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Main Street Morgantown adds events for holidays

Annual Christmas parade set for Dec. 5

BY LISA ELLISON

Newsroom@DominionPost.com

The planning for 2022 holiday events is driven by Main Street Morgantown and its Promotions Committee.

The Promotions Committee is chaired by Grace Hutchens and Charlie McEwuen, with Ava Vavrick, promotions and marketing coordinator, working closely with Amy Loomis to make sure the celebration will offer family-friendly fun for everyone.

The support of its partner organization, the Morgantown Area Partnership, made new opportunities for celebrating at the historic Ward Building possible.

In 2021, Main Street Morgantown (MSM) invested \$9,000 in holiday advertising to draw people to the district. MSM is set to do more this year.

Loomis, interim executive director of MSM, said, "We are passionate about our small businesses and their success. Reflecting on the legacy of Main Street Morgantown, looking back to past successes and thinking hard about the activities we believe are essential to a successful and spirited kick-off to the holiday shopping season" was all part of the planning for this year.

The Ward Building lobby, 238 High St.,

will be open for shoppers for the first time and be the "holiday hub," Loomis said.

Many activities were planned for Saturday to kick off the holiday shopping season and attract shoppers to the downtown.

Loomis pointed out that shopping small businesses means "the money you spend keeps circulating in the local economy. It's also personal. You get to know the merchants and their pride in their products."

Finally being free from pandemic isolation, shoppers are "craving the real-world connection from shopping local stores for unique holiday gifts not available in big box stores," said Loomis.

For instance, The Apothecary hosts a Christmas Market Dec. 10 if a shopper is looking for something casual. Shoppers looking for something more quirky and alternative could find that at the First Annual Krampusnacht & Drunk Ghost Stories on Dec. 10 at Gibbies, Loomis noted.

Music fans will want to check out the First Annual Catch Christmas with John Berry at the Met Monday or the choral concert A Winter Gala Friday. River Fair Trade will host an Open House, as will Old Stone House and Hoot and Howl.

Events can be followed on Facebook.

Loomis said the city is offering free parking Dec. 17-26, courtesy of Downtown Merchants and the Morgantown Parking Authority.



William Wotring/The Dominion Post

This mural along Fayette Street is one of many projects Main Street Morgantown has accomplished to improve downtown.

Many look forward to the Tree Lighting Ceremony on Courthouse Square before the annual Christmas parade. This year, that will take place Dec. 5.

The parade will step off down High Street at 6 p.m.

The 2022 Christmas tree was donated by Dominick Claudio.

Loomis said planning this year's parade was affected by the passing of Mike Hopkins, who organized it for years. This time it was organized by a group of volunteers.

"So this year's parade is both a celebration of the season and the legacy of his holiday spirit," Loomis said.

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Morgantown Service League keeps giving to area

BY EVA MAYS

Newsroom@DominionPost.com

The Old Stone House on Chestnut Street, the oldest stone dwelling in Monongalia County, is an icon of Morgantown's past.

But now, as the headquarters of a local organization that works to better the lives of local residents, it is also a beacon for a brighter future.

Built in the latter years of the 18th century, the Old Stone House was at first a private residence. It was designed to be defensible and self-sustaining in case of an outside attack, with two-foot-thick walls, gun ports and a cistern for water. It also served as a place of worship, as it was the site of the first Methodist Church in the area. The structure was added to the National Historic Registry in 1972.

In 1935, the Service League of Morgantown was formed at the request of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt to give back to the local community to improve the lives of local citizens through charitable, educational and cultural activities.

The Service League, then numbering 11 women, chose the Old Stone House as its headquarters. At various points over the organization's almost 90-year history, the house has served as a thrift store and a baby clinic. Now, in its current iteration, the Old Stone House is a popular gift shop staffed by Service League volunteers. All proceeds from sales go to support the organization's community

OLD STONE HOUSE

313 Chestnut St.; 304-296-7825

Open 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Friday and Saturday;
noon-4 p.m. Sunday

outreach services.

Much of the merchandise in the shop is made in West Virginia.

"Small business is so community-based, and we like to support and promote local businesses and authors," said Retail Committee Co-Chair Marlene Pope.

The Old Stone House stocks locally made foods such as honey, jellies, salsa and maple syrup. Handcrafted items include winter gear, jigsaw puzzles, clothing, ornaments, jewelry and pottery. Other popular items include the Old Stone House signature spice tea blend and hand-blown glasswork from the Blenko Glass Co. in Milton.

Shoppers at the Old Stone House are not only supporting local businesses and community outreach. During the holiday season, 20% of sales go to the Old Stone House's selected charity partners. In the upcoming weeks, the charity partners are Meals on Wheels for this week, RDVIC for the week of Dec. 5, St. Ursula's Food Pantry for the week of Dec. 12 and Mon County Child Advocacy Center for the week of Dec. 19.

Pope noted that the shop expects to see a big influx of shoppers during the holiday season, despite the reduced open hours.



Ron Rittenhouse/The Dominion Post

Donna Tennant, a volunteer at the Old Stone House, looks at Christmas items for the Jingle Bell Sale that will be Dec. 2-4.

"We've been struggling to return to normal after the COVID-19 pandemic, but we have a fantastic clientele that supports us well. They come when they know we're open," she said.

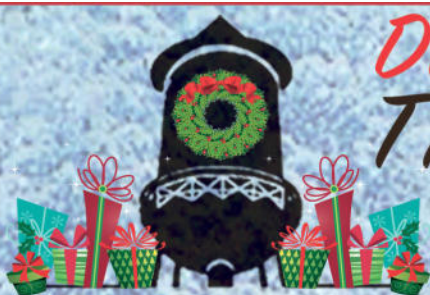
For those who prefer private shopping, appointments are also available and can be arranged by calling or sending a text message that reads "private shopper" to 304-685-5947.

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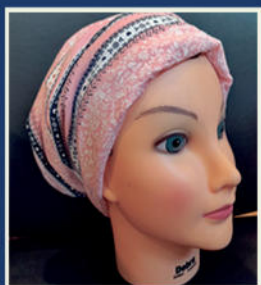
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Merandis thankful for 40 years in business

BY EVA MAYS

Newsroom@DominionPost.com

The co-owners of downtown Morgantown formalwear boutique Coni & Franc have a lot to be thankful for this holiday season.

On Nov. 29, Connie and Frank Merandi will celebrate 40 years in business with champagne, food, music and special sales on their merchandise.

"We're going to make it really fun," said Connie Merandi. "We want to thank everyone who helped make this possible. It has been our joy to serve our clients in Morgantown all these years."

According to Merandi, a commitment to customer service has contributed to the business' longevity.

"I had a background in design, and Frank had great business acumen and excellent taste. The two of us together continually changed the scope of the business and refined it to a point where we specialize in customer service," she said. "We take excellent care of our clients, and that's why we have some that have shopped with us and then brought in their daughters and then are now bringing in their granddaughters, too."

Coni & Franc is busy during the holiday season, supplying finery for many winter weddings.

Merandi noted that the holiday season is a popular time for couples to become engaged, and clients are always welcome,

CONI & FRANC

422 High St.; 304-296-9466

Open 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Friday; 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday; closed Sunday

no matter what stage in the planning process they are.

"It doesn't matter to us if the wedding is in a week or if it's in a year. We give them all the attention they deserve," she said.

The shop has also stocked many items under \$50 for holiday gifts and is also hosting several trunk shows throughout the season.

The shop dresses people for not just weddings but cocktail events, semi-formal, full-length and black-tie events, too.

"The balls are coming back," said Merandi. "People are having holiday parties again. Everyone is trying to find a reason to celebrate. We have the gowns, the jewelry, the handbags and the evening wraps. There's so much packed into our little space."

Merandi spoke of dressing some attendees of the recent Mon Health Medical Center Auxiliary Ball of the Year on Nov. 5. "There was so much glamor. It was a magnificent evening."

Merandi said she is looking forward to the WVU Medicine Children's annual gala, scheduled for Feb. 11, 2023.



Benjamin Powell/The Dominion Post

Along with the holidays, Frank and Connie Merandi are celebrating 40 years of Coni & Franc on High Street.

"We are here to dress people for all these wonderful events," she said and noted that the store is happy to work with people with varying budgets and experience with formal events.

"It's a wonderful thing to see the transformation of a client who maybe doesn't

want to go to an event because they're worried about how to put themselves together. When we can give them confidence and help them see how beautiful they are, and they go to an event with joy, it's great. It makes us feel like we did our job."

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Leather work won out over degree for McEwuen

BY SHAYLENA HESS

Newsroom@DominionPost.com

Figuring out what to get those special people in your life during the holidays can always be hard; as can figuring out where to shop.

How about a local shop known for its craftsmanship and quality leather products?

Shopping locally is important for both the smaller businesses and the local economy. When you shop at smaller local stores, like Tanner's Alley, you are helping the economy in your area grow.

"We get to know our customers and we've had customers for some of them almost the entire time I've been in business, and they become more than customers. They're almost like friends, and we become part of their life and they become part of ours. It's a very personal relationship between me and my customers and I think that they feel that, too," said Tanner's Alley owner Charles McEwuen.

"They know that I am someone that they can count on and I know that they're there to support me. And, I think that shopping locally is how to keep our local economy strong because no matter how much, how convenient it is to shop online or on Amazon or whatever, when it comes right down to it, you have the most effect on your local community whenever you shop local."

Tanner's Alley can be the place for all

TANNER'S ALLEY

416 High St.; 304-292-0707

Open 9 a.m.- 6 p.m. Monday-Friday;
9 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday; closed Sunday

of your leather needs, from a new bag to shoe repair. The shop has items such as purses and totes, luggage bags, briefcases, packs and pouches, belts and more with a price range on items from \$35-\$1,200, in a variety of colors to choose from.

This local shop was founded in 1976 by McEwuen, who still owns it. McEwuen began learning the art of making leather goods in a class he took in junior high. These skills came in handy in 1973 while he served with the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell in Kentucky.

When McEwuen realized he needed a new knife sheath for a knife he had, he decided to take the skills he had learned in school and put them to use, going to the craft shop on post and making one himself.

"All these guys in my unit were asking me to make things for them and so I started doing more leather work and have this little business going while I was still in the Army."

When McEwuen returned from service, he found that he had a decision to make — open his own leather store or go back and finish his degree in geology.

"Opening a leather store sounded



Benjamin Powell/The Dominion Post

Charles McEwuen stands in his shop, Tanner's Alley, where many handmade leather goods can be purchased.

much more glamorous and so at the tender age of 21, thinking I knew all there was to know about leather working, I opened the store and from then on I proceeded to learn all the things I didn't know."

Tanner's Alley started out as a simple little shop on Walnut Street. Originally an

alley, a storefront, back and roof were added to create a shop space. This is where the name Tanner's Alley comes from.

Everything sold was handmade by McEwuen himself. After a few years, the

SEE LEATHER, P-10



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Mother-daughter venture offers discounts on trends

Holiday specials run through November

Newsroom@DominionPost.com

Mother and daughter, Gail Knotts and Bridget Moreland, have teamed up to bring trendy clothing to Morgantown at lower prices.

And, with the holidays around the corner, their shop has some specials planned.

Knotts and Moreland have owned Uptown Cheapskate just outside Morgantown since 2018.

Moreland said the store sells current and trendy styles of clothes, shoes, jewelry, purses and accessories for men and women.

"We offer Vintage, Worth the Splurge and WVU sections as well as new boutique items," she said.

Not a consignment shop, Uptown Cheapskate buys clothing and other items every day. Moreland said they take all seasons, year-round, in sizes XS-3X.

"We don't consign. We are resale and pay cash on the spot or 25% more in store credit," Moreland said. "No appointment necessary. We buy up until one hour before close nightly."

She said shoppers come looking for great deals on name brand items at a fraction of the price. They often have upscale, designer items such as Louis

UPTOWN CHEAPSKATE

5001 Mid Atlantic Drive; 304-381-4568

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Vuitton, Gucci, Fendi, Burberry, etc.

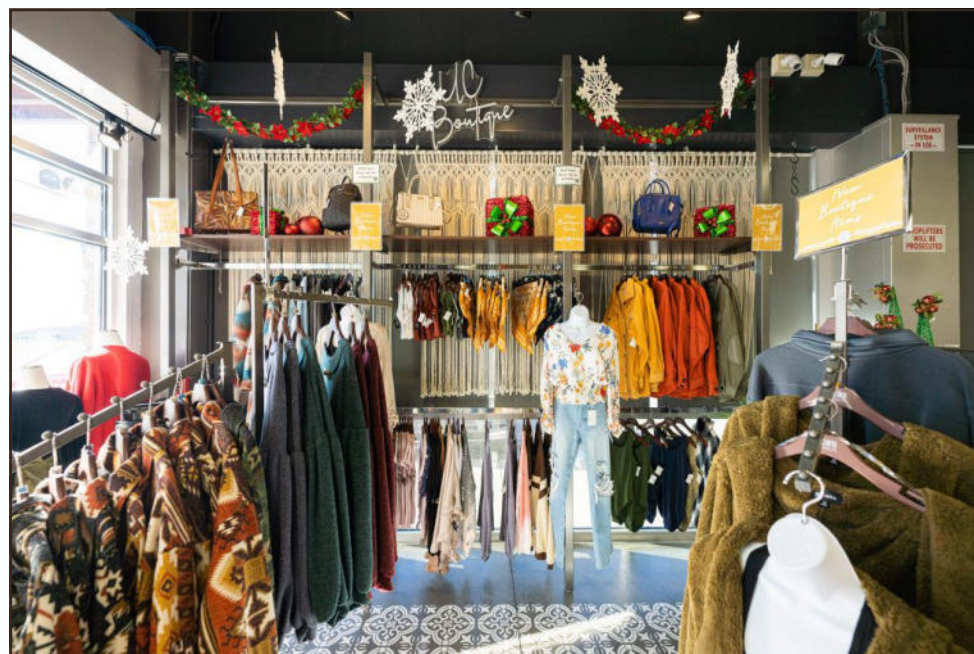
There are monthly markdowns — look for the colored sticker on the tag to coordinate with the discount of 25%, 50% and 70%. They also always offer a 10% discount to military/police/fire/EMS.

Black Friday specials started early and now through the end of November, shoppers can earn a spin ticket when they spend \$40. They can redeem those tickets in December to spin a prize wheel.

Also, Uppie the Elf will hide in the store daily in December, and if found, the shopper will earn \$5 off their purchase.

Looking for a gift or stocking stuffer? Uptown Cheapskate has two Christmas designs and will load the gift card for any dollar amount.

"Uptown Cheapskate is a franchise with 100 locations nationwide," Moreland said. "Each location is a small business and locally owned and run. We will be opening a second location in Clearwater, Fla., within the next year."



Benjamin Powell/The Dominion Post

Mother and daughter, Gail Knotts and Bridget Moreland, have been bringing trendy clothes and other items at discount prices to the Morgantown area for nearly five years.

"WE DON'T CONSIGN. WE ARE RESALE AND PAY CASH ON THE SPOT OR 25% MORE IN STORE CREDIT. NO APPOINTMENT NECESSARY, WE BUY UP UNTIL ONE HOUR BEFORE CLOSE NIGHTLY."

Bridget Moreland
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Charlie

From live plants to special vases, Coombs Flowers has it covered

BY SHAYLENA HESS

Newsroom@DominionPost.com

Have you started to think about what you're wanting to get your family and friends this holiday season, but just aren't too sure where to start?

How about a flower arrangement?

From lilies and roses to live plants, small to large flower arrangements, cut flowers to living plants, simple vases to special containers, beautiful flowers of all sizes, colors and species, Coombs Flowers is the place to go for all of your flower gifting needs.

The holiday season always brings new seasonal flowers, poinsettias for instance. Coombs is known for the unique vases and containers its arrangements come in as well.

"A lot of new items have come into the store, a lot of gift items, a lot of special containers that people can also send a lot of flower arrangements in so it gives them something to keep after the flowers are gone," said owner James Coombs.

Shopping at Coombs means shopping small, shopping local, and stores helps your community and neighbors, the customer service is basically guaranteed.

"You get a more personal touch," Coombs said.

Many people in the area know Coombs Flowers, but don't necessarily know about its long-standing history in the community.

The Coombs family has been serving

COOMBS FLOWERS

401 High St.; 304-292-1571

Open 9-3 a.m. Monday-Friday; closed Saturday and Sunday

the Morgantown area, including Westover, Sabraton, Star City, Granville and all of WVU since 1952 when they first opened on Canyon Road.

That was the beginning of the family's commitment to offering the most beautiful arrangements and gifts as well as the friendliest of service.

Coombs Flowers originally started as a greenhouse on Canyon Road, water came from a pond because back then there was no city water available.

When the pond was undermined by the coal companies it fell in, eliminating the greenhouse's source of water and forcing Coombs to move locations.

Coombs ended up relocating to Fayette Street and transitioned from a greenhouse to a flower shop, in the old Nixon Building, where the parking lot is now.

The shop moved again in 1960 to its current High Street location.

Coombs said shoppers will find the best offerings by stopping in the store.

That way, you see items first-hand, but if it's more convenient, orders can be made at coombsflowers.com.



Benjamin Powell/The Dominion Post

Coombs Flowers on High Street offers fresh cut flowers, plants and special vases and other gift items all year and for the holidays..

THE COOMBS FAMILY HAS BEEN SERVING THE MORGANTOWN AREA, INCLUDING WESTOVER, SABRATON, STAR CITY, GRANVILLE AND ALL OF WVU SINCE 1952 WHEN THEY FIRST OPENED ON CANYON ROAD. THAT WAS THE BEGINNING OF THE FAMILY'S COMMITMENT TO OFFERING THE MOST BEAUTIFUL ARRANGEMENTS AND GIFTS.

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Allison's ready for most wonderful sale of the year

BY KAITLYN EICHELBERGER

KEichelberger@DominionPost.com

Is there someone in your life who always brightens your day? Stop by Allison's Fine Jewelry for an equally dazzling gift.

At Allison's, you'll find something to suit all of your jewelry and accessory needs. From designer bridal lines to custom-made pieces to winter fashion, Allison's has something for everyone.

"What really sets us apart is the hand-picked, one-of-a-kind items you will only find here," said Allison Mogyoros, owner of Allison's Fine Jewelry. "We offer something for everyone with any budget."

Shoppers can explore the variety of items available at Allison's, including designer bridal lines like Benchmark, Fredrick Goldman, Valina and Romance, diamond settings, pendants, earrings, bracelets and more. In addition to jewelry sales and custom design, Allison's also offers jewelry and watch repair, watch battery replacement, cleanings and inspections — even if the item wasn't purchased there.

Beyond jewelry, the boutique carries an assortment of accessories, like handbags, hats and cozy winter essentials like scarves, gloves, and cardigans — everything you need to stay warm and stylish this season.

"[The boutique] is a great place to get that one perfect accessory to go with that one outfit or create a whole new look from

ALLISON'S FINE JEWELRY

Chelsea Square, 1137 Van Voorhis Road, No. 11; 304-599-8080

Open 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Friday;
10 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday; closed Sunday

head to toe," said Mogyoros.

Mogyoros has been the owner of Allison's since 2016, though she's been in the jewelry business far longer — since 1997. To her, Allison's is far more than just a business.

"This isn't just a business we work at, it is our passion and we love what we do," said Mogyoros. "I think that is the big difference in shopping local."

For local businesses, the holidays are an opportunity to help you find that perfect gift for your loved ones. At Allison's, the staff works to ensure you find the right product without breaking the bank.

"The holidays really bring out the spirit of giving, and to know we get the opportunity to be a small or big part of other people's holiday joy is really an honor," said Mogyoros. "You can pick up a gift for a friend, coworker or that teacher you just think so much of."

Continuing their holiday tradition, Allison's will be offering 70% off of jewelry and 30% off boutique items this shopping season.



Benjamin Powell/The Dominion Post

Allison Mogyoros has been the owner of Allison's Fine Jewelry since 2016. She's been in the jewelry business since 1997. In addition to jewelry, Allison's has a boutique with such accessories as handbags, hats, scarves, gloves and cardigans. The store is in Chelsea Square, along Van Voorhis Road.

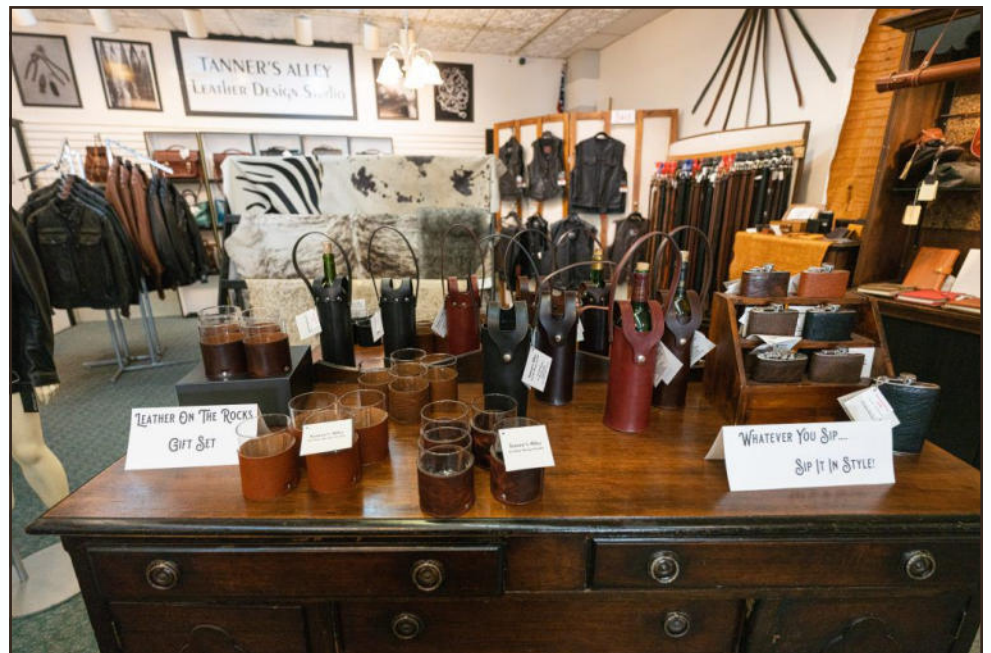
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Benjamin Powell/The Dominion Post

Tanner's Alley, on High Street, offers handmade leather products.

LEATHER

FROM PAGE P-7

shop moved to Spruce Street. Soon a retired shoe repairman introduced himself, told McEwuen that he should get into repairing shoes as well, sold him his equipment and showed him the skills needed to do so.

That was 40 years ago and that service is still offered.

In 1998, McEwuen relocated to 416 High St., and the shop became much more visible to the public.

Shopping at Tanner's Alley allows shop-

pers to see all leather is not the same.

"The thing about leather is it's such a tactile experience and so it's best to come in and be able to touch and feel and explore the products we have," McEwuen said. "People have told me over the years, you know they ordered something leather online, and when they got it, it didn't look or feel like the photograph. I said, 'well, we can eliminate that problem by coming in and actually looking at the product yourself.' So the best way is just come in and visit us and look around the store and explore the items we have to offer and find something you like."

Find the perfect fireplace or grill or gourmet oil

BY LISA ELLISON

Newsroom@DominionPost.com

Rustic By Design opened in 2007 to help people find the right fireplace for them.

Owner Janet Merchant said she “wanted to help our customers see and understand that a fireplace is the focal point of your home. It should be beautiful and cozy.”

Merchant wanted customers to be able to “imagine the fireplaces and stoves in their own homes, including all elements from stonework, hearth, mantel, television mount to the fireplace.”

She said she wanted customers to “not only see them, but to feel their heat and warmth.”

Staff at Rustic By Design can help customers choose among their options for the best fit for their homes and needs.

“Our fireplaces can be designed with a traditional look, a rustic or a more modern style. There are lots of choices. The fireplaces and stoves we sell are mostly made in the U.S. to be efficient quality,”

RUSTIC BY DESIGN

Seneca Center, 709 Beechurst Ave., No. 15; 304-284-8211

Open 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Saturday

Merchant said.

Some customers buy fireplaces for their look and their heat. Some buy just for the look of a fireplace in their home.

Customers can get free estimates. Rustic By Design also does masonry and pools.

Price ranges for Rustic By Design items vary depending “on what they are buying. We sell home accents, Christmas decorations, barbecue grills, pellet grills, smokers, Big Green Egg — a versatile outdoor cooking device — and barbecue accessories,” Merchant said. “We also sell gourmet oils and balsamic vinegars with a tasting bar.”

Most of the Christmas decorations are discounted, and the shop offers military

SEE FIREPLACE, P-15



Benjamin Powell/The Dominion Post

Rustic By Design opened in 2007 to help people find the right fireplace.

For all things sewing, stop by A&J Sewing Studio

BY KAITLYN EICHELBERGER

KEichelberger@DominionPost.com

From sewing machines and classes to fabrics and patterns, A&J Sewing Studio has something for total beginners just learning the craft, seasoned experts searching for inspiration and everyone in between.

“We’re kind of a one-stop shop for all things sewing related,” said Anne Perella, co-owner of A&J Sewing Studio.

She opened A&J with her husband, Joe, in 2019.

The studio offers a wide variety of Bernina sewing machines, but Perella is proud to go beyond just sales.

“I offer sewing machines with free new owner training and lessons, and we provide maintenance support,” said Perella. “So it’s not just something showing up on your doorstep and then you’ve got to figure out the right way to use it.”

The studio offers classes for all levels of sewing experience, including basic sewing, machine quilting and embroidery.

A&J SEWING STUDIO

Seneca Center, 709 Beechurst Ave., No. 21; 304-282-3667

Open 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Saturday

Upcoming class projects include a Santa stocking on Nov. 29, an embroidered Christmas tree on Dec. 1, a poinsettia table runner on Dec. 13, folded Christmas tree napkins on Dec. 15 and quilted gift tags on Dec. 20.

Each class is \$25 and would make a great last-minute Christmas gift or decoration, or just a fun holiday experience with a friend.

If someone on your shopping list is interested in learning to sew, A&J Sewing Studio will be offering a three-session Sewing 101 Beginner’s Class in the new year.

Holiday patterns available for purchase include Santa socks, a quilted tree skirt, a snowflake quilt, gnome orna-

SEE SEWING, P-15



Benjamin Powell/The Dominion Post

Anne Perella stands in A&J Sewing Studio, which she opened with her husband, Joe, in 2019.

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Brewing up a love for tea at The Tea Shoppe

BY KAITLYN EICHELBERGER

KEichelberger@DominionPost.com

Tea aficionados and casual enjoyers alike will want to check out The Tea Shoppe's wide selection of flavorful blends, unique products and themed events.

Nominated "Best Place to Caffeinate" for Best of Morgantown 2023, The Tea Shoppe offers more than 180 flavors of loose-leaf teas. This includes black, white, green, oolong, pu-erh, Rooibos, herbal and fruit blends.

Holiday favorites include a variety of flavored black teas like Apple Spice, Frosty Plum Spice, Pumpkin Spice, German Gingerbread and Candy Cane.

Its Tea Samplers would make a perfect gift for the tea lover in your life, each themed package containing four flavors and making around 30 cups in total. The Holiday Tea Sampler includes Santa's Milk & Cookies, Mulled Spice, Holiday Winter Spice and Winter Palace Marzipan Rooibo.

Or consider a subscription to the Tea of the Month Club, including three new teas from around the world each month. Each box also contains a flyer with information on the included teas, recipe and brewing suggestions, health benefits and more.

Beyond tea, visitors can enjoy gourmet sandwiches, quiches and paninis, freshly made salads, homemade soups, bakery items and more. Everything is made fresh, in-house.

The Tea Shoppe also carries a range of

THE TEA SHOPPE

Seneca Center, 709 Beechurst Ave No. 23; 304-413-0890

Open 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Saturday

tea accessories, from tea cups and teapots to infusers and canisters.

Lisa Biafore and her daughters, Rachel and Regina, have run The Tea Shoppe together since 2013 with the goal of bringing an appreciation for tea to Morgantown. Biafore has received multiple certifications from the World Tea Academy and the staff takes a Tea 101 class to ensure customers receive the best service possible.

The Tea Room itself offers a whimsical aesthetic, highlighting the Seneca Center's historical architecture and The Tea Shoppe's elegant decor. An assortment of special events are held here, the schedule filled with tea tastings, themed tea parties, tea etiquette classes and more.

To celebrate the holiday season, The Tea Shoppe will be hosting a Charles Dickens-themed Literary Tea-vent on Dec. 7, a Harry Potter-themed family tea party on Dec. 10 and a Holiday Tea Tasting on Dec. 14. Visit the website for registration — theteashoppewv.com.

Shopping locally this holiday season supports the community as a whole, said Biafore. "We are a family-owned business, so we appreciate people coming in to shop locally."

Special holiday sales will be offered online and in-store through Monday.



Benjamin Powell/The Dominion Post

Lisa Biafore and her daughters, Rachel and Regina, have run The Tea Shoppe together since 2013 with the goal of bringing an appreciation for tea to Morgantown.

HOLIDAY FAVORITES INCLUDE A VARIETY OF FLAVORED BLACK TEAS LIKE APPLE SPICE, FROSTY PLUM SPICE, PUMPKIN SPICE, GERMAN GINGERBREAD AND CANDY CANE. TEA SAMPLERS WOULD MAKE A PERFECT GIFT FOR THE TEA LOVER IN YOUR LIFE, EACH THEMED PACKAGE CONTAINING FOUR FLAVORS AND MAKING AROUND 30 CUPS IN TOTAL.

Couple brings taste of New York to Seneca Center

BY JIM BISSETT

JBissett@DominionPost.com

It's a long way from pancakes on the griddle to ground camel in a skillet.

"Hey," Vanessa Martenson said, with a little laugh. "It does keep things interesting."

And besides, she adds: "Love can always make you do interesting things."

Such as closing your successful restaurant in your hometown of Hudson, N.Y.

And then moving with your fiancé and best friend to his home state of West Virginia, so you start all over with another restaurant on track to follow the same culinary trajectory.

Martenson and James Bailey — the fiancé and best friend everyone calls "Jay" — did just that in June, with their two young sons in tow.

In the meantime, it hasn't taken long for "Vanessa's Kitchen" to serve itself up as a food destination in Morgantown's historic Seneca Center, which was once a decorative glass-making hub for the region, from its bricked perch on Beechurst Avenue.

There are steaks of every stripe (and strip), a French Onion soup people are now asking for, Po' Boy sandwiches and much more.

Ribeyes. Sushi-grade tuna.

The one-of-a-kind "West Virginia Fish and Chips," which consists of lightly breaded rainbow trout, house-made cocktail sauce and tartar sauce, heaped with French fries.

VANESSA'S KITCHEN

Seneca Center, 709 Beechurst Ave.; 681-209-2577

Open noon-9 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday; noon-11 p.m. Friday and Saturday; noon-9 p.m. Sunday; closed Mondays

Smoked meats, also — Jay oversees that — and seafood.

And more seafood.

The latter, Martenson brought with her, in effect.

Hudson is about 100 miles or so from the shores of the Atlantic, meaning what grows in the sea goes on the plate.

"Up there," Bailey said, "more people order seafood than steak."

"And it's the opposite down here," Martenson said.

Check out the restaurant's Facebook page for the full rundown, they said, then come order it in person.

Recipe for a career

Martenson said she may have been pre-ordained to do what she does.

"It doesn't hurt being Italian, either," said the woman whose maiden name is Soresino.

She still remembers the first thing she made: Pancakes, in her grandma's kitchen.

"My grandma was this little Italian lady and I was a little, little girl," she said. "I'm sure I was standing on a foot stool."



Benjamin Powell/The Dominion Post

Vanessa Martenson and James Bailey own Vanessa's Kitchen together in the Seneca Center on Beechurst Avenue.

As a teenager, she got a leg up in her future industry by working after school and weekends in restaurants in Hudson — and one of her early bosses told her that she just might "have the makings" to be a chef.

She was wondering the same, so after high school, it was off culinary school in Miami and Rhode Island.

Exotically delicious

Martenson came back home to open her Red Barn restaurant, and one of her regulars turned out to be Bailey, who hails from Alum Bridge, in Lewis County. He was upstate, working on a shale exploration crew.

SEE VANESSA'S, P-15

Jack and Jill: Luxury products to ‘suit’ your needs

BY KAITLYN EICHELBERGER

KEichelberger@DominionPost.com

Jack and Jill Menswear was founded in the 1950s as a dry cleaner and tailor.

Decades later, it's proud to offer luxury menswear for all occasions, from suits and casual wear to custom-made clothing.

"We have some of the finest products made around the world," said Frank Tatta, owner of Jack and Jill Menswear. With name-brand items made in the USA, Italy, Spain and more, there's something to fit all tastes.

Shoppers can also browse a selection of accessories, including ties, belts, pocket squares and shoes.

Alongside offering deluxe menswear, Jack and Jill also provides tuxedo rentals, dry cleaning and custom tailoring.

Jack and Jill's Fairmont location was opened in 1955 by Tatta's parents, the late Louis and Rose Tatta.

Since taking over the business in 1978, Tatta has opened the Morgantown location, expanded its inventory and even recently started his own collection.

Tatta's original clothing line, Tatta Collection, features suits, sport coats, shirts, ties and more — all with a per-

JACK & JILL MENSWEAR

3009 Northpointe Plaza; 304-225-1161

Open 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Friday; 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday; closed Sunday

sonalized touch.

"I bought the fabrics, designed it out myself and had it made," said Tatta. "It gives a more personalized part to the business."

This has been a longtime goal of Tatta's, and the collection has been a hit among customers.

Shopping locally this holiday season will support business owners like Tatta, and leave you with more suitable products.

"When you shop online, you never know if you're getting exactly what you think it is," said Tatta.

"Here, you're gonna see it, feel it, touch it and get the item that you want."

Shopping at Jack and Jill isn't just a more personal experience, it's tailored specifically to you.

Knowledgeable staff will ensure you leave the store looking and feeling your best.



Benjamin Powell/The Dominion Post

Frank Tatta, owner of Jack and Jill Menswear, stands among the clothing options available at the Northpointe Plaza store.

TATTA'S ORIGINAL CLOTHING LINE, TATTA COLLECTION, FEATURES SUITS, SPORT COATS, SHIRTS, TIES AND MORE — ALL WITH A PERSONALIZED TOUCH.

Village Salon Wigs, thriving, giving in Morgantown

BY LISA ELLISON

Newsroom@DominionPost.com

Village Salon Wigs, owned by Brenda Waller, will be participating in the Seneca Center Christmas Open House Dec. 15-17.

Waller said, "Rumor has it that Mrs. Claus will be visiting and there will be many family events and holiday sales with hours extended for both Thursday and Friday."

Customers who purchase any item on those days will be entered into a drawing to win a free wig from the current store inventory. Additionally, customers will get \$5 off any purchase of \$25 or more.

Prior to this location, Waller ran the business from her home for a year and a half, until the business outgrew the space. Waller enjoys the diversity of Morgantown's people and culture as an ideal place for her business.

There are no plans for another move.

"I truly like the atmosphere and the location is convenient for our clients. It has been of great benefit for me to have the extra exposure to a higher volume of traffic," she said.

Although Village Salon Wigs appeals most to "those who are suffering from hair loss," Waller said, some customers are just seeking "a change in style or color without the permanent commitment or cost of maintenance."

What's new for 2023 at Village Salon Wigs?

Waller said, "I am looking forward to expanding our service to include men's wigs and furthering our online social media presence."

Waller has been a licensed cosmetol-

VILLAGE SALON WIGS

Seneca Center, 709 Beechurst Ave. Suite 6; 681-285-8857

Open 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Saturday

ogist for 36 years and has been teaching in the field for a decade. She currently teaches part-time at Laurel College of Technology, but will retire from there in January.

Her post-retirement plan is to invest more time at Village Salon Wigs.

"The part I absolutely love the most is working with the customers," she said. "There is nothing more rewarding than restoring dignity and confidence to a client who has hair loss. I see the tears as well as the joy and smiles on the faces of those who look in that mirror and see themselves again after suffering the trauma of hair loss."

"It is indeed priceless. I'm not really sure who is more blessed in that moment, them or I; it's a toss up for sure."

Waller works with Mon Health Medical Center's wig bank, which supplies wigs to cancer patients.

She said Trisha Julian "heads up that department and has such a heart for her patients. I love working with her to supply wigs to cancer patients who otherwise could not afford to buy one."

Village Salon Wigs made it a mission to provide quality, affordable wigs, which formerly were not available in Morgantown.

She does custom fittings to make sure her customers get what they need. Wigs from all over the world come in three



Ron Rittenhouse/The Dominion Post

Brenda Waller, owner of Village Salon Wigs, fits a wig on Patricia McDade.

varieties, including synthetic, human hair and Remy, which are a mixture.

The wigs start at \$35 and come from a variety of vendors, including Jon Renau, Paula Young and Forever Young Wigs.

Village Salon Wigs offers a 10% discount for cancer patients, military, med-

ical personnel, first responders and police officers.

Customers can visit the Facebook page and website to place orders and arrange shipping, or just to browse before coming into the store. Village Salon Wigs can be found at <https://www.vsw709.biz>.

"THE PART I ABSOLUTELY LOVE THE MOST IS WORKING WITH THE CUSTOMERS."

Brenda Waller, Village Salon Wigs owner

Star City eatery offers fresh, local meals and treats

BY ERIN CLEAVENGER

ECleavenger@DominionPost.com

Fresh. Local. Made from scratch.

This has been the motto and main driving force behind Terra Cafe since its inception in 2011.

Located along the rail-trail in Star City, the artisanal eatery provides a relaxed atmosphere and features an award-winning bakery, delicious farm-to-table soups, salads and sandwiches, specialty coffee and smoothies and a locally focused tap list.

“We strive for an atmosphere of hospitality. We always want to make guests feel at home and provide them with the freshest ingredients and high quality, interesting presentations,” said General Manager Tanner Floyd.

“We always say that we believe you should know what’s in your food. And so we offer fresh, delicious meals that are made from scratch using local ingredients.”

Floyd said they create daily features highlighting the seasonal flavors of the produce provided by their partner farms, which include Mountain Harvest Farm, Possum Hill Farm, Brookside Farm and Round Right Farm.

“One of the other things that I think is particularly special about Terra is that all of the bread that we use for everything from our sandwiches to French toast, down to the smallest croutons — anything bread-based — is made from bread that we bake in house daily,” Floyd said.

In addition to fresh breads, the bakery,

TERRA CAFE

425 Industrial Ave., 304-554-2233

Open 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday; 8 a.m.-8 p.m. Thursday-Saturday; 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Sunday; closed Monday

which Floyd said has earned them the Best of Morgantown award for Best Sweet Indulgence, makes use of those local seasonal ingredients to make delectable pastries, cakes and cookies.

For the holiday season, the cafe will be offering seasonally themed coffee and pastry specials, which Floyd said customers can find out about by following them on Instagram and Facebook.

The bakery will also be offering specialty cakes and cookies that customers can order by calling into the cafe at 304-554-2233 or emailing catering@terra-cafe.com.

Floyd said they also offer coffee beans from their roasting partners Quantum Bean Coffee and Mountaineer Roasting Co.

“Of course, as always, we have art for sale in the cafe from our local artisans,” Floyd said. “And that’s everything from screen prints to multimedia works to pottery and jewelry.”

Terra customers can also find Terra Cafe branded T-shirts and tote bags as well as gift cards.

“Something unique about those gift



Benjamin Powell/The Dominion Post file photo

Line Cooks Caden Lucas (left) and Harrison Austin serving meals to customers at Terra Cafe.

cards is they are valid at our partner restaurants as well — so at Riverbirch Cafe and Sargasso as well.”

Full menus for coffee and beverages,

breakfast, lunch, dinner and brunch, bakery offerings and catering information are available at terracafe.com.

TWEET @DominionPostWV

“WE ALWAYS SAY THAT WE BELIEVE YOU SHOULD KNOW WHAT’S IN YOUR FOOD.”

Tanner Floyd, general manager

Boutique pays homage to glass-cutting history

BY EVE MAYS

Newsroom@DominionPost.com

When the Seneca Center was still Seneca Glass Co., suite 26 was where the fine glassware destined for prestigious tables throughout the world was cut and polished before distribution.

The current proprietor of the space, Sandy White, paid homage to that history when she named her business The Cutting Room Boutique.

White was an employee of The Finery, which occupied the same space in the Seneca Center for over two decades. When The Finery’s owner retired, White decided to open her own shop.

The Cutting Room Boutique has provided a curated array of women’s clothing, accessories and shoes to the Morgantown area since 2018.

“When you feel good, you look good,” said White, and she loves to help her customers feel confident and beautiful.

She endeavors to get to know her client base so she can bring items into her shop that suit their needs and tastes.

The Cutting Room stocks clothing for a variety of body types in sizes from XS to XXL. A good fit can enhance comfort and flatter the figure. To this end, alterations are available by appointment.

Patrons can make personal shopping appointments at the Cutting Room for themselves or a small group by calling 304-413-2800.

White is supportive of her neighboring Seneca Center businesses. She noted that

THE CUTTING ROOM BOUTIQUE

Seneca Center

709 Beechurst Ave., No. 26; 304-413-2800

Open 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Saturday; closed Sundays

a group of friends could enjoy a quiet, more personalized shopping experience after normal operating hours and then close the evening with a dinner at Vanessa’s Kitchen, which is open until 9 p.m.

Some items stocked in The Cutting Room are made locally, and many come from far-flung locales like Italy, Turkey and New Zealand.

The shop features the work of roughly 35 designers, and White takes care that her offerings are unique — she never buys more than six pieces of a particular item for her shop.

Many of the items in the shop, including accessories and ornaments, would make prime holiday gifts. Gift certificates are also available for purchase. Complimentary wrapping services are available for items purchased as gifts for the holidays or other special occasions.

On Dec. 16 and 17, the shop will be participating in the Seneca Center’s annual holiday open house. Though typ-



Benjamin Powell/The Dominion Post

Sandy White stands among the offerings at her Cutting Room Boutique.

ically open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday, the Cutting Room will remain open until 8 p.m. during the open house.

“All of the shops in the Seneca Center will contribute something,” said White.

The Cutting Room will be supplying appetizers, and White noted that there will also be tea and other beverages, caroling and a visit from Santa Claus.

SANDY WHITE ENDEAVORS TO GET TO KNOW HER CLIENT BASE SO SHE CAN BRING ITEMS INTO HER SHOP THAT SUIT THEIR NEEDS AND TASTES.

VANESSA’S

FROM PAGE P-12

“And here we are,” he said.
“Yep,” the chef seconded.
Both are having a lot of fun serving up the culinary creativity, they said.
Bailey most recently smoked an alligator that went over big.
Oh, and that ground camel?
Well, for starters, it’s a “Hump Day” special, Martenson said — “And it’s like nothing you’ve ever tasted.”
The chef also plans on introducing ostrich to the menu, she said.
“We want our restaurant to be unique and special,” she said.
“That’s because our customers are unique and special. West Virginia is beautiful. And we love Morgantown and all the history of the Seneca Center, with the glassmaking.”

TWEET@DominionPostWV

SEWING

FROM PAGE P-11

ments and more.
Shopping locally saves on shipping and supports small businesses, said Perella.
“I’m here to be able to support my customers,” she said. “And I appreciate them coming out to support my business and to support me.”
The Seneca Center’s Holiday Open House, held Dec. 15, 16 and 17, is the perfect time to do just that, said Perella. “It’s a great chance to come out for last-minute gifts, and a good opportunity to support folks who are here locally.”
A&J Sewing Studio is offering great savings all season long. Register for classes on the website — ajsewingstudio.com.

FIREPLACE

FROM PAGE P-11

and first responder discounts as incentives to shop in Rustic By Design. Merchant believes the variety of items in the shop will encourage shoppers to check out the store.
Who should shop there?
“Anyone who is looking for a fireplace, stove or insert,” Merchant said. “Someone who needs a great unique gift idea for Christmas as we have a wide variety, especially in our gourmet and barbecue inventory.”
Merchant hopes to bring in new customers for 2023 who “are planning to build, or if they want to add a fireplace to their existing home. New customers might also be those wanting to update an older fireplace,” she said.
The store can also help customers add more outdoor living space to a backyard. Its lead builder has “over 30 years of construction experience,” as stated on the website, whose customers may also view the work on the site. Customers can take a virtual tour online or walk in to see the showroom.



PRESENTING THE SOAP OPERA

Seneca Center, 709 Beechurst Ave.; 304-292-1211
Open 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Saturday

Benjamin Powell
The Dominion Post



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William Wotring
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