

WE ARE WINCHESTER

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

We didn't set out to create an issue filled with people that have created, curated, maintained, and fostered legacies in Winchester, but as I look back, I see that is what we did.

Each story in this issue reminds us that big impacts come from small seeds. People saw a way to help their fellow neighbors and rallied together to create something.

We explored the legacy of Jim Barnett and the incredible parks system we now have. We shared a glass of wine with Star in the Valley Winery owners to learn more about our wine region. We were looped into Brad Veach's vision to ensure the Apple Blossom Festival is around another 100 years. Finally, we saw the dream of Anne Marie Utz moving from volunteer to executive director of Froggy's Closet to grow the legacy Tina Marie Scully created.

We hope they inspire you as much as they did us!



Misty Weaver & Katie Jordan

**WE ARE
WINCHESTER**

WINCHESTER BOY SCOUTS



Robert Baden-Powell was a British military officer who knew that scouting, in the wild, was the way to win wars. He believed young boys should learn the skills of scouting to prep them for future military service. His book entitled *Scouting for Boys*, written in response to his earlier work *Aids to Scouting*, started the youth scouting movement in the 20th Century!

An American businessman was lost in London due to the fog. A young man asked the businessman where he was trying to go and showed him the right way. When the businessman offered the young man money for his troubles, the young man declined and replied, "I do this because I am a scout." Curious, the businessman decided to learn more about scouts. The American businessman was William Boyce, a Chicago publisher who ultimately incorporated the Boys Scouts of America in 1910. Today, Boy Scouts of America (BSA) has over 1 million youth participants and 600,000+ adult volunteers. The program is open to boys and girls. Locally, BSA is run through the Shenandoah Area Council led by Jon Elliott.

Saturdays in March are for the Pinewood Derby. Scouts carve and decorate cars to compete in downhill races. The winners go on to compete against winners of other packs, earning trophies and patches. Family members are allowed to make their own derby cars to participate too. Other activities include camping, fishing, archery, shooting, hiking, knife skills, cooking, and more.

The scouts also do regular service projects. Before school starts each August, Pack 3 spreads mulch at Frederick Douglass, Virginia Avenue, and Garland Quarles Elementary Schools. They "Scout for Food" by collecting canned goods. They donate to C-cap and Watts, collect trash, lay wreaths and put out flags at veterans' graves.

Scouts is an opportunity to learn skills, give back, build relationships, and increase confidence and self-esteem. Cub Scout Packs are for kids in kindergarten through 5th grade. Boy Scout Troops are for 6th graders and above.

You can learn more and find a pack near you at Sac-Bsa.org.



THE LEGACY OF JIM BARNETT



James E. "Jim" Barnett, the namesake of Winchester's largest park, served as the Recreation Director from 1957-1988. He is remembered for his dedication to Winchester, his extensive relationships throughout the community, and his innate ability to inspire volunteerism and contributions to be part of something greater than themselves.

Barnett grew up in Huntington, WV with his older brother, mother, and father who was a Methodist minister. He attended the University of Kentucky and played football under coach Bear Bryant. Jim Barnett went on to serve in the United States Navy for two years then took his jobs as Recreation Director in a small town in New Hampshire then another outside Philadelphia before settling in Winchester in 1957. At that time, Winchester Recreational Park had an old shelter, two ball fields, an obsolete pool, and the War Memorial Building, which had a much smaller footprint than it does today. It was the City's only park.

Over time, Barnett was responsible for adding a dozen neighborhood parks and a long list of park amenities. The most surprising aspect is how little of the expansions were paid for by the city. There was little money for recreation in the city budget. Barnett expertly rallied support around his vision for parks projects which led to financial contributions from individuals and businesses. Beyond that, he had a long list of volunteers who helped build and maintain amenities. Even city works employees volunteered their time to help construct major projects like the playground at Christianson Familyland.

Jim Barnett wanted everyone to be included in the parks. In the early 1960s, he created the Teen Age Club (TAC club, and also known as Today's Active Citizens). It was an organization for teenagers. The club had its own officers, held elections, and fundraised for its activities. It held dances on Friday and Saturday nights with bands and a snack bar. Between Christmas and New Years, they'd get trucks from the local RC Cola plant, gather Christmas trees from Winchester residents and pile them where Preston Field is now to light them on fire. It was called The Burning of the Greens. Every high school nominated someone to be queen, and the TAC club members voted on who to crown. Winchester Furniture donated a handmade cedar chest each year to award to the winner. The TAC club also formed Barnett's summertime work crew. They mowed grass, painted bleacher boards, etc. TAC club officers were mentored by Barnett, and many of them went on to run major corporations, including as VPs of Levi Strauss and General Motors.

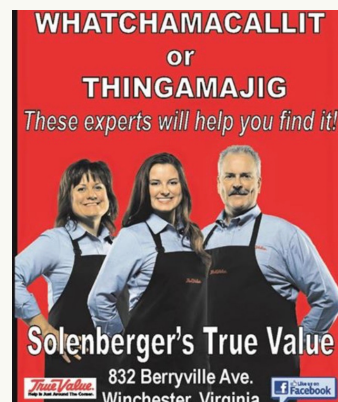
Barnett's leadership methodology was to be firm, fair, and consistent. He asked that everyone who worked for him give 110 percent. He was known to say that 100 percent was not enough. He led by example. Barnett would leave the park for dinner then come back each night until 10pm to work some more. While work was his life, Barnett was an eternal kid at heart. He often quoted George Bernard Shaw saying "you don't stop playing because you grow old, you grow old because you stop playing." The saying is still emblazoned on a sign at the intersection of

Cork St and Maple Dr visible as you are leaving the park. Barnett's beloved wife, Ruth, also showed the same level of dedication to our community. She was a Frederick County school teacher for 50 years. After dinner, while Barnett was back at the park, Ruth would go out and work at the drug fair to continue to give back.

Jim Barnett believed that everyone should aim to make as many connections as they could because connections make the world go round. His network of connections was extensive. As part of his retirement celebration, a roast was held of Barnett at the Lee Jackson Banquet Hall. Tickets for the event sold out before the tickets were printed! In his farewell speech, Barnett reminded the community that "Parks and recreation are vital. If we don't have it, we don't have a complete community."

Barnett dedicated his life and his family to Winchester Parks and Recreation. He made sure to appreciate and look after everyone, regardless of their position or status. He insured all recreation leagues were free to everyone. No one would be denied an opportunity to participate. For his decades of contribution, the city Recreation Board honored Barnett with the re-naming of its largest park to Jim Barnett Park.

Jim Barnett's parks accomplishments include the creation of 12 neighborhood parks, volunteer system, lighted fields and courts, BMX track, Bridgeforth baseball field, fishing lake, fitness trail, indoor pool and more.



STAR IN THE VALLEY: A TOAST TO AUTHENTICITY



We were delighted as the Star In The Valley tasting room came into view in picturesque Strasburg VA. Like many small local wineries, they have taken advantage of growing at a higher elevation, giving clientele phenomenal views as they sip. At the helm are owners Cara Mroczek and Shane Waller, with Cara being a fourth-generation grape grower, having cultivated her passion on a sprawling 2,000-acre farm, boasting 40 acres of grapes as a child.

With over 11,000 grapevines taking root in the oldest mountains in the world, the vineyard boasts shallow, rocky, and well-drained soils at an elevation of over 1,000 feet. This strategic location, nestled in Virginia's driest area, promises healthy, ripe fruit, underpinning the winery's production of approximately 2,000 cases of wine annually. Star In The Valley distinguishes itself as a boutique winery, focusing on crafting exceptional wines that reflect the unique terroir of their estate.

Cara and Shane are planning for the future by cultivating grapes like Petit Verdot, a variety that thrives in Virginia's shorter growing seasons, yielding full-bodied red wines that are increasingly gaining popularity. This meticulous attention to varietal selection underscores their philosophy of producing wines that resonate with the local climate and soil. They have also introduced sheep to the vineyard to not only help with clearing weeds, and adding natural compost, but to promote unique events like Wool Fest where they celebrated the sheep with local wool products and fun activities throughout the day.

The essence of Star In The Valley extends beyond the vines. Cara and Shane champion an authentic wine-tasting experience, emphasizing the significance of estate-grown produce. This approach not only sets them apart but also aligns with the evolving consumer demand for transparency and authenticity. They believe in providing a customer experience that is both approachable and elevated, inviting guests to partake in the winemaking journey.

An integral part of their vision is engaging with the younger demographic, recognizing the shift towards occasion-based drinking and a growing curiosity about the wine's origin and production process. They have observed a heightened interest from millennials and Gen Z consumers, who seek not just a product but a story and a connection to the place and people behind it.

Looking to the future, Cara and Shane are committed to not only expanding their vineyard and production facilities but also elevating the entire Northern Shenandoah Valley as a premier wine destination. They are at the forefront of promoting the region's unique characteristics and fostering a sense of community among local wineries.

Star In The Valley's signature event, "Wine Under the Stars," epitomizes their vision of creating memorable experiences. This event, alongside others like Crush Fest and after-dark gatherings, reflects their innovative approach to connecting with the community and celebrating the wonders of winemaking and the natural beauty surrounding their winery.

Visit StarInTheValley.com

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SEE *April events* BE SEEN

6 SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The Symphony Orchestra culminates its season with music by Joan Tower and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov; and Amy Beach's luminous The Cantic of the Sun. [SU Performs](#)

12 MOOSE SPRING BAZAAR

Spring craft and vendor bazaar, come shop, open to the public, no membership required. [Winchester Moose](#)

20 SOLENBERGER CAR SHOW

Join us for a spectacular display of classic and custom cars, old trucks, and maybe a few old Tractors! [Solenberger's](#)

21 FASHION TRUNK SALE

SPRING TRUNK SALE IS BACK
FEATURING: Styles From Anthropologie, Free People, Johnny Was, Sundance, Boden, and more. [Twice is Nice](#)

26+ APPLE BLOSSOM

The Bloom takes place from Apr 26 to May 5th this year, be sure to get tickets early! Over 50 events including the Bloomin' Wine Fest, craft show, carnival and more!
[TheBloom.com](#)



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FROGGY'S CLOSET: ONE CHILD AT A TIME

Froggy's Closet, a cornerstone in the community dedicated to serving foster and at-risk children, has made a profound impact since its inception in 2009. Spearheaded by its passionate Executive Director, Anne Marie Utz, the organization continues the mission set forth by its predecessor, Tina Marie Scully, offering essential items and beyond to deserving young ones.

The genesis of Froggy's Closet was born out of a need to provide foster families with crucial items such as car seats, clothing, and high chairs. Initially focusing on foster families and working closely with agencies like the Department of Social Services (DSS) and various private foster care organizations, Froggy's has since expanded its reach. The organization now caters to a broader demographic, including needy and at-risk children, collaborating with 20 different agencies within the area, such as Head Start and Winchester's Fremont Day Nursery.

Froggy's Closet's unique model operates on a referral basis, ensuring that those in need receive assistance through their counselors or DSS personnel. This system has opened the doors for many families to access essential items, sometimes more than once, highlighting the critical need within the community. Ingram explains, "Some people think most of us can live with one week of clothing. But if you need it, we understand. We're here to help, not to judge."

February Footwear Month stands as a testament to Froggy's Closet's dedication to providing quality over quantity. A touching anecdote shared by Ingram reveals the moment that sparked a pivotal shift in their operations: upon noticing a child's comment about dirty soles on shoes they received, the decision was made that only new or like-new donations would be accepted. This commitment to dignity and respect for those they serve underscores the ethos of Froggy's Closet, ensuring that children not only have their basic needs met but feel valued and seen.

The organization also faces challenges, such as the fluctuating availability of items due to seasonal changes in retail. However, their proactive approach and community engagement through social media have allowed them to continue meeting demands efficiently. Their upcoming events, including a cornhole/pickleball tournament, Jeep Cruise, golf tournament, and Abnormal Formal, are not just fundraisers but opportunities to unite the community for a common cause. Their signature event Abnormal Formal is Jimmy Buffet themed this year, sure to encourage fun outfits within the abnormal subtheme!



Anne Marie Utz's journey to Froggy's Closet, from meeting Tina Marie to now becoming the driving force behind the organization, reflects a deep-seated commitment to giving back to her hometown of Winchester. Her story is a powerful reminder of the impact one person can have when driven by compassion and a desire to make a difference. "We're here to help, whatever your needs may be."

Learn more at Frog-Kids.org

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BRAD VEACH: INNOVATION AT APPLE BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

Brad Veach, the Executive Director of the Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival, orchestrates the annual celebration that has withstood the test of time. From his humble beginnings as a James Wood High School graduate in 1992 to leading one of the most cherished festivals in Virginia, Veach's excitement about the changes he has created and his future plans gave him a glow as we spoke in his office.

Veach's path wasn't always clear. After dabbling in education at Lord Fairfax and James Madison University, he found his calling within the realm of public service and technology. His tenure with Winchester Parks and Recreation, where he rose to the position of director, laid the groundwork for a career that seamlessly blends community service with technological innovation. The leap from public service to entrepreneurship saw him at the helm of a tech venture, developing apps and websites—a skill he continues to nurture alongside his duties at Apple Blossom.

A significant pivot in Veach's career came from his time with former delegate Chris Collins, a role that, despite its rewards, proved challenging for his family life contending with working in Richmond during the week. This experience led him to the Frederick County Economic Development Authority, where he honed his skills in economic development—a precursor to his eventual role with the Apple Blossom Festival.

Taking the helm of the festival in November 2019, Veach was poised for the usual bustle of event planning. However, the onset of COVID-19 provided an unexpected silver lining. The pandemic hiatus allowed him to dive deep into the festival's financials and operations, setting the stage for a reimagined event that leaned heavily on technology and community engagement. Under his leadership, the festival navigated the challenges of COVID-19, emerging more resilient and innovative, evidenced by the successful adaptation of events and the integration of advanced ticketing systems.

Veach's vision extends beyond managing a successful festival; he aims to make Apple Blossom an inclusive event that celebrates the rich tapestry of cultures within the community. Initiatives like Fiesta Latina and partnerships with the Latino business community are steps toward this goal, acknowledging the festival's role in embracing diversity and fostering a sense of belonging for all. Anyone who attended last year's Fiesta can tell you what a hit it was, with people standing in line for hours to get a peak. The larger location this year will allow more to enjoy the event which is expected to be a big draw again for locals.

Veach and his team are also committed to researching future changes that will make the festival more inclusive such as the parking area launched last year. A section of private parking near Handley High School makes it easier for those with mobility issues to park close to the events and be able to access their seats for the parades and events. This parking is free for anyone with a handicap placard. Collaborations with Access Independence and other groups are helping them explore ideas for the hard of hearing, those with sensory issues, and other ways to include more of the community.

Moreover, Veach understands the importance of tradition while also recognizing the need for progress. His efforts to refresh the festival's offerings, like the Queen's Ball and the integration of eSports is keeping the event relevant and engaging for younger generations. Veach has a dream for a museum dedicated to Apple Blossom's history and the apple industry further to honor the past while paving the way for the future.

In Brad Veach, the Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival has found not just an executive director but a local leader who sees the festival as a blend of community, tradition, and innovation that he wants to ensure will last another 100 years.



Photo Credit Kimberly Needles

Winchester Book Gallery Recommends:



1985. Anita de Monte, a rising star in the art world, is found dead in New York City; her tragic death is the talk of the town. Until it isn't. By 1998 Anita's name has been all but forgotten—certainly by the time Raquel, a third-year art history student is preparing her final thesis. On College Hill, surrounded by privileged students whose futures are already paved out for them, Raquel feels like an outsider. Students of color, like her, are the minority there, and the pressure to work twice as hard for the same opportunities is no secret.

But when Raquel becomes romantically involved with a well-connected older art student, she finds herself unexpectedly rising up the social ranks. As she attempts to straddle both worlds, she stumbles upon Anita's story, raising questions about the dynamics of her own relationship, which eerily mirrors that of the forgotten artist.

Anita de Monte Laughs Last is a propulsive, witty examination of power, love, and art, daring to ask who gets to be remembered and who is left behind in the rarefied world of the elite.

WinchesterBookGallery.com

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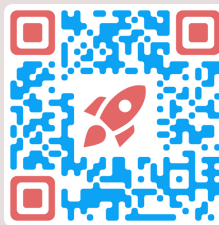
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