at the Bright Box Theater in downtown Winchester.

Where to Catch Live Music

BY TABITHA REEVES

The Winchester-area music scene has flourished over the years and produced greats like country music legend Patsy Cline. Today, there are still many places — some tucked away and some well-known — to catch live music from big names and rising artists alike.

To see a performer in a concert-like setting — and one who may be a bit more well-known — **Bright Box Theater** and **The Monument** are two venues to hit. Both are located on the Loudoun Street Mall and regularly book local, regional and national talents. Tickets sometimes need to be purchased in advance. To learn more, visit brightboxwinchester.com and themonumentva.com.

You also can check out bar, restaurant and winery settings for live sets. **Blue Fox Billiards** at 1160 Millwood Pike is a full-service restaurant with American cuisine and a bar that hosts DJs and live music multiple nights a week. Another Frederick County stop, **Backseat Bar and Grill** at 104 Full House Drive near Winchester, often showcases acoustic acts. For a more upscale venue, visit **Valerie Hill Vineyard and Winery** at 1687 Marlboro Road near Stephens City. It

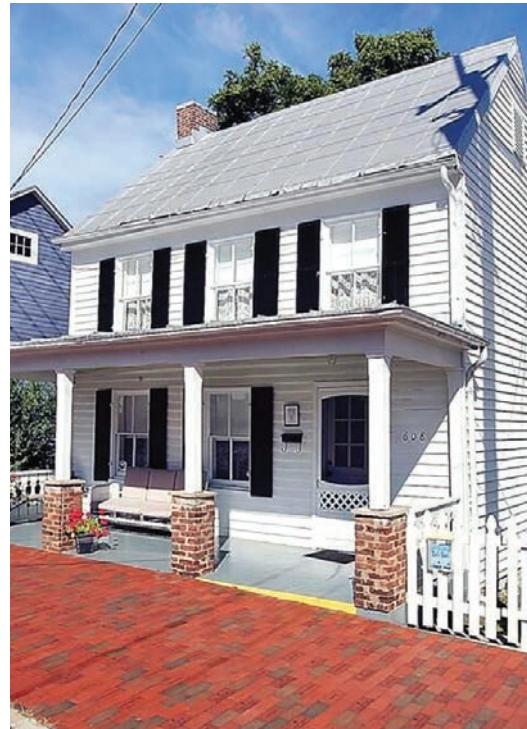


JEFF TAYLOR
The Monument on the Loudoun Street Mall in downtown Winchester offers live entertainment.

features live music on weekends year-round, both indoors and outdoors depending on the season. To learn more, visit bluefoxbilliards.com, backseatbargrill.com and valeriehillwinery.com.

Plus, there's **Shenandoah Conservatory** at Shenandoah University in Winchester that offers a variety of concerts and other performances. Find an events calendar of all the area has to offer at visitwinchesterva.com.

Explore These 3 Historic Spots



FILE PHOTO

If you love Patsy Cline, you'll want to visit the Patsy Cline Historic House at 608 S. Kent St. in Winchester.

BY TABITHA REEVES

1 Belle Grove Plantation

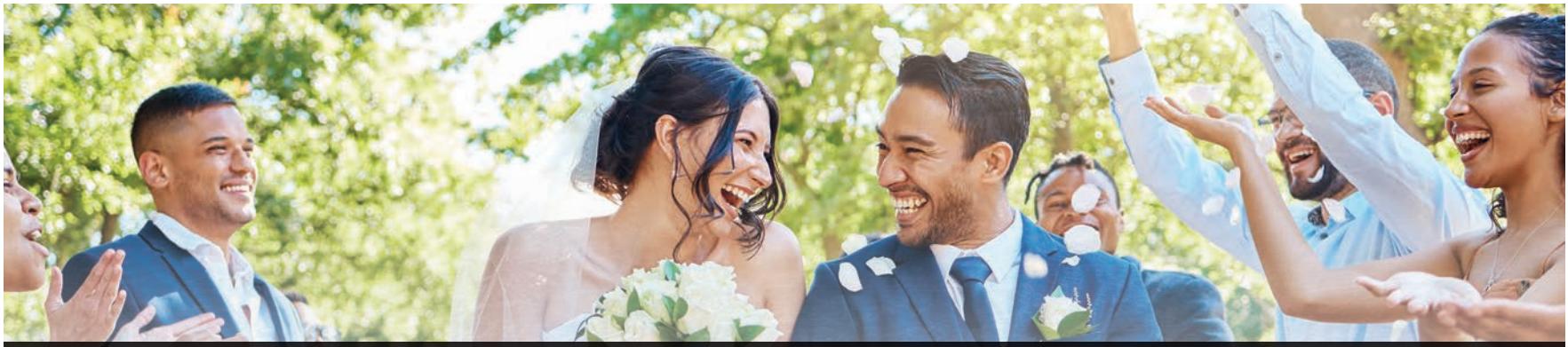
Belle Grove Plantation is a historic property at 336 Belle Grove Road near Middletown that was once owned by James Madison's sister and her husband. It was scheduled to reopen for tours earlier in March, with guests welcome to walk the property and the trails, too. Visit bellegrove.org.

2 Rose Hill Park

Rose Hill Park at 1871 Jones Road near Winchester is the site of the First Battle of Kernstown, a Civil War clash that occurred in March 1862. It's open to guests for free every day except Christmas. To find out more, visit thems.org/rose-hill.

3 Patsy Cline Historic House

The Patsy Cline Historic House at 608 S. Kent St., Winchester, is the former home of country music legend Patsy Cline. The museum opens for the season on April 1, offering guided tours. Learn more about Cline and the home at celebrating-patsy-cline-inc.square.site.



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5 Places for Educational Fun



VISIT HAGERSTOWN

Tour authentic 19th-century cabins at the Washington County Rural Heritage Museum's open-air village.

BY ELIZABETH STINNETTE

1 STEM out at the Discovery Center.

Branding itself as more than a museum, Hagerstown's Discovery Center boasts two floors of interactive exhibits. Kid-friendly hits include a model of the Titanic and a play kitchen and grocery store that encourage science, math and engineering play. On the last Sunday of every month, the museum opens for a sensory-friendly experience.

101 W. Washington St., Hagerstown
301-790-0076
discoverystation.org

2 Explore a little-known corner of World War II history at Ritchie History Museum.

When the military needed counterintelligence officials and interrogators during World War II, they trained them at the quiet Camp Ritchie. The base, which also housed German and Italian POWs, was decommissioned in 1998. Today, learn about this little-known yet important chapter of American history by taking a walking tour of the grounds. Be sure to visit the picturesque "Castle" with turrets made of green granite, as well as the on-site museum.

14319 Barrack Ave., Cascade
301-781-7740
ritchiemuseum.org

3 Admire and learn about classic art for free!

With a permanent collection of more than 6,500 items stretching from the Renaissance to modern times, the Washington County Museum of Fine Arts provides art lovers and novices alike the chance to view a wide variety of artistic styles



SCOTT CANTNER

The "Castle," built in 1927 as a National Guard headquarters, is among the historic sites at Camp Ritchie.



VISIT HAGERSTOWN

Two floors of science, technology, engineering, art and math fun await at Hagerstown's Discovery Center.

for free. This spring, regional artists will display their copies of the museum's most valued pieces.

Washington County Museum of Fine Arts
401 Museum Drive, Hagerstown
301-739-5727
wcmfa.org

4 Time travel through Maryland's history.

With an expansive, open-air village depicting rural Maryland history between 1661 and 1940, as

well as museums dedicated to transportation, farming and home life, the Washington County Rural Heritage Museum offers a fascinating, hands-on experience for all ages. Families will want to check out the museum's annual spring potato planting, when children can learn how farmers planted potatoes by hand. Closed for the winter, the museum will reopen April 5.

Washington County Rural Heritage Museum
7131 Sharpsburg Pike, Boonsboro
240-420-1714
ruralheritagemuseum.org/19th-century-historic-village

5 Tour the home of Hagerstown's founder.

In 1739, John Hager settled in what is now Hagerstown and built a spacious home out of uncut fieldstone for his German bride. Today, view the home's historic furniture and artifacts to get a sense of the region's German and colonial heritage at the Jonathan Hager House Museum.

110 Key St., Hagerstown
301-739-8577 x 170
hagerstownmd.org [Search the museum.]

Washington County, Maryland

3 PLACES TO VISIT ON A BUDGET

IF you want an adventure without breaking the bank during your trip to Washington County, visit these spots that offer fun options for all ages. First up, view the night sky anew at the **William Brish Planetarium** in Hagerstown, shown here. On the second and fourth Tuesday of the month, they present two entertaining and educational shows inside a full-dome planetarium. Tickets go for \$3.50 for adults and \$2.50 for children. Check out upcoming shows at wbplanetarium.weebly.com.

At **Fort Frederick State Park**, experience three centuries of history at a stone fort built during the French and Indian War and restored to look as it did in 1758. The park, which only charges a parking fee of \$3 for Maryland residents and \$5 for out-of-state visitors, offers several self-guided walking tours. Outdoor enthusiasts will enjoy the camping, hiking and boating opportunities. For information on special events such as reenactments, visit dnr.maryland.gov and search for the park.

Hungry after your adventures? Visit the **Dog House Bar and Grill** in Hagerstown, known for its inexpensive yet delicious "gourmet" hot dogs, hamburgers and other American comfort food. Most entrees are under \$10. Check out their Facebook page at [facebook.com/Thedoghousehagerstown](https://www.facebook.com/Thedoghousehagerstown).

—Elizabeth Stinnette

JOSEPH COPENHAVER

Don't Miss These Spring Festivals

BY ELIZABETH STINNETTE

From lively festivals to historic traditions, Washington County offers a season full of exciting events. If you're in the area, be sure to check out these two.

Hunt for a deal at the National Road Yard Sale Festival.

Stretching from Baltimore, Maryland, to St. Louis, Missouri, the National Road Yard Sale Festival is a chance to indulge your inner treasure hunter. Locals sell antiques, collectibles, furniture and even treats along Route 40, Maryland's longest primary U.S. highway. Along the Washington County stretch, community events take place on Friday

and Saturday. This year, the sale will run from May 28 to June 1. Find out more by calling 765-987-7565.

Roll out to the National Pike Festival.

Long before prairie schooners and the Oregon Trail, Maryland's Baltimore-National Pike was part of one of America's first trails West. May 16 to 18, celebrate this history by watching a wagon train of restored wagons and majestic Belgian draft horses roll from Clear Spring to Boonsboro. Along the way, visit reenactments like a wagon camp and historical demonstrations of activities like blacksmithing and spinning. Call 540-303-3083.



NATIONAL PIKE FESTIVAL
Wagons ho! Delve into historical reenactments and watch a real wagon train go by at the National Pike Festival, to be held May 16-18.

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Shepherdstown Community Club

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MAY 17TH & 18TH
BACK ALLEY TOUR AND TEA
There will be an art show and tea party at the War Memorial Building. Guests do a self guided walking tour of 15-20 gardens, enjoying all the history and whimsical nooks and crannies of an old town.

SCAN FOR
MORE INFO

ORDER TICKETS
HERE

For more
information contact
304-995-6689
ShepherdstownCC.org

4 Events to Check Out This Spring

BY JENNIFER FITCH

1 Commemorate V-E Day.

When the Gettysburg Film Festival opens Thursday, May 8, renowned filmmaker Ken Burns will pay tribute to the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe (V-E) Day. This year's festival will focus on the legacy of World War II and runs through May 11.

"In the heart of Gettysburg, where Lincoln vowed that democracy 'shall not perish from the earth' and Eisenhower returned from war to find a home, we'll come together to share stories of courage, sacrifice, and the enduring fight for freedom," proclaims the festival's website.

Panel discussions are being scheduled to elevate voices of veterans, filmmakers, public figures and historians. The lasting impact of World War II is expected to be a major theme.

Tickets often sell out for the festival's events (held at various locations), so plan to purchase them in advance.

717-334-4723 Ext. 101
GettysburgFilmFestival.org

2 See who can stay afloat at the cardboard boat regatta.

Teams piloting homemade cardboard boats take the Cross Keys Village's annual regatta very seriously every year as they compete for titles like "fastest" and "best in show."

On Friday, June 6, teams will race around Cross Keys Village's pond in vessels built from cardboard and tape. The big question is how many of those boats will actually navigate the entire course without disassembling. The regatta draws hundreds of spectators and will start at 1:30 p.m.

2990 Carlisle Pike, New Oxford
717-624-5208
crosskeysvillage.org/blog/events

3 Reel in the big one.

The Pennsylvania Fish and



CROSS KEYS VILLAGE

Behold folks who've carefully crafted cardboard boats attempt to stay afloat at this year's Cardboard Boat Regatta at Cross Keys Village in early June.



Boat Commission will host its Mentored Youth Trout Day on Saturday, March 29, from 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Youth anglers joined by a licensed adult angler may take two trout with a minimum length of 7 inches. The mentored youth permit for those under age 16 is free.

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission stocks more than 3 million adult trout every year. Mentored Youth Trout Day applies to waterways across Pennsylvania. See the commission's website for info on how to get the free youth permit. fishandboat.com

4 Shop local during Market on the Square.

New Oxford's 69th annual Market on the Square is planned for Saturday, June 21, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Visitors will find locally made art, antiques, produce, décor, baked goods, canned goods, primitives and more. Food trucks will line Carlisle Street. Admission is free.

Volunteers give their time to keep the community spirit alive and help the more than 140 vendors make connections with shoppers.

Parking is available on the streets, at New Oxford Elementary School, and, for a donation, at First Evangelical Lutheran Church. The event is family-friendly, so don't hesitate to bring the kids.

27 Center Square, New Oxford
717-624-2800
newoxford.org/market-on-the-square

LGBTQ+-Friendly Things to Do This Season

BY JENNIFER FITCH

For members of the LGBTQ+ community and their allies, the **ninth annual Gettysburg Pride Fest** (gettysburgpride.org) is the place to be May 30 to June 1. Past festivals have featured dance parties, drag shows, discussion panels, yoga and cabaret sessions. Dozens of vendors will have giveaways and goods for sale on Lincoln Square and Carlisle Street that Saturday, May 31.

Waldo's & Co., a queer-run artist space and coffee bar, will host an all-ages dance party to mark Pride. The organization moved into its makers' space at 17 Lincoln Square in 2015. Artists use the facility for its dark room, ceramics studio, print shop and other offerings. A survey of Waldo's & Co. users found that 60% of them self-identify as queer, Waldo's reported.

"I'm excited what we do as a space is give artists of all income levels access to equipment they used in high school and college. I think fringe folks are really drawn to creative spaces," Waldo's Creative Director Christopher Lauer said.

Waldo's & Co. hosts a gallery opening the first Friday every month and open mic night the last Friday of every month, along with other events like concerts.

Art sales and the coffee roasted on-site help subsidize artists' memberships to the workspace.

Lauer expressed enthusiasm over how Gettysburg has undergone a cultural shift in the past couple of decades to become a destination for activities, shopping, theater and music. "It has become this cute, cultural haven."

According to Pride Fest organizers, small businesses that are supporters of pride causes include:

- Gettysburg Community Theatre (stage shows)
- A&A Village Treasures (clothing boutique, bath and body, etc.)
- Lark (candles, jewelry, perfume)
- Nerd Herd (gifts and games)
- Olinger House (bed and breakfast)
- One Lincoln (restaurant in Hotel Gettysburg)
- Sign of the Buck (restaurant)
- Union Hotel (hotel and restaurant)



GETTYSBURG PRIDE INC.

Poison, Forever Miss Gay Pennsylvania America, performs at Gettysburg Pride Fest in 2022.

Where to Savor the Flavors of Classic Bites

BY JENNIFER FITCH

Adams County offers cuisine for every palate, even those of its youngest visitors.

Tommy's Pizza on Steinwehr Avenue is essentially a Gettysburg institution. Run by the same family since 1973, they offer gyros along with pizza, wings, subs and stromboli. Wash down your meal with one of their craft beers. Call 717-334-8966 or visit tommyspizzainc.com.

The Lincoln Diner on Carlisle Street in the heart of downtown Gettysburg is marking its 70th year. It was refurbished in the late 1990s to carry a 1950s aesthetic.

The traditional diner menu includes all-day breakfast options from 7 a.m. through 9 p.m., but

lunch and dinner fare are, of course, also served. Plus, check out their "Overnight-Breakfast" menu. You'll never go hungry at The Lincoln. For more information, call 717-334-3900 or visit thelincolndiner.com.

Appalachian Brewing Co.'s Gettysburg Brew Pub on Steinwehr Avenue has a beer garden for adults, and its quesadillas, burgers and specialty root beer are a hit with the younger crowd. In good weather, enjoy patio seating, and sidle up to the old-timey walk-up beer- and soda-window to collect your beverages. In a rush? You can order food for takeout through their website. Learn more at abcbrew.com/Gettysburg, or call 717-334-2200.



TOMMY'S PIZZA
Tommy's Pizza owners Wade and Drew Leedy stand in front of the restaurant their grandfather Tommy Kranias founded in 1973.

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Upcoming Events ▶ May 3rd Community Barn Yard Sale contact Amy to RSVP a free table
June 14th Benefit Horse Show

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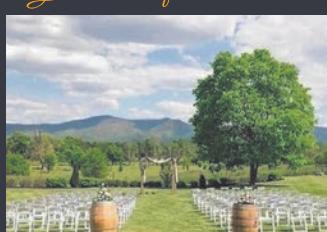
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Discover the limestone caves in Luray Caverns.

KAT STORMER

Bad Weather? No Problem!

BY GABRIELE PAONESSA

Formed in 1831, Page County is set between the Blue Ridge and Massanutten mountains and is part of the greater Shenandoah Valley. Located about 90 miles west of Washington, D.C., Page County is close enough for the perfect day trip.

Each town in Page County has a variety of outdoor activities to offer visitors, but when the weather turns bad, they can head to these indoor attractions.

Shop the shops

Spend the afternoon on Main Street in Luray, shopping in boutique shops like the Virginia Gift Shop or Nest and Hive. If antiques are more your style, check out Momma's Treasures. Are you a bookworm? Head to Bank Street Books to grab a book to read in the not-so-nice weather.

If you choose to venture to the town of Stanley, check out The Coffee Shop. Continuing your way through Page County, shop at the Shenandoah General Store.

Nature's subterranean limestone masterpiece

Looking for more of an adventure? Venture beneath the surface to explore the wondrous depths



This railroad town is on display at the town of Shenandoah Museum — and it lights up at night.

of Luray Caverns, the largest caverns in the eastern United States. Discovered by intrepid explorers in the 19th century, these subterranean marvels have captivated visitors for generations. As you traverse the labyrinthine passages illuminated by softly glowing lights, you'll be greeted by a breathtaking array of stone formations. From towering columns to delicate draperies, each chamber holds a spectacle waiting to be unveiled.

The journey through Luray Caverns culminates with visits to the Car & Carriage Caravan Museum, Shenandoah Heritage Village, and Toy Town

Junction, offering a comprehensive glimpse into the region's cultural heritage.

Railway history museums

Page County has two museums showcasing the local history on the railroad. The historic Shenandoah Milling Company building houses the town of Shenandoah Museum and Welcome Center, offering a captivating glimpse into the region's railroad heritage.

From the bustling railyard of yesteryear to the iconic USS Shenandoah, each exhibit pays homage to the town's storied past. In the restored Norfolk & Western Depot, the Page County Railway Museum stands as a testament to the region's deep-rooted connection to the railroad.

After more than a decade of meticulous restoration efforts, the museum now boasts exhibits tracing the evolution of railroading in Page County. From vintage tickets to dining car memorabilia, visitors can immerse themselves in the bygone era of steam locomotives and iron rails. A highlight of the museum is the scale layout of the Norfolk & Western through Page County, meticulously crafted by the dedicated members of the Page County Railroad Club.

4 Festive Spring Events

BY GABRIELE PAONESSA

1 Ring in spring.

The town of Stanley Spring Festival will be held April 19 at Ed Good Memorial Park, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. This annual event will host a number of crafters and vendors and food trucks, one of which will feature a town of Stanley favorite: Elephant Ears.

The Ed Good Memorial park has a huge playground and skate park for the kids to enjoy, along with bounce houses and face painting. The town of Stanley Spring Festival is a day for the community to come together after the long winter and enjoy some family fun.

332 E. Main St., Stanley
540-778-3454

2 Hunt for eggs.

Free Community Easter Egg Hunt will be held April 19 in Big Gem Park, starting at 1 p.m. This event is sponsored by the Christ United Methodist Community Focus Group. This year the community group will hide 2,000 eggs (1,000 will be filled with candy, and 1,000 will be filled with toys), and ring pop candies will be hidden separately.

This event has taken place for over five years and each year it gets larger. Free Community Easter Egg Hunt is for ages 2 to 12, and about 200 children participated last year. There will be areas in the park designated for certain age groups to hunt for the Easter eggs.

This year's event will provide pizza and water, thanks to an anonymous community donor. A raffle drawing for a \$50 gift card to Rudy's Diner will also take place. Participants have been asked to bring their own Easter baskets to store the eggs they collect.

736 Fourth St., Shenandoah
Vicki Breedan, 540-652-8890

3 Join a fishing tournament.

The fifth annual Stanley Volun-



GABRIELE PAONESSA

Boy Scout Troop 8 retires old tattered flags in a retirement ceremony during the town of Shenandoah's Memorial Day Celebration.

teer Fire Department and Luray Boy Scouts Troop #100 Annual Trout Fishing Tournament will be held along the Hawksbill Greenway in Luray May 3 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. This annual event has raised money to help the Stanley Volunteer Fire Department purchase fire equipment, tools and other lifesaving equipment for the department's use. The Trout Tournament has also helped raise money that will send the Boy Scouts to camp and help them build life skills. Over the last few years, there have been entries into the Annual Trout Fishing Tournament from all over the state of Virginia and three other states, making it a perfect time for family and friends to be together.

North Broad & Mechanic streets, Luray
Search Facebook for the event.

4 Celebrate Memorial Day.

The 28th annual Memorial Day Festival will be held in Shenandoah May 23 and 24. The two-day affair will feature a number of different events. Friday night will start with a Cruz-in

on First Street from 6 to 9 p.m. All makes, models and years are welcome with no registration fees. The evening will also feature the annual Flag Retirement ceremony performed by Boy Scout Troop 8 at Veterans Park, 205 Virginia Ave., Shenandoah, starting at 7 p.m. The following morning, join the Memorial Walk and/or the Memorial Service, both hosted at the VFW, Post 8613 Avis O. Comer, 1103 Varina Ave., Shenandoah.

The entire day can be spent shopping at the yard sale, book sale, and craft show; petting the zoo animals at Shenandoah Landing and River Park; browsing the car, truck and tractor show; or enjoying the motorcycle cruise. The whole day leads up to both the Children's Parade at the Shenandoah Landing and River Park at 1 p.m., where the children can walk the track decked out in their most patriotic finery, and the Memorial Day Parade, an old-fashioned parade from 4 to 5 p.m.

Brenda Haggett, 540-742-4081
efgva@yahoo.com

3 PLACES TO EAT WITH KIDS

BY GABRIELE PAONESSA

1

Blue's Dog Bowl - Patrons can choose either ground beef or ground chicken with a choice of toppings to create their custom smash burger. A smash burger is a burger that is made by smashing the ground meat onto the grill with a spatula. Smashing the burger results in a sear on the outside of the meat, which locks in juices and flavor. Try one of Blue's already set smash burgers like Buffalo Ranch Ground Chicken Smasher or Jalapeno Pepper Jack Smasher. Don't forget to get a side of either regular or loaded fries with your smash burger. During the heat of the day, enjoy an ice cream bar or ice cream sandwich. Open Friday to Sunday.

622 W. Main St. Luray
540-300-1816

2

Ciro's Pizza - Ciro's offers homemade pasta, a relaxing family atmosphere, and maybe the most popular pizza in the Town of Stanley. Their menu consists of a wide variety of pizza, pasta, and hot or cold subs. There is a spacious dining room for you, your family, and friends. The food and service are always great, and Ciro works hard to keep their prices reasonable. Open Tuesday to Sunday.

558 D W. Main St., Stanley
540-778-1112

3

Rudy's Diner - Serving breakfast, lunch, and dinner seven days a week, Rudy's offers daily specials, hand-cut fries, homemade desserts, and much more. Check out their Fireman theme as they are owned and operated by local firemen. Their home-cooked meals are tough to beat and prices are very reasonable. Open daily.

418 N. 5th St., Shenandoah
540-652-2002



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Clarke County, Virginia

5 Must-See Historic Sites

Clarke County's rolling countryside is seen from Long Branch Historic House and Farm in Millwood.



JEFF TAYLOR

BY TABITHA REEVES

From a 19th-century schoolhouse for African American children to a centuries-old farm, the town of Berryville and Clarke County are rich in educational stops for history lovers. Here are five destinations to check out.

1 The Josephine School Community Museum

It was built in 1882 by former enslaved people and free Black people as a place to educate their children. In the years since, it has become the region's first museum devoted to local African American history. It's open to visitors on Sunday from 1 to 3 p.m.

303 Josephine St., Berryville
jschoolmuseum.org

2 Burwell-Morgan Mill was built in 1785 and once produced more than 300,000 pounds of flour and meal per year. It opens for the season in May, welcoming visitors for demonstrations. A meadow next to the mill is open for year-round walks and picnics.

15 Tannery Lane, Millwood
clarkeh历史.org/mill

3 Long Branch Historic House and Farm is situated on about 400 acres of rolling countryside, with a two-story mansion that was built in 1811.



The 360-acre Clermont Farm is located on East Main Street in Berryville.

Located near the village of Millwood, it's open from dawn to dusk for strolling, biking and picnicking on the grounds. Tours of the mansion occur daily.

830 Long Branch Lane, Boyce
visitlongbranch.org

4 Clermont Farm, once surveyed by an 18-year-old George Washington in 1750, is a centuries-old working farm and an agricultural research site with multiple historical buildings across 360 acres. Clermont hosts events throughout the year and is open for tours by appointment.

151 Clermont Lane, Berryville
clermontfarm.org



COURTESY PHOTO

5 Locke's Mill is a historic grist mill in Clarke County. It's restored and operational.

5 Locke's Mill is a colonial-era grist mill along the Shenandoah River that opens for the season each March. The milling industry once flourished in Clarke County due to the river and limestone soils. Locke's Mill — a restored, operational mill — is a remnant of that time. It's open the first and third Saturday of the month.

1600 Locke's Mill Road, Berryville
lockesmillgrains.com

Shop Till You Drop at This Spring Market Trifecta

BY TABITHA REEVES

1 The Big Flea

Who says April is too soon to Christmas shop? With vendors that fill downtown Berryville with tents and tables, The Big Flea offers a multitude of items — for Christmas, Mother's Day and more. Last fall, more than 160 artisans, craftspeople and collectors participated in this semi-annual gigantic flea market. The spring 2025 iteration of The Big Flea will be held April 12 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. The rain date is the following Saturday. To learn more, visit experienceclarkecounty.com and search for The Big Flea.

2 Mother's Day Garden Fair

From bonsai trees to botanical skin products, the annual Mother's Day Garden Fair at Blandy Experimental Farm in Clarke County is a popular tradition for plant lovers. It's always held on Mother's Day weekend, which is May 10 and 11 this year. That makes the event a great place to snag a last-minute gift for mom, or a perfect outing with your

mom on Mother's Day. In addition to plant and garden-related vendors from around the region — offering perennials, annuals, vegetables, herbs, small trees, shrubs, berry bushes and more — you'll also find food vendors, live music and garden experts. Visit experienceclarkecounty.com and search for the fair.

3 Luckett's Spring Market

If vintage is your vibe, get excited for The Luckett's Spring Market. It's an annual affair at the Clarke County Fairgrounds, set this year for May 16 to 18. About 200 "vintage hip" vendors on the East Coast will sell furniture, home decor, clothing, jewelry and more, with styles ranging from American farmhouse and European country to mid-century modern. Live bands, a play area for kids, food trucks and a beer garden will add to the fun. General admission tickets for one-day entry are available at the gate, and three-day, extended-hours tickets are available online in advance. Learn more at luckettsmarkets.com.



FILE PHOTO

Blandy Experimental Farm's Garden Fair is held over Mother's Day weekend.



MICKEY POWELL

The Big Flea in downtown Berryville last year

Have Fun on a Budget

Looking for an outing that pleases the senses as well as the wallet? There are lots of budget-friendly options in Clarke County for your next day trip.

First, consider the world's longest hiking-only footpath: **The Appalachian Trail**. About 22 miles of it — the "Roller Coaster" section — cut through Clarke. Hike options vary in difficulty, each featuring gorgeous views of the Shenandoah Valley. Visit experienceclarkecounty.com.

Another outdoorsy experience with fewer hills involved is **Blandy Experimental Farm** near the town of Boyce. The 712-acre property is a hot spot for bird-watching, photography and picnics. It's free to enter and explore, with restrooms available on site. Visit blandy.virginia.edu.

Though buds and blooms make spring a season for relishing nature, April's showers are inevitable. The exhibits at the Barns of Rose Hill in the town of Berryville are indoors and free to visit. Barns of Rose Hill is open Tuesday through Saturday from noon to 3 p.m. Visit barnsofroseg hill.org/exhibits.

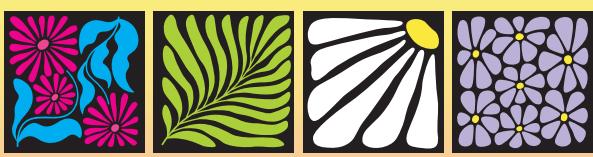
— Tabitha Reeves



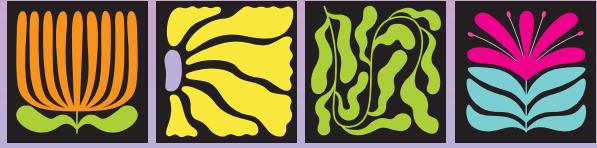
JEFF TAYLOR

A visitor explores Blandy Experimental Farm in Clarke County.

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5 Activities That Won't Bust Your Budget

BY JILLIAN ABBALLE

Spring is the perfect time to explore Hardy County, with its beautiful landscapes and activities that won't break the bank. Here are five budget-friendly places to visit to make the most of the season.

1 Sign up for the Lost River Trail Run.

Challenge yourself on the scenic trails of Lost River State Park at the Lost River Trail Run May 3. With options ranging from a 1-mile course to a half-marathon, this event offers something for everyone who enjoys running. Proceeds benefit the Lost River Trails Coalition, which maintains the park's trails. Registration includes a T-shirt (must register by April 1) and post-run pizza. Fees start at \$35 for adults and \$25 for youth up to age 19.

321 Park Drive, Mathias
304-897-5372
runsignup.com/Race/WV/Mathias/LostRiverTrailRun

2 Explore the Hardy County Barn Quilt Trail.

Drive through the county on a tour to view colorful quilt patterns displayed on barns celebrating local heritage. Visit the website in advance to download a map for this free self-guided tour, which winds through Mathias, Lost City, Moorefield and several other towns. Enthusiasts will want to check out the online gallery of various quilt patterns before heading out.

lostrivercrafts.com/barn-quilt-trail

3 Catch a show at McCoy's Grand.

Experience an evening of music and fun at the historic McCoy's Grand Theatre & Museum, founded in 1927. This spring, catch the old-time fiddles of Raw Country April 5, singer/pianist Jacob Tolliver's high-energy show April 12 and the



WARDENSVILLE GARDEN MARKET



Jacob Tolliver's genre-meshing style incorporates elements of pop, country and blues, pushing the boundaries of traditional rock. He'll bring his high-energy stage presence to McCoy's in April.

rock and roll of Astoria II May 3. Tickets are \$15. While you're there, check out the display of the original owner's antiques.

121 N. Main Street, Moorefield
304-530-7115
mccoysgrand.org

You'll find treats from their own bakery, farm, kitchen and glass studio at the Wardensville Garden Market.

4 Check out the Wardensville Garden Market.

For a truly local experience, visit the Wardensville Garden Market. This community-focused market, open Thursday through Monday, not only sells organic produce and homemade goods, but also runs as a nonprofit supporting educational programs for local youth. Enjoy fresh, seasonal produce and unique handmade items from their glass studio. Catch the market's Second Saturdays, a free, family-friendly, outdoor event series that kicks off in spring. See the website for details.

28813 WV-55, Wardensville
304-470-8050
farmsworkwonders.org/wardensville-garden-market

5 Throw strikes at Potomac Lanes.

Rainy day? Head indoors to South Branch Potomac Lanes to bowl a few games. With affordable rates and family-friendly vibes, it's a great way to spend quality time without worrying about the weather — or going over your budget. Play for as little as \$2.99 on weekdays and \$3.99 on weekends, according to their website. Plus, get a \$10 coupon for open bowling when you sign up to receive notifications from them.

185 Hyde St., Moorefield
304-530-BOWL (2695)
potomaclanes.com



BALL: SHUTTERSTOCK

3 Family-Friendly Places to Dine Out

BY JILLIAN ABBALLE

After a full day on the river or wandering old country roads, adults' and kids' bellies alike will be grumbling. Here are some places the whole family can comfortably chow down.

Known for its comfort food and cozy atmosphere, the **Lost River Grill** is the popular spot for a family dinner. Go for the classic meatloaf and mashed potatoes and stay for the famous homemade pies. Cocktails and beer are available, and it's open for dinner every day. Too tired to move after a big meal? Stay at its bed-and-breakfast. Visit lostrivergrill.com to confirm hours and see specials.

Nestled on the scenic grounds of the Inn at Lost River, the historic **Lost River General Store + Cafe** is perfect for lunch or an early dinner. Enjoy sandwiches, soups, salads and their signature house-smoked, pulled pork barbecue. Adults can unwind with craft beer and wine while kids enjoy the hot dogs and



LOST RIVER GRILL
The warm, welcoming atmosphere at Lost River Grill is sure to make you feel at home.

hand-dipped ice cream. Call 304-897-7000 or visit innatlostriver.com.

The crowd-pleasing stop sure to make everyone's day is **Sweet Rose Ice Cream** in Moorefield. Choose from soft-serve or Flavor Burst ice creams, and from plenty of toppings. To see daily specials, visit their website at sweetroseicecreamwv.com or call 304-530-2695. The shop is located in South Branch Potomac Lanes, so be sure to pop in after bowling.



LOST RIVER GENERAL STORE + CAFE
Lost River General Store + Cafe menus feature seasonal ingredients from Lost Pond Farm—their sister property—and other local and regional farmers and producers. Don't miss their pepperoni rolls—a fan favorite.

Trails for Every Trekker: Explore Hardy's Scenic Hikes

BY JILLIAN ABBALLE

A haven for hikers, Hardy County offers trails that range from serene lakeside strolls to rugged mountain climbs. While Lost River State Park is a huge draw for hikers, here are a few other favorites to explore this spring.

Big Schloss Trail is a 4.4-mile trek through the George Washington National Forest and is a must for its panoramic views. Starting at the Wolf Gap Recreation Area, this moderate trail leads to a stunning rock outcropping where you can relax and take in the sweeping scenery. Bring a packed lunch—you'll want to

spend some time at the summit. Camping is available.

If you're in the mood for more of a leisurely stroll, try **Rockcliff Lake Trail**, ideal for beginner hikers. This gentle loop circles the serene Rockcliff Lake. As you wander along the path, enjoy spotting wildlife, exploring the shoreline and soaking in the tranquil atmosphere. The trail opens in early May.

Ascending Great North Mountain and following the ridge along the Virginia/West Virginia state line,



Tuscarora Trail rewards your efforts with incredible overlooks, including one at Terrapin Spring.

This section is part of a 250-mile trail system managed by the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, offering adventurers a connection to the Appalachian Trail. For a steeper challenge, the Eagle Rock section of the Tuscarora Trail delivers incredible views.

Bucktail Loop Trail covers rugged terrain near Wardensville and takes you deep into the heart of Hardy County's wilderness, with striking

vistas along the way, up Halfmoon Mountain. For seasoned hikers, this 9.7-mile loop promises a challenge. Allow around five hours to complete the loop and don't forget to check for trail maintenance and updates.

Perfect for nature photography, the **Trout Pond Loop Trail** near Lost City offers a gentle—and less aerobic—escape into the wilderness. Trout Pond, West Virginia's only natural lake, is the centerpiece of this peaceful trail. The roughly 3-mile loop will also swing you past Rockcliff Lake.

For trail information, including months when trails are not open, call 540-984-4101.

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Where to Celebrate Romance



BERKELEYSPRINGS.COM

There's no better spot to add some spark to your relationship than Berkeley Springs State Park. The park offers couples massages, Roman baths and spa treatments. Or, like Claire Ramirez and Greg Schene, shown above, you could play around in the naturally warm spring waters.

BY JUSTIN GRIFFIN

Nestled in the enchanting landscapes of West Virginia, Morgan County beckons couples seeking a serene getaway infused with both relaxation and adventure. Here are five things to do with your significant other.

1 Enjoy a stroll in the park.

Spend a cozy afternoon unwinding with your partner at the historic Berkeley Springs State Park. Renowned for its natural mineral springs, the park offers couples massages, Roman baths, and spa treatments to enjoy together.

2 S. Washington St., Berkeley Springs
304-258-2711
wvstateparks.com/park/berkeley-springs-state-park

2 Take a scenic hike at Cacapon Resort State Park.

Explore the beauty of spring together with a hike along the Ridge Trail or to the Panorama Overlook. The park's vibrant wildflowers and sweeping views make it a picture-perfect back-

drop for a romantic stroll. You can also stay overnight in a cabin or inn.

818 Cacapon Lodge Drive, Berkeley Springs
304-258-1022
wvstateparks.com/park/cacapon-resort-state-park

3 Behold the views from Prospect Overlook.

A renowned overlook offering panoramic views of the Potomac and Cacapon rivers, Prospect Overlook, also known as Panorama Overlook, is a short drive from downtown. It's a perfect spot for a romantic walk and to watch the sunset together. National Geographic ranked this spot as one of its top five vistas in the Eastern United States, according to Discover Berkeley Springs. Be advised you might need to get creative with the parking, but it will be worth it.

3299 Cacapon Road, Berkeley Springs
301-707-3201
discoverberkeleysprings.com/locations/prospect-overlook



BERKELEYSPRINGS.COM

A hike to Panorama Overlook in Cacapon State Park offers breathtaking views of the rolling West Virginia hills and the Potomac River. The moderate trail offers a peaceful escape into nature, making it a great spot for reflection, photography, or simply soaking in the serene beauty of the Appalachian landscape.

4 Stroll through Berkeley Springs Farmers Market.

In the heart of downtown, the Berkeley Springs Farmers Market is perfect for a romantic spring outing. Browse fresh produce and local crafts, and sample homemade treats while enjoying live music and a cozy atmosphere. Don't miss the baked goods. The market is open Sunday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. beginning in April.

Route 522 and Fairfax St.,
Berkeley Springs
berkeleyspringsfarmersmarket.org

5 Dine at The Country Inn of Berkeley Springs.

End your day with an intimate dinner at The Country Inn of Berkeley Springs. This historic establishment offers fine dining with dishes crafted from locally sourced ingredients, perfect for a candlelit evening with your special someone. While you're there, unwind in the Renaissance Spa.

110 S. Washington St., Berkeley Springs
304-258-1200
thecountryinnnw.com

Morgan County, West Virginia

Must-Stop Spots for Solo Travelers



BERKELEYSPRINGS.COM

The Ice House Gallery is a lively arts hub featuring local and regional talent through diverse exhibits, workshops and performances, bringing the town's creative energy to life.

BY JUSTIN GRIFFIN

Sometimes, the best way to clear your head is to get in the car and drive. Here are a few stops you shouldn't miss in and around Morgan County when traveling solo.

The Paw Paw Tunnel is a must-see. This 3,118-foot engineering marvel along the C&O Canal offers a unique, peaceful hike through history. Constructed in the mid-1800s as an alternative to building a canal along the Potomac River, it's technically in Allegany County, Maryland, but is right next to the town of Paw Paw in Morgan County.

Today, the tunnel's eerie yet beautiful brick-lined passage and scenic surroundings make it perfect for self-reflection, adventure and breathtaking photography—ideal for any traveler seeking solitude and discovery. You'll find "weep holes, rope burns, rub rails, as well as brass plates marking every 100-feet that bring the tunnel's history to life," according to the National Park Service. To plan your trip, visit nps.gov and search for the tunnel.

The Star Theatre is a nostalgic gem perfect for a cozy, unique experience. This historic cinema shows

classic and indie films in a charming, vintage setting. Grab some freshly-popped buttered popcorn, settle into the old-school atmosphere, and enjoy a relaxing night immersed in the magic of the movies. For showtimes, call 304-258-1404.

The Ice House Co-op Gallery is a must-visit for solo travelers seeking inspiration and cultural enrichment. This vibrant arts hub showcases local and regional talent through diverse exhibits, workshops and performances. Wander through captivating displays, connect with the creative community, and immerse yourself in the town's artistic heartbeat—perfect for a reflective and enriching solo experience. For more information, call 304-867-3073.

Feeling peckish but don't want to get too full for the drive back home? Before you bid farewell to Morgan County, stop by **Lighthouse Latte** in Berkeley Springs, a family-owned café established in 2011. Enjoy a variety of coffee beverages, including French-pressed to-go options, along with homemade soups and sandwiches. The café also offers free Wi-Fi. Additionally, explore their selection of certified pure therapeutic-grade essential oils, available for purchase. Call 304-258-5429, and check their website for a coupon before you visit: lighthouselatte.com.

Grab a Bite

By JUSTIN GRIFFIN

Co-owner Trey Johanson said the recently-opened **Panorama Public House** boasts "locally-sourced, regionally inspired" comfort food to enjoy from "one of the top views on the Eastern seaboard"—the Panorama Overlook, also known as the Prospect Peak/Overlook. The new restaurant offers lunch and dinner menus with plenty of vegan options, including vegan homemade ice cream. Visit panoramapublichouse.com or call 304-444-2950.

Angus & Ale features ginormous burgers, fall-off-the-bone ribs, wings and steaks, along with a list of seafood favorites. There's also a screened-in porch and a full bar with an extensive wine list. Two miles down the road at Berkeley Springs Bowl, Angus & Ale also provides breakfast, lunch and dinner to go with bowling, and a full arcade. Visit angusandale.com.

When you're looking for a great place to start the day, stop by **Charlotte's Cafe**. Their menu has all the beloved standard breakfast fare to please even pickiest of eaters. This place is also good for your wallet. The most expensive item on the online menu is under \$15. There's also a lunch menu, and if you're looking for more, there's a family-style takeout menu where all the dishes are enough to feed four people. See charlottescafewv.com.



FILE PHOTO

Charlotte's Cafe serves up baked-from-scratch desserts daily.

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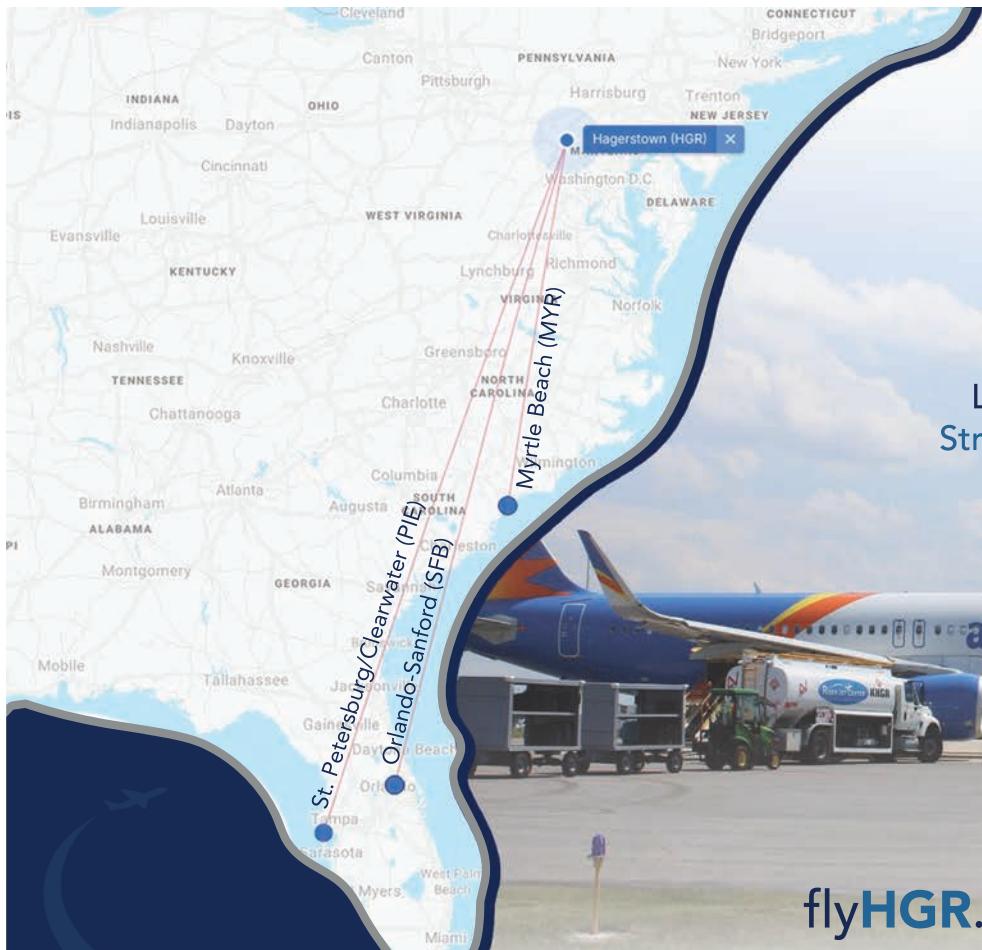


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5 Fun Things to Do with Kids

BY ASHLEY MILLER

1 Paintball

Paintball is a competitive activity enjoyed by both kids and adults, making it a great choice for families seeking outdoor adventure and quality bonding time. Open Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Cousins Paintball offers 100 acres of awesome terrain for birthday parties, scout trips and family reunions. Rent equipment or bring your own.

363 Radio Station Road, Strasburg

631-698-6230

cousinpaintball.com/play-paintball-virginia

2 Woodstock Tower observation

What kid doesn't want to climb a tall tower to look out over the landscape? Standing tall over the northern ranges of the George Washington and Jefferson National Forest, Woodstock Tower is located at one of the highest peaks of the Massanutten mountain range, revealing an exceptional view of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River from its 2,000-foot elevation. Pack the binoculars and enjoy the breathtaking scenery.

Woodstock Tower Road, Woodstock

fs.usda.gov

3 Mayfest

On the second weekend of May every year, the Strasburg community pulls out all the stops to throw a huge family-friendly party that takes over the streets. In addition to a parade and a carnival, kids will enjoy the inflatables and bounce houses, the cupcake-eating contest, face painting and the numerous food and craft vendors. Parents might want to stop in at the beer and wine garden.

strasburgmayfest.com

4 Duckpin bowling

Step back in time and experience the charm of duckpin bowling at Shenandoah Bowling Lanes. Built in the late 1940s, this landmark offers a nostalgic experience that's perfect for families looking to create lasting memories together. The smaller bowling balls are the perfect size for little hands.

5904 Main St., Mount Jackson

540-477-2341

Search **Shenandoah Bowling Lanes** on Facebook.

5 Virginia LOVE signs

LOVE can be found in every corner of



VIRGINIA TOURISM

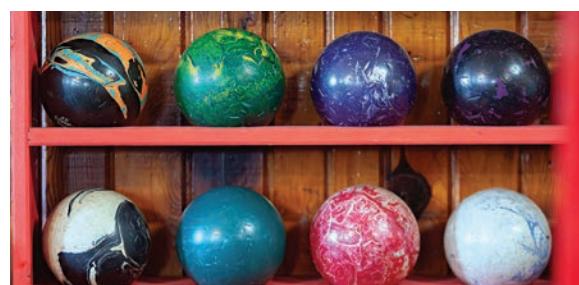
At the Virginia Museum of the Civil War in New Market, the "L" and "O" in the LOVE sign are made from cannons, while the "V" is made from Signal Corps flags.



JON HENRY GENERAL STORE

The LOVE sign at Jon Henry General Store in New Market features produce grown in the Shenandoah Valley.

Shenandoah County — literally. From the steps of Massanutten Military Academy in Woodstock to Strasburg's Town Park, it's easy to tell that Virginians love LOVE. See how many you can find and be sure to capture these iconic symbols of love — and maybe take a photo that can be used in the



RICH COOLEY

Out-of-service duckpin bowling balls rest on display shelves at Shenandoah Bowling Lanes in Mount Jackson.

family's holiday card. You'll find LOVE signs in Strasburg at 174 E. King St.; Massanutten Military Academy at 614 S. Main St. in Woodstock; Jon Henry General Store at 9383 N. Congress St. in New Market; the Virginia Museum of the Civil War at 8995 George Collins Parkway in New Market; and along Main Street in Woodstock — look for the hot air balloon that serves as the "O" in LOVE.

virginia.org/love

Shenandoah County, Virginia

3 Must-Visit Vineyards



RICH COOLEY

A bin of cabernet sauvignon grapes at Cave Ridge Vineyard near Mount Jackson

BY ASHLEY MILLER

1 North Mountain Vineyard

Open year-round, Wednesday through Sunday, the charming European architecture of North Mountain Vineyard's winery building is the perfect setting for celebrations, while its tasting room offers an elegant and cozy atmosphere. The vineyard site has been farmed since the 1700s, although the first grapes were planted in 1982. The gift shop offers local art, crafts, cheese and jams. Pack a picnic or enjoy prepackaged light fare. Pet friendly.

4374 Swartz Road, Maurertown
540-436-9463
northmountainvineyard.com

2 Wolf Gap Vineyard and Winery

Founded in 2004, Wolf Gap Vineyard and Winery has stunning views of the Great North Mountain from its covered pavilion. Wolf Gap offers flights of whites or reds and



RICH COOLEY

Grapevines are backlit in the afternoon sun at Cave Ridge Vineyard.

wines by the glass or bottle. The winery also makes rosés and sparkling wines. Reservations are not required but are recommended for groups of five or more.

123 Stout Road, Edinburg
540-984-3306
wolfgapvineyard.com

3 Cave Ridge Vineyard

Located in the foothills over-

looking the Shenandoah Valley, Cave Ridge Vineyard is an award-winning vineyard known for its tasting room and outdoor facilities. It's an ideal spot for picnics. Wines produced emphasize the fruit character of the grape using a minimalist approach while adhering to sustainable farming practices.

1476 Cincville Road, Mount Jackson
540-477-2585
caveridge.com

Where to Brunch

BY ASHLEY MILLER

Sunday brunch! There's nothing quite like savoring brunch with family and friends, where the combination of delicious food and good conversation makes for the perfect start to a new week.

Dishing up breakfast all day, **Strasburg Diner** at 119 Hite Lane in Strasburg offers a wide variety of brunch favorites, including their golden pancakes, waffles and French toast. Breakfast meals are served with a choice of hash browns, home fries or grits and toast, biscuit or English muffin.

Find out more about the Strasburg Diner on its Facebook page.

Serving sandwiches daily until 11 a.m. and brunch on Sunday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. the **Woodstock Cafe** at 117 S. Main St. in Woodstock is known for its three-egg omelets with multiple fillings, eggs Benedict and homemade sausage gravy served over biscuits. Don't forget to add a classic pomegranate or seasonal mimosa. Learn more at woodstockcafeva.com

Indulge in the comforts of grandma's house at **Kathy's Home Cooking Cafe** at 9478 S. Congress St. in New Market, where popular side items like Western ham, peaches, rib eye and fried potatoes are the ideal morning wake-up call. Find out more about Kathy's Home Cooking Cafe on its Facebook page.



WOODSTOCK CAFE

Woodstock Cafe offers tasty entrees for brunch every Sunday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

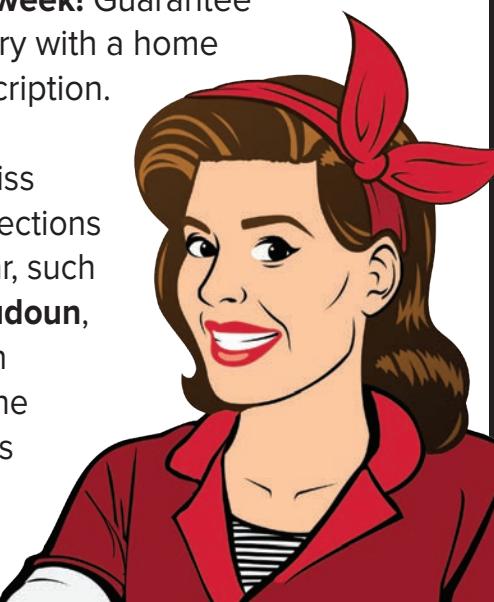
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5 Places to Hike, Bike & Explore

By NANCY SORRELS

Whether you are on two feet or two wheels, there are plenty of places in Rockingham County to enjoy the great outdoors. If you can't decide whether you want to hike, bike (or paddle), consider Grottoes, where there are two fine parks from which to choose. Both parks are on the South River and have put-in spots. Picnic facilities are available at both as well. There is a flat concrete multiuse path connecting the two parks. The 2.5-mile path takes about 50 minutes on foot for 15 minutes by bicycle.

Here are five places to check out when you're ready to hit the trails.

1 Grand Caverns

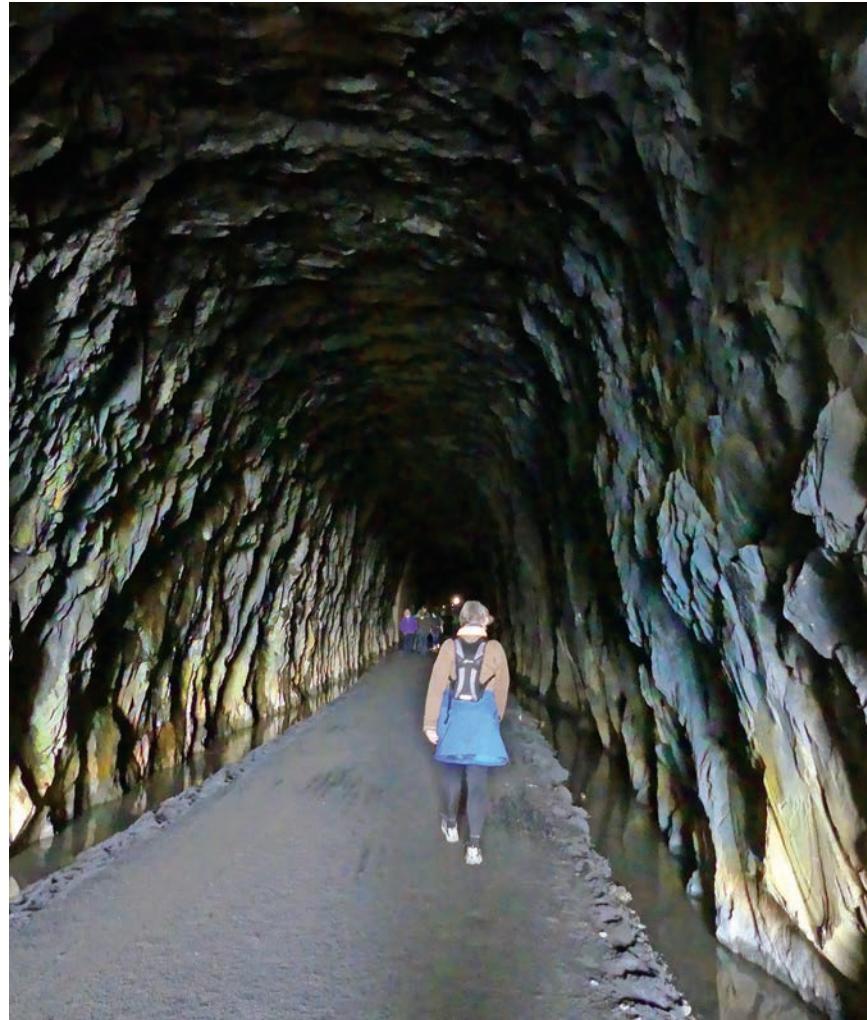
At the southern part of Grottoes sits Grand Caverns Park. You could do your hiking underground in the nation's oldest continually operating show cave (1-mile walk) or you could hike or cycle the 1-mile gravel loop around the park. In addition, you could wear yourself out hiking up and down the wooded trails of Cave Hill in this 100-acre preserve. The Cave Hill trail system, shaped like a figure 8, offers about 2 miles of trails and several eye-popping overlooks for guests of all abilities. Those hiking up to the top of Cave Hill might stop and think about the fact that folks on the cavern walking tour are actually 100 feet *underground* right beneath their feet. Also try fishing, picnicking, and the really daring can try a wild caving adventure. There is a fee for going inside the caves. Everything else is free.

5 Grand Caverns Blvd., Grottoes
grandcaverns.com

2 John E. Painter Park

Located at the north end of Grottoes, this park features a 1.4-mile walking trail as well as a fishing pond, ballfields and courts, and a driving range.

1100 20th St., Grottoes



NANCY SORRELS

The Blue Ridge Tunnel is an engineering marvel that operated as a railroad tunnel from the 1850s-1940s.

3 Massanutten Western Slope Trails

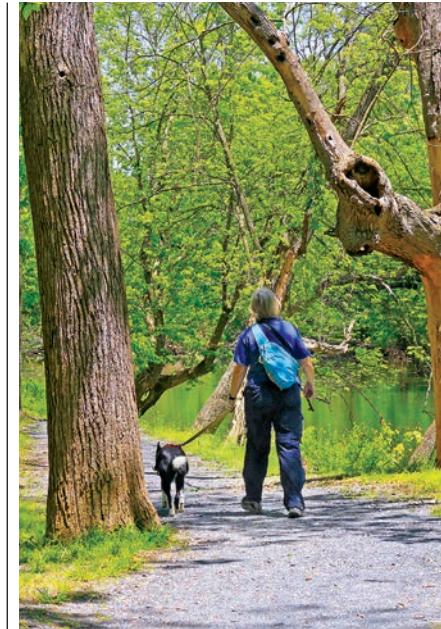
Located about 7 miles from Harrisonburg near Keezletown, the Massanutten Western Slope Trail system offers more than 800 acres with 32 miles of trails for mountain biking and hiking. It's owned by Massanutten Resort and maintained by the Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition. Access is by fee-based pass only, and both day and annual passes are available.

Trailhead parking:
4276 Happy Valley Road, Keezletown
svbcoalition.org/western-slope-trails

4 Hillandale Park

This 74-acre park has it all, including hiking and cycling trails where sharp-eyed birders will spot many feathered friends, perhaps even an owl. Rocktown Trail system offers three trail levels for cyclists, runners, and walkers, including 1.4-mile and 1.2-mile biking loops. The Friendly City Trail, which is 2-plus miles, runs through the park, connecting it to Westover Park and three schools.

Vehicular entrance:
710 Hillandale Ave., Harrisonburg
Pedestrian and cyclist entrance:
422 S. Ave., Harrisonburg



NANCY SORRELS

Grand Caverns Park includes a path along the river.

5 Blue Ridge Tunnel

Hikers (and cyclists) are coming from all over to experience one of Virginia's most popular trails – the restored Blue Ridge Tunnel. This engineering marvel, built through the backbreaking work of Irish immigrants and enslaved African Americans, operated as a railroad tunnel from the 1850s-1940s, then was abandoned. Two decades of work brought it back as a greenway unlike any other. East Trailhead offers flat access trail of 0.63 miles to a tunnel that is 0.81 miles in length for a round-trip hike of 2.88 miles. The West Trailhead offers a steeply graded access trail of 0.81 miles to a tunnel that is 0.81 miles in length for a round-trip hike of 3.24 miles.

Open sunrise to sunset. Bring a jacket and a flashlight/headlamp.

East Trailhead :
215 Afton Depot Lane, Afton
West Trailhead :
483 Three Notched Mtn. Highway,
Waynesboro
TheBlueRidgeTunnel.com

Bad Weather? Go Underground!

BY LEE ZION

Rockingham County is full of exciting outdoor places to visit. But what if you're not fond of the cold and wet? What then? Here are a few places to go on your day trip when the weather won't cooperate.

Explore the caves.

There are three caves open to the public near Harrisonburg. All of them are popular, and all of them are beautiful. **Melrose Caverns**, north of Harrisonburg on U.S. 11, has a lot of history to it. During the Civil War, Union Soldiers hid in the caves and etched their names inside. There are also several shield formations throughout the cave — and shields are not very common.

Endless Caverns, farther north on U.S. Highway 11 but just inside Rockingham County, gets its name because surveyors have yet to find where the caverns stop. The surveyed area travels about 6 miles underground.

Grand Caverns is in the Grottoes, which is in the southeast corner of



FILE PHOTO

Angie Rivera-Moradel, of Harrisonburg, checks on a 3D print in the Maker City at the Explore More Discovery Museum.

Rockingham County. It opened in 1806, making it the oldest continually operating cavern in the United States. The caverns were already world-famous by the 1860s, making it a tourist attraction during the Civil War.

Take in a museum.

There are a few museums to visit in Rockingham County. **The Museum of American Jewelry Design & Manufacturing** in downtown Harrisonburg includes Industrial Age designs,

tools, machinery and more. People visiting can learn about the processes of craft and the history of an industry — maybe even while creating their own souvenir. Call 540-574-4306.

A short distance away from the jewelry museum is the **Valley Turnpike Museum**, in the Hardesty-Higgins House downtown. Visitors can relive the history of settlement in the Shenandoah Valley as the museum explores the history of the road, now known as U.S. Highway 11. It provided a major artery for exploration and settlement. The road was called the Avenue of Invasion during the Civil War and provided a north-south corridor for troop and artillery movements. Call 540-432-8935.

And, just north of that, on U.S. Highway 11, is the **Explore More Discovery Museum**. The museum uses interactive, multi-sensory learning experiences that help children understand themselves and the world. The museum is all about the Shenandoah Valley community, according to its website. Call 540-442-8900.

Festivals, Flowers and Fun

BY ANYA SCZERZENIE

Edith J. Carrier Arboretum

James Madison University's Edith J. Carrier Arboretum bursts into full bloom in the spring and celebrates the season with Wildflower Walks and a yearly spring plant sale. That sale, held on the terrace outside the Francis Plecker Education Center in the arboretum, runs from April 25 to May 3 this year.

The arboretum also holds wildflower walks every Wednesday in April from noon to 1 p.m., starting at the Frances Plecker Education Center. Keala Timko, a Virginia Master Gardener, hosts them.

Located at 780 University Blvd. in Harrisonburg, the arboretum is open daily from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. For more information, visit jmu.edu/arboretum.

Redbud Festival

This arts and crafts festival is the spring equivalent of the town's autumn Dayton Days event. It takes place in downtown Dayton and features craft vendors, food, "ducky races" and live music. Visitors can also get a free redbud sapling and a free horse-drawn carriage ride.

The Redbud Festival, scheduled for Saturday, April 26, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., is on College Street in downtown Dayton. Parking is available in the Koogler Field at the corner of College Street and Eberly Road for \$5, and limited free parking is available at Wilbur Pence Middle School.

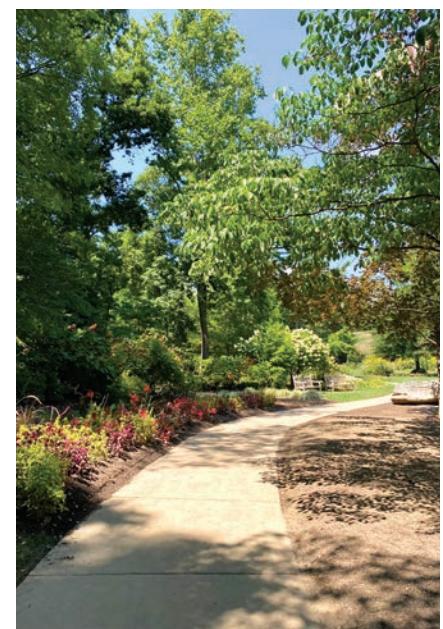
The Ducky Races are an annual tradition at the Redbud Festival. You can pick out your duck ahead of the festival

at some Dayton businesses or purchase yours at the town information booth at Dove Park on the day of the festival. The races will begin at Cook's Creek Park at 1 p.m. Visit daytonva.us.

Massanutton ValleyFest

The Massanutton resort's annual beer and wine festival will be held May 24 from 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

In addition to adult beverages, the event features food and live music. The wine list, beer list and band lineup will be announced on Massanutton's website once the event gets closer. The event is for a good cause — a portion of the proceeds will go toward initiatives sponsored by local rotary clubs. The resort is at 1822 Resort Drive in Massanutton. For more information, visit massresort.com.



FILE PHOTO

The Edith J. Carrier Arboretum in Harrisonburg is open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.



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1... Stop in for Travel information



The Edinburg Mill is a *Certified Virginia Visitor Center*

Check with us for maps, books and information about local places, area hiking and events.

2... Come & Explore!

The museum at the 1848 Edinburg Mill is a treasure-trove of Route 11 memorabilia, antiques, old equipment and tools, as well as exhibits featuring Civil War history, the nation's first CCC camp, the farming community and so much more! Exhibits are constantly updated so there's always something new to discover.

Learn the fascinating story of how the Mill survived Sheridan's fires during the Civil War and be sure to keep an eye out for our resident ghost, the mischievous Frankie.

First floor Visitor Center/shop is open to the public. Admission to floors 2 & 3 museum displays, donation \$3. Includes a showing of the film "The Burning." Elevator available.

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5 Places to Kindle Romance

BY LAURA RUBY

Romance, like love, is in the eye of the beholder. Front Royal and Warren County have something for every couple — no matter your love language.

There's nothing like deepening your love through shared experiences. Some of these adventures will get your blood pumping, while others give you time to slow down, soak up the scenery and enjoy time with your love.

1 Make it a date to remember with a skydive at **Skydive Front Royal**. With stunning views of the Blue Ridge Mountains and Shenandoah River, this is an adventure that takes you out of your comfort zone to make lifelong memories.

229 Stokes Airport Road, Front Royal
540-935-3279
skydivefrontroyal.com

2 Take in the blooming spring scenery, explore a hiking trail or the nearby river and snap a photo to remember your visit to **Cullers Overlook** at the Shenandoah River State Park. Hiking options abound for all skill levels — or you can reach the overlook by car for a more leisurely outing.

293 Daughter of the Stars Drive, Bentonville
540-622-6840
dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/shenandoah-river

3 Fall in love with the charm and history of Front Royal with a tour of the **Warren Heritage Society** sites. Tours are available for the three historical buildings on site, which tell the stories of a Confederate spy, area families and many facets of local history.

101 Chester St., Front Royal
540-636-1446
warrenheritagesociety.org



COURTESY PHOTO

Make lasting memories skydiving. Although you jump out of the plane at the same time, each person jumps with a certified instructor, as shown above.

4 Couples who make art together stay together. Check out Stone Branch Center for the Arts for its many creative outlets. Or simply enjoy the work of talented area artists.

114 E. Main St., Front Royal
540-418-1407
stonebranchartscenter.com

5 After a day of exploring, relax and enjoy a top-notch, handcrafted cocktail at The Catamount Lounge. The cozy cocktail bar is perfect for sharing an appetizer and raising a glass. The lounge also hosts local music and comedic entertainment.

124 E. Main St., Front Royal
540-551-3058
thecatamountlounge.com



RICH COOLEY

Enjoy a fun cocktail together at the Catamount Lounge, where the Space Oddity features Hendricks gin, soju, cucumber syrup, lime juice and orange bitters.

For the Love of Brunch!

BY LAURA RUBY

Nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains along the Shenandoah River, the town of Front Royal offers a great escape from the busyness of Northern Virginia and from the stress of the work week. And, what better way to relax than over a long, leisurely, well-prepared brunch with friends? Whether you're relaxing after a morning outing or fueling for an afternoon adventure, the slow pace of brunch is the perfect activity for any weekend.

1 Houlihan's

Just north of Front Royal, Houlihan's restaurant is attached to the DoubleTree by Hilton, making Sunday brunch ultra-convenient for guests. Brunch runs from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sunday. Houlihan's has all of your favorites — from smoked salmon Benedict and chicken and waffles to mimosas and build-your-own Bloody Marys.

101 Hospitality Drive, Front Royal
540-631-3045
houlihans.com



COURTESY PHOTO

2 On Cue Sports Bar & Grill

Located in the heart of downtown Front Royal, On Cue serves brunch from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Sunday. In addition to traditional brunch staples, the menu features

pancake tacos — buttermilk tacos stuffed with sausage links, scrambled eggs and maple syrup — and a breakfast burger with hash browns, a fried egg, gravy, cheddar cheese, bacon and savvy sauce. A selection

The Bloody Marys at On Cue Sports Bar & Grill come with outrageous garnishes like sliders and shrimp.

of Bloody Marys, each piled high with food on a skewer — think fried shrimp or mini bacon, egg and cheese sliders — makes for a special Sunday meal.

206 E. Main St., Front Royal
540-636-8424
oncuesportsbarandgrill.com

3 L'Dees Pancake House

L'Dees Pancake House serves breakfast and lunch all day, every day Wednesday through Sunday, making it the perfect place to build your own brunch whenever the urge strikes. The diner serves a full menu of pancakes, French toast, and omelets, along with daily specials that include fresh-made quiche. If you're leaning more toward lunch, check out the burgers, salads or subs.

522 E. Main St., Front Royal
540-635-3791
ldeespancakehouse.com

Where to Go Solo

BY LAURA RUBY

Front Royal is a fun and friendly town — ideal for solo travelers. Here are two spots to visit if you find yourself exploring the area on your own.

Samuels Public Library — named Virginia Library of the Year for 2024 — is home to a new Makerspace and Memory Lab, called **Studio 330**. The only one in the Shenandoah Valley, the library's Studio 330 helps visitors create whatever their heart desires. Learn how to operate a glow forge or a sublimation machine — or

join a group to practice sewing or embroidery. Of course, there are plenty of spots to cozy up with a good book and enjoy time alone. The library is at 330 E. Criser Road.

For solo hikers on the Appalachian Trail, a stop at **Basecamp Front Royal** is an opportunity for a hot shower and access to laundry facilities. Located adjacent to Vibrissa Beer and Mountain Trails at 122 Main St., the free facility also offers a boot dryer, lockers and a bathroom. Gear, food and drink are available nearby.



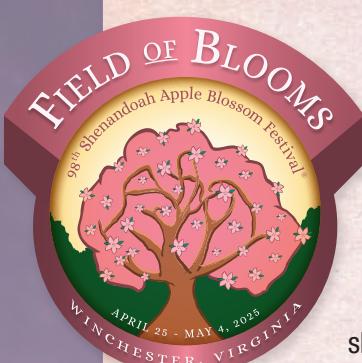
RICH COOLEY

Studio 330 includes a turntable, CD, cassette and radio that has the ability to record to a USB drive. The space also has sewing, weaving and embroidery machines alongside high-tech equipment like a laser cutter, sublimation printer, flatbed scanner, large and small sized Cricuts and 3D printers.

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CELEBRATING 98 YEARS OF TRADITION AND COMMUNITY

This year marks the **98th anniversary of the Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival®**. In the spring of 1924, with support from the Shenandoah Valley Travel Association, the City of Winchester enthusiastically hosted the first festival on May 3rd. The event was created to honor those in the apple industry and showcase the northern part of the valley. Originally, it was a one-day celebration welcoming the arrival of the pink and white apple blossoms that covered the Valley's agricultural landscape, while also recognizing the economic importance they brought. Apple blossoms have remained a key part of Winchester's agricultural heritage. Over the years, with backing from the Virginia Tourism Corporation, the festival has blossomed into a 10-day celebration filled with events. While it has evolved since 1924, we continue to cherish traditions such as the Coronation of Queen Shenandoah, parades, dances, dinners, and luncheons.

Today, the Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival® has grown into a 10-day celebration featuring more than 50 events, ensuring there's something for everyone. This year, we're excited to introduce 3 new events: the Apple Blossom Airshow, the Family Fun Party and the Blossom Artisan & Faire. **Each year, over 200,000 attendees from around**

the world come to experience all that Winchester has to offer. Festival-goers might even encounter nationally recognized figures from the entertainment and sports industries who attend the festival as honored guests. But the spotlight isn't just for celebrities; the festival also celebrates local civic groups, schools, charities, and volunteers. We're especially grateful to the more than **2,000 local volunteers** whose dedication has helped make the festival the grand event it is today. The Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival® is a vital economic engine for the community, **generating an estimated \$10 million in impact**. Beyond boosting business revenue, the festival also creates opportunities for local charities to

fundraise by selling parade seating, food vending and much more. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, the festival directly raises funds for local causes and indirectly supports fundraising efforts for many other charities through its 10-day celebration. We hope to see you there as we celebrate 98 years of fun and tradition!

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