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HARPERS FERRY ELECTION CONTROVERSY

2 'disqualified' from deciding on votes

By TIM COOK Staff writer

HARPERS FERRY – Two Harpers Ferry Town Council members would violate state ethics law if they took part in a decision about whether to count four provisional ballots rejected during the town's June 11 election, according to a legal opinion from the West Virginia Ethics Commission.

An Ethics Commission staff attorney informed Town Council members here — including Hardwick "Hardy" Johnson and Charlotte

■ The Harpers Ferry Town Council met Tuesday after this week's edition went to the printer. Catch up at spiritofjefferson.com

Thompson — last week that any public official would have a direct personal conflict of interest that should disqualify them from voting in an election proceeding that could determine whether they retained their public office.

"It is the general opinion of Ethics Commission staff that if there is a reasonable probability

that the tribunal's decision on the election contest could impact whether a council member, who is also a member of the tribunal, may keep his or her City Council seat, then that council member may not participate as a member of the tribunal because he or she has a financial interest in holding the elected position in question," Ethics Commission staff attorney Theresa M. Kirk wrote in Thursday's opinion.

(See **ETHICS** Page 2)



Charles Town woman killed was a bystander in neighbor's quarrel

By TIM COOK Staff writer

CHARLES TOWN – The Charles Town woman who was killed in the doorway of her apartment on Aug. 24 was an innocent bystander to a quarrel between the man who shot her and her neighbor who lived across the hall, according to allegations filed in Jefferson County Magistrate Court.

Elliott De John Lansdowne, 28, of Jefferson, Md., is charged with first-degree murder in the killing of Taylor Pond. A preliminary hearing is scheduled for today.

Police say Pond called out "Elliott, get out of here with that gun," when she saw Lansdowne appear outside her open doorway with a firearm. As she slammed shut her apartment door, Lansdowne fired his gun, striking Pond in the head and killing her.

Pond, 28, knew Lansdowne from having had a previous relationship with him, police reported. She worked as a supervisor at the CVS Pharmacy on West Washington Street in Charles Town, across from the apart-

ment where she lived.

On the Saturday evening when she was killed, however, Lansdowne had stopped at her apartment building to obtain a bag of clothes from a neighbor Lansdowne was also having a sexual relationship with. That woman witnessed the slaying, police said.

"The witness advised several days ago, she had recently found out she was possibly pregnant with Lansdowne's baby and they had been arguing about whether to keep the baby or place it for adoption," Charles Town police investigator Corporal Alissa Meeks wrote in a charging document. "The witness advised she told Lansdowne she already had several children and could not afford to have another one."

However, Lansdowne reported-

(See **SLAYING** Page 6)



Jefferson High soccer players lack practice space

By TIM COOK Staff writer

SHENANDOAH JUNCTION – Danny VanDerPool said he and his Jefferson High soccer teammates have felt kicked around lately.

A shortage of athletic fields at the school has often left the boys varsity and junior varsity soccer teams booted onto an "unrealistically small" playing space, Danny and several players' parents said.

Danny, 14, said the situation has deflated morale, leaving some feeling like soccer is a step-child extracurricular program to the football team and the band that



use the same practice field.

Nearly every parent at a recent soccer practice signaled displeasure at the school's crowded practice field hemmed in between Jefferson High, Wildwood Middle and Flowing Springs Road.

Heather Garcia, whose son Pedro is a freshman on the junior varsity soccer team, said the shortage of practice space has resulted in unequal treatment for the soccer players over the past two years.

"They're the first ones that are dis-served," Garcia said. "They're the first one that are inconvenienced. They are the first

(See **SOCCER** Page 6)

Raymond Waters
of Harpers Ferry
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ROCKWOOL CONTROVERSY

City utility board to discuss new sewer plan for factory

By TIM COOK Staff writer

CHARLES TOWN – The Charles Town Utility Authority has been preparing since March to manage the construction of the so-called Route 9 Infrastructure Project, a 6-mile, state-funded sewer project that would serve the Rockwool factory along with future development in northern Jefferson County.

But on Aug. 28, Rockwool delivered a two-sentence letter to CTUB requesting that the city utility approve a separate pipeline agreement

(See **ROCKWOOL** Page 5)

MARC support (but no cash)

By TIM COOK Staff writer

CHARLES TOWN – In advance of Saturday's public hearing on proposed cutbacks to the MARC commuter train in the Eastern Panhandle, the Jefferson County Commission unanimously agreed to send letters urging Gov. Jim Justice and Maryland transportation officials to find a way to keep the current service on track.

"I think a letter certainly can't hurt," said Commissioner Patsy Noland. "Hopefully, it will help."

For years, Maryland officials have been seeking an annual commitment of \$3.4 million from West Virginia to continue the six stops at Harpers Ferry, Duffields and Martinsburg.

This year, the West Virginia Legislature did provide \$1.1 million, what it called a one-time payment.

Maryland now plans to cut all but two of the trains on the Brunswick line from Martinsburg to Union Station starting Nov. 4, leaving only a 5 a.m. eastbound

(See **MARC** Page 11)

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