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Shepherd Village to Host an Online Open House

Saturday, August 22, 10 a.m. to Noon, via Zoom

Are you interested in learning about our Shepherd Village community? Would you like to know more about cohousing and how it works for us? Whether you're seriously interested in becoming a community member or totally confused about what cohousing is, we invite you to our virtual open house. Mark your calendars for Saturday, August 22, from 10AM to Noon, grab a cup of coffee and join us on Zoom. Check out our [event page](#) for more details and free registration! We look forward to seeing you soon!

Harvesting Sun and Rain

As the hot July sun beats down on our Village, it's satisfying to open the app on our phones and check out the amount of power being generated through solar panels installed on a number of our homes. Our Common House is particularly well positioned to receive those rays; we are able to offset quite a bit of the power we use there. Should we generate more energy than we need, we have the capacity to return energy to the grid for a credit to be used on those inevitably cloudy days.



Many of our members have installed solar panels on their roofs through Solar Holler, a WV company located right here in Shepherdstown.

Solar panels are only one of the ways Shepherd Village seeks to live into our value of “sustainability.” By taking advantage of nature’s gift of rain, we are able to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and nourish our soil and plants with rainwater.



The tops of rain barrels serve as planters, reflect the personalities of their owners, and harvest the runoff from our roofs.

Shepherd Village had the good fortune to receive an EPA matching grant for stormwater management practices. The grant supported the purchase and installation of more than 100 rain barrels used to slow down the first surge of a rainstorm and store water for watering gardens around our homes.

The installation of three rain gardens, as well as extensive systems of berms and swales, captures water and directs it for productive use in growing food and native plants. (See article below)

It isn't easy being green, as the song reminds us. But with time and attention to sun and rain, Mother Nature is ready with a helping hand to improve the way we care for our world and use her gifts wisely.

~ Leah



The largest of three rain gardens that help to catch and absorb rains, slowing down runoff while nurturing native plants.



As Kay's granddaughter Izzy finds, they can provide fun on summer days as well.

Come Home to Cohousing in Shepherd Village Home for Sale

In these times, don't you wish you could live in a caring, supportive community where you really get to know your neighbors, even while social distancing? You can! We have a home for sale!

We are a 1-year-old, active 55+ cohousing community in the walkable downtown district of historic Shepherdstown, WV, a small university town just an hour west of Dulles Airport and convenient to the Washington, D.C. metro area.

The house for sale is a lovely duplex unit featuring an open-plan “great room” with kitchen, dining room and living room, 2 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms on the main floor. A loft with full bath could be used as an office, bedroom, or guest room. There's lots of light, thanks to abundant windows and skylights; efficient eco-friendly heating and cooling. The kitchen features stone counter tops, built in storage island, and modern appliances, including a washer/dryer. There is a generous L-shaped front porch and a screened back porch. The home, built with Universal design principles, features wide doorways and a handicapped-accessible master bath. There are conduits to have solar panels added later if desired.

Learn more about [Shepherd Village](#), what it's like to live in a cohousing community and more details about the home for sale.

Helping Friends and Neighbors



*Andy walks the dedicated duo across the bridge from Shepherdstown to MD and the tow path. The trio go way back as Andy and Sandra's husband worked together to launch the NPR live music show, **Mountain Stage**.*

In these times of cautious social-distancing, we haven't had many guests, but Village residents Andy and Mary recently hosted longtime friends Sandra and her 14-year-old daughter Bonnie, who are walking from Pittsburgh to Washington, D.C., to raise money for Manna Meal, a West Virginia charity that serves the homeless.

Andy and Mary met their friends on the C&O Canal Trail near the Potomac River not far from Shepherd Village last Thursday afternoon, and walked them back to the trail on Saturday morning, after providing a welcome respite from the road, with showers, soft beds and a delicious socially distanced outdoor lasagna dinner, provided by Village neighbor Claudia.

Sandra said the journey provided time for reflection. "I started to realize something of what it's like to be homeless," she said. "You have to carry your worldly possessions with you.

You have to live outdoors in

inclement weather and find a dry place to sleep. You have to plan how to get food, and stay clean. You get to know what it's like to be rootless."

Andy and Mary were happy to support their friends on this important journey; Bonnie has already raised \$32,000 for [Manna Meal](#), far exceeding her goal!

~ Mary



Sandra and Bonnie prepare to leave their home-away-from-home at Mary and Andy's.



On the road again. . .

Village Vehicles Get Support



Shepherd Village has a guiding principle of sustainability. This has prompted the installation of the infrastructure to support members who own an electric vehicle (EV) with on-site charging! Standard wall outlets for low-power trickle charging are installed at every covered parking space. These provide five miles for every hour of charge and are useful for daily plug-in or extended, long-term parking to keep the electric car's battery topped off and ready to go.

We also have three faster, higher-power charging stations near the Common House. They use a standard “J plug” that fits most electric car models, providing 30 miles for every hour of charge. They are easy to use -- just right to prepare for an early morning long-distance trip. ~Steve

Swales and Berms: A Solution for Healthy Soil and Water

They look like large planting beds. They *are* very large planting beds — but they are so much more. The Swales and Berms project at Shepherd Village is intended to reduce soil erosion and runoff, and increase water infiltration.

First, swales (or ditches) were dug down to a depth of 8 inches; the displaced soil was mounded up on the lower end. Then we added in a soil mix. The swales were then filled with wood chips.



The swale is first dug by the machine



The swale is empty and the topsoil is on the berm



Swale filled with wood chips; berm covered with topsoil.

The berms (or mounds) had soil and straw added on top. Their location was determined by following the contour of the land. The combination will help us capture the water as it moves through the land and use it to water our plantings, instead of letting the water run onto the roadway.

Creating the swales and berms took three days, machinery, and a team from our contractor Michael Judd and his company, Ecologia Design, based in nearby Frederick, Maryland. Michael wrote the book *Edible Landscaping with a Permaculture Twist*. We are grateful to our Shepherd Village volunteers who spent hours in the hot sun loading buckets with wood chips and distributing them soil and straw. We have unusually poor, compacted soil here and it will be a joy to see the microbes into the swales. Michael’s team dug the trenches, mounded the clay and rock, and then topped with soil and straw. We have unusually poor, compacted soil here and it will be a joy to see the microbes, worms, composted plant matter, etc., turn it into healthy soil.



This digger is doing the heavy lifting for us. This soil is mostly compacted clay and is going to need some tender loving care to bring it back to being plantable soil.

We are looking at planting interesting and edible trees and shrubs that Michael recommends, such as persimmon, juneberry, pawpaw (Michael's other book is *For the Love of Pawpaws*), rose rugosa, aronia, flying dragon trifoliate orange, goumi berries, elderberry, mulberry, nanking bush cherry and che fruit (mandarin melon berry). In support plants, we are thinking of leadplant (downy indigo bush), horseradish, rhubarb, garlic, comfrey, Egyptian onion, echinacea, blue wild indigo and yarrow. There will also be perennial flowers, such as purple asters and yellow goldenrod.

~ Ellen



Determining where to dig. Michael Judd from Ecologia Design is holding an A-frame, used to locate the contours of the land. Each contour line point will be marked with a flag. SV members Charlotte and Kay are learning how this works.



It takes a village. Here you can see the berms that are below the swales. The berms will be covered with topsoil and the swales are being filled with wood chips. The wood chips will absorb the water and retain it. They will be a water source for the trees when they are planted.

Our Workshop Is Buzzing!

The woodworking shop at Shepherd Village is up and running. We have a spacious, well-equipped shop that is bright and inviting. The shop is heated and air conditioned so it can be comfortably used year-round.



Lynn enjoys bringing her creations to life in the woodworking shop.

Most of our tools were donated by our residents. They include large pieces of equipment such as a drill press, table saw, planer and jigsaw. We also have loads of small hand tools and even a small stock of building supplies.



As the dogs enjoy the exercise area, their human companions are grateful for a place to sit.

We have already built a picnic table and benches and two, stand-alone, heavy-duty benches. The workshop team is available to help residents discuss, plan and build!

~ Lynn



The shady southern end of the Village is a perfect place for the picnic table, Lynn's first creation in the woodworking shop.



*Meeting, Playing, Working, Dancing, Dining, Celebrating,
with Social Distance in the time of COVID*

CONTACT US

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