

HERE SHALL THE PRESS THE PEOPLE'S RIGHTS MAINTAIN, UNAWED BY INFLUENCE AND UNBRIBED BY GAIN.

Newtown Heritage Festival has something for everyone

By Mark Gunderman

Stephens City's biggest annual event gets underway Memorial Day weekend. The 2023 Newtown Heritage Festival (NHF) will entertain all who attend. This lower Shenandoah Valley event is going to be all about fellowship. There will be something for everyone – music, appetizing food vendors, broad and diverse craft tents, free guided history trolley tour, museums, classic car and truck show, main street parade and fireworks.

Families schedule reunions around the event each year, old friends are back in town and children are mesmerized by the live experience. This two-day event is all about promoting a hometown experience. Come Saturday afternoon, Newtown Commons will evolve into an electrifying fun packed, family filled get-together. It is what makes small towns the heart and soul of America.

On Friday May 26, the festival music begins at 6:30 pm with perennial favorites “Crosswinds” and “Souled Out” performing on the Newtown Stage. Crosswinds is based in Frederick County and perform today's Country Hits...and the Classics that count and do some 90's alternative rock. Souled Out is a Funk/R&B/Soul/Rock band, from Winchester. This high-energy dance band encourages fans to dance the night away with a long list of tunes guaranteed to satisfy all age groups.

The music is followed by the outdoor family night movie “The Sandlot,” sponsored by Seth and Kelly Thatcher. The Sandlot is a genuinely sweet and funny coming-of-age adventure. Bring lawn chairs or blankets and enjoy the music and movie.

Saturday May 27, will kick-off at 8 am with a Veteran's Day Observance on the Memorial -- Old Stephens City School. The featured speaker is Stephens City Mayor Mike Diaz.

About thirty craft vendor tents will be on site hawking hand-made jewelry, arts and prints, tote bags, soaps, candles, woodcarvings, and blacksmithing small-scale art.

Food vendors will be serving customers traditional festival menu items such as barbecue, custom hot dogs and hamburgers, cheese steaks, pizza, street tacos, wraps, nachos, and novelty ice cream, kettle corn, freeze-dried candies, sweet deserts, snow cones and funnel cake.

For in depth Stephens City history, folks may take an

11 am or 4 pm free guided trolley tour presented by Rick Kriebel, Stone House Foundation Manager of Collections and Programs, titled “West of Main.” This year's seven stop history tour will cover the west side of town. African American history, old town commons, and nationally notable residents will all be featured comprehensively! The one-hour tours will depart from the Newtown History Center.

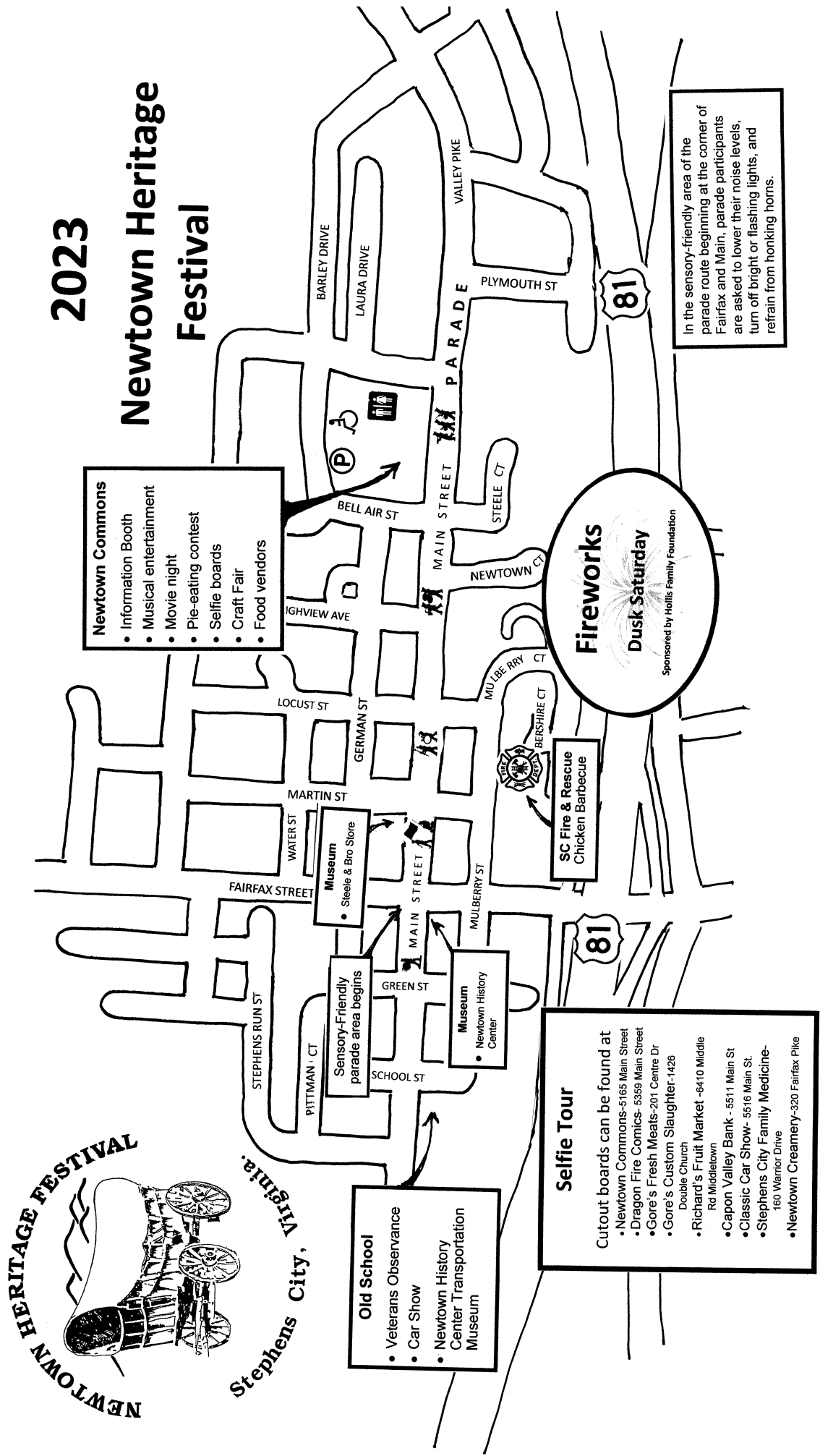
The 2 pm north-south Main Street, one-mile-long parade through the historic district highlights the hometown festival. The parade continuously wows the crowd with an honor guard, local marching bands, business and church floats, beauty pageant winners, dignitaries, boy scouts, civic groups, antique cars, firetrucks, military vehicles, and numerous walking groups. There is an excitement in the air come 2 pm when approximately 2,500 residents' line both sides of the street and sit on curbs, fences, walls, porches and in lawn chairs, waving, shouting, laughing, and soliciting the attention of parade participants. The parade fosters a sense of affection and joy within our community. Plaques will be awarded for the Adrian O'Connor Best Display of Heritage, Best in Originality and Best Overall Appearance.

The music starts up again on Saturday at Noon with the “Newtown String Band” at the Newtown Stage. The Lexington band is self-described as Acoustic/Bluegrass/Americana genre. The sweet-picking foursome, will play the ‘Music of the Valley.’

From 3 pm to 6:30 pm, the festival will introduce newcomers’ “Gunner Heathe” and “A Little Too Serious.” Gunner Heathe, a Front Royal native, will perform a mix of Country/Rock/Alt covers, and his own original music. An Indie/Alt Rock band from Winchester, “A Little Too Serious,” will play their own original songs.

Closing on stage at 7 pm to bring on the night will be “Dunlap & Mabe.” With roots planted firmly in bluegrass, the band stretches their sound in ways that all audiences will enjoy. Absolutely killer fun, and unforgettable.

The NHF Festival will wrap-up with a scintillating fireworks display, to the delight of 3,000 spectators, and sponsored by the Hollis Family Foundation.



Newtown History Center



Trolley Tour

This year's trolley tour will cover the west side of town. Tours will depart from the front of the Newtown History Center (5408 Main Street) at 11am and 4pm. There is no charge for tickets but reservations are required. To reserve your tickets email NHFtour@gmail.com. Please indicate requested tour time. Heritage Festival staff ask that guests arrive 10 minutes before the scheduled tour time.

Pie-Eating Contest

The Newtown Heritage Festival Committee along with our local Stephens City McDonald's restaurant will host a pie-eating contest on Saturday during the Festival. There will be two age groups: adults (13 and older) and youth (12 years and under). Contestants may register at the Festival before 5:00 on Saturday. Prizes will be awarded.



Miss Newtown Ambassadors



As you enjoy the festival, keep an eye out for the 2023 Miss Newtown Festival ambassadors. These winners of the Miss Newtown pageant held on May 7 will be in the parade and then around the festival at the various events and venues. For a complete list of all the winners go to the 2323 Miss Newtown Festival page on Facebook.



Car Show



The Newtown Festival will be holding the 2nd Annual Car & Truck Show at the Old Stephens City Elementary School at 5516 Main Street on Saturday, May 27th from 9:00 AM to 1:00PM. Classic car shows have long been a staple of car enthusiasts, a place for fellow collectors to share their treasured antique cars and trucks.

Car owners get your vehicles polished up and join us at the Show on the 27th. For more information, call Ron at 540.327.2748.

Selfie Tour Expanded



This year, the Selfie Tour has expanded and welcomes you to visit each one for a memorable collection of Selfies! From stand up images of a Conestoga wagon and handheld head cutout boards, you can transform into a dragon at Dragon Fire Comics, the Mona Lisa at Gore's Meat, a flower in a giant bucket bouquet, a vintage car driver at the Newtown Car Show, or be a medical professional at Stephens City Family Medicine. They will be peppered around the Commons and throughout the Town and surrounding area to provide great photo opportunities. Check them out and snap some pictures. Post them on Facebook at #NHF23 for all to see. The map on the back cover will help you plan the path of your 'Selfie Tour'.

Facebook Page



Festival Website



2023 Commemorative

For a stylish yet practical addition to your Newtown pottery collection, make sure to pick up this year's plate style spoon rest. This blue and gray Grandville Pottery commemorative is the perfect place to rest spoons and ladles. Avoid messes in the kitchen while paying homage to your local community and its rich history of wagon making. The six and a half inch round spoon rests with the Festival logo and date will be available for \$20 each at the Information Tent at the Commons during the festival or at the Town Office.



WALK INTO HISTORY

An important part of the mission of the Newtown Heritage Festival is to promote the historical significance of Stephens City. To fulfill this goal, the Newtown History Center is presenting three different museums throughout the town. The Tavern building at 5408 Main Street houses exhibits of local craftsmanship, the town's early history, the Civil War, and early African America history. Local museums will set up tables in the Tavern's side yard. The Wagon Exhibit at 5516 Main Street focuses on the local wagon making industry of the early 1800s. It houses a covered wagon, as well as the various tools used to make a covered wagon. Enter the Steele & Bro. Store at 5353 Main Street and you will step back in time to the store filled with items which were actually available for purchase when it was operating in the early twentieth century.



2023 FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

Pre-Festival-Sunday, May 7

Noon – Miss Newtown Pageant- Doors open at 11:00 am
Laurel Ridge Community College

Friday, May 26- On the Commons

6:30– Souled Out & Crosswinds

Dusk- Movie on Main Street featuring *The Sandlot*
Sponsored by Seth and Kelly Thatcher

Saturday, May 27

8:00 AM – Veterans Observance –
Veterans Memorial-5516 Main Street

9:00 AM- 1:00 PM Car Show – Old Stephens City School
5516 Main Street

ALL DAY- Selfie Tour- various locations

Pick up map at Commons Info booth

10:00 AM- Commons- 5165 Main Street

Festival Information Booth

Commemorative Sales

Pie-eating Contest Registration

History Tour registration and ticket call

Food Vendors

Craft Show

10:00 AM-4:00 PM Museums open

Newtown History Center Transportation Museum-
Old School-5516 Main Street

Steele & Bro. Store- 5353 Main Street

Newtown History Center & Museum Hamlet- 5408 Main.St.

11:00 “West of Main”

Guided Trolley tour created by Newtown History Center. Tour is free but tickets are required. Reserve your seat by emailing nhf4tour@gmail.com.

11:00 am – 1:00 PM Chicken Barbecue (Drive thru and takeout)

Stephens City Fire & Rescue- 5346 Mulberry Street

12:00 Noon-1:45 PM -Newtown String Band

Commons stage-5165 Main Street

2:00 PARADE – Main Street

Awards sponsored by Stephens City Lions Club

3:00 -6:30 Gunner Heath & A Little Too Serious

Commons stage-5165 Main Street

4:00- West of Main”

Guided Trolley tour created by Newtown History Center. Tour is free but tickets are required. Reserve your seat by emailing NHF30th@gmail.com.

5:00 PM – Pie-Eating Contest- Commons -5165 Main Street

Sponsored by Stephens City McDonald's

Youth and Adult divisions. Pre-registration required.

7:00 PM – Dunlap & Mabe- Commons stage-5165 Main Street

9:00 – **FIREWORKS-**

sponsored by the Hollis Family Foundation

2023 FESTIVAL SPONSORS

As of 5/1/2023

FIREWORKS

Sponsored by

Hollis Family Foundation

WAGON MASTERS

Bowman-Shoemaker Companies

Black Shutter West Antiques & Vintage

Capon Valley Bank

Enders & Shirley Funeral Home

Gore's Meats

H.N. Funkhouser & Co.

Miller Ace Hardware

Valley Fleet Service

Valley Health

Woodgate Petroleum Co.

TRAIL BLAZERS

Animal Medical Center of Frederick County

Christabel Sweeney, DDS, PC

Clem's Garage, Inc.

Cloth Peddler Quilt Shop

Elite Insulation & Concrete Lifting

Freedom Ag and Energy Cooperative-SC

Lantz's Pharmacy

Newtown Music Center

Shenandoah Elevator Company

Stephens City Lions Club

WAGONEERS

The Bank of Clarke County Foundation

Gentle Family Dentistry- Dr. Adam Arria

Gregory's Inc.

Newtown Veterinary Clinic

Stephens City Insurance Agency Corp.

Stephens City Imports

Thomas Moore Lawson, P.C.

IN-KIND SUPPORT

Appleland Sports Center

Blokd Squared Website Hosting

Commercial Press, Inc.

Stone House Foundation

Dudley Rinker

Stephens City Fire and Rescue

Stephens City McDonald's

Frederick County Sheriff's Office