

12/01/07

“Lewisburg, WV”

by
Tom Holbrook

I was trying to describe to some friends just what Lewisburg, WV means to Judy and me and one description popped out of my mouth without even thinking... “Lewisburg is the most eclectic community I’ve ever seen.” Just to be sure I hadn’t given it a title that fell short of my true feelings for my former hometown I checked out my trusty Webster’s New College Edition and found that I was right on with my statement. The word ‘eclectic’ is defined as: 1) Selecting what appears to be the best from diverse sources, systems, or styles, and 2) Made up of components selected from diverse sources. An absolutely perfect description of this beautiful community nestled in the hills of Southeast West Virginia.

My many years of living in Lewisburg made me appreciate the talents and personalities of those who made it their home as well, and through whom Lewisburg’s personality came to life. Never have I seen a small community, especially as small as Lewisburg, filled with so many people so diverse in background, talents, goals, leadership qualities, age, shapes and sizes. Lewisburg is rich, in the true sense of the word, with folks just bubbling over to become involved with the development and protecting of Lewisburg’s heritage and history.

Having not lived in the confines of the Greenbrier Valley for several years now I must admit I had forgotten just how ‘eclectic’ Lewisburg is. I was reminded when Judy and I were able to zip through the county for a few days stay with family and friends for Thanksgiving. On the very first evening we arrived we were off and running to the “Wild Bean” for an original play to be performed by local talent. (For the uninitiated the “Wild Bean” is a beyond-quaint coffee house in downtown Lewisburg on Washington Street.

The play was well written by a young lady (Courtney Smith) whose day job is making children happy with some of the best toys around from her very successful store, “Honnahlee.” (Also located on Washington Street, just down from the Wild Bean.) A cast of 14 talented local teens and much older children (sorry Larry and Mitch,) spent the better part of 90 minutes more than adequately sharing a comical tale of the “Holiday Reunion,” or better known by those in attendance as the “Brown and White Family Reunion.” It was a truly enjoyable evening sipping freshly made hot chocolate and laughing at the histrionics of two fictional families celebrating their lineage.

Later in the week my 8 year old grandson told us we just “had to” visit the new library in town. He was so excited about it and literally insisted we couldn’t leave town without seeing it. I remembered Rotary meetings years ago, representatives of the Greenbrier Public Library were

asking the club to donate monies to build a badly needed new facility but I never heard what came of the project until this trip.

Not to disappoint, we drove up Washington Street and my grandson pointed to the Library sitting majestically on the hill above the New River Community and Technical College (formerly the Greenbrier Community College.) I couldn't believe the beauty of the place... it was beautiful. As we walked into and all around the brightly lit, well appointed building, I mentally compared that which had been the previous Library to this fantastic edifice. What a great gift to the community.

Again my thoughts were... "What a bunch of positive and interactive people these Lewisburgians are to participate in making this dream a reality." Then I remembered all the other tremendous accomplishments this same community had credited to their record. Through the years the people of Lewisburg have selflessly given of their money and talents to make previous dreams a reality... Greenbrier Community College's multi-million renovation and restoration; Carnegie Hall's unbelievable transformation and successful operation; and the building of a brand new, year round Greenbrier Valley Theater in the old Leggett's building on Washington Street.

Millions upon millions of dollars raised and invested in making Lewisburg one of the most culturally diversified communities in the entire state. There is no other community, small or large, as active in supporting the arts and artists as Lewisburg, WV and your crown of achievement, with its most recent jewel shining brightly, has been placed on your head to let the whole community know that a center of knowledge available to all, is now open for their enjoyment and enrichment. I am so proud to have been a part of this wonderful town and I want to thank those visionaries who worked so diligently to make the dream come true especially the late Robert W. McCormick who spearheaded the drive.

I'm sure the current Board of Trustees will continue the Library's growth and expansion as needed under the more than capable chairmanship of Dave Nalker. Dave and I have served on several boards together and he has always shown himself to be organized and dedicated to the success of any venture in which he was involved. He's also a great Barbershop Baritone if anyone's interested. I hope everyone is as proud of Lewisburg and its residents as I am.

Please allow me to close this article by sending my condolences to Jeanne Hamilton, her children Trip and Barbara, and her grandchildren, on the death of her husband Lawson. He was a good man and a great friend to Lewisburg, Greenbrier County and all of West Virginia. He is gone but will never be forgotten.

#

