

PARSONS
1400 Shepherdstown Rd., Martinsburg, WV 26041-2204 • 800-725-4200
BUY 24 HOURS, 7 DAYS ONLINE

NOBODY BEATS A PARSONS DEAL! NOBODY!

BAD CREDIT? IT'S OK!
WE'LL FINANCE IT!
CALL 800-725-4200
www.parsonsmotors.com

CLICK HERE FOR THIS WEEK'S SPECIAL

Vacation Planner
Sporting Events
Special Events

The **HERALD-MAIL Online** Know more...
HAGERSTOWN - WASHINGTON COUNTY, MARYLAND

Hagerstown, MD

40°F
Fair

Feels Like: 33°F
Humidity: 51%
Wind: NW at 12 mph
Enter city/zip **GO!**

SEARCH OUR ARCHIVES! • MORE OPTIONS

- NEWS SPORTS CLASSIFIED ADS PLACE AN AD ARCHIVES ADVERTISEMENT CONTACT US

- FRONT PAGE
- LIVE - ONLINE CHAT
- LOCAL NEWS
- TRISTATE HEADLINES
- SPORTS
- OPINION
- BUSINESS/MONEY
- LIFESTYLE
- LOTTERIES
- HEALTH NEWS
- FOURMAJORS
- OBITUARIES
- COMMUNITY
- OUT & ABOUT EVENTS
- EDUCATION
- SUNDAY DRIVER
- PHOTO GALLERY
- CORRECTIONS
- NEWS - COUPONS
- NEWS - YARD SALES
- SCHOOL CLOSINGS
- HOMETOWN GUIDE

HomeSource
& LOCAL PROPERTY LISTINGS

HomeSourceMetro.com

iServices
MANAGE YOUR PAPER ACCOUNT

CHAMBER of COMMERCE

Nominate Someone
PERSON of the YEAR

CLICK HERE
TRANSFORM YOUR CHOICE

FREEDOM of INFORMATION

Find out who's online now!

What do you think?

How concerned are you about the possibility of a worldwide avian flu outbreak?

- Very concerned
- Somewhat concerned
- A little concerned

ONLY AT A&T FALL INTO SAVINGS! THE SUNDAY HERALD-MAIL for 99¢!

PRINTER FRIENDLY **E-MAIL TO A FRIEND**



Thursday November 10, 2005
Underneath it all
Martinsburg tunnels being studied
by **CANDICE BOSELY**

MARTINSBURG, W.VA.

martinsburg@herald-mail.com

Part of a tunnel at The Adam Stephen House in Martinsburg, W.Va., has been excavated. Jerry Bowen is president of Tri-State Grotto. Quarterly digs are conducted to help find the filled-in tunnel. (Photo credit: by Richard T. Meagher / Staff Photographer)

A stop along the Underground Railroad for slaves seeking freedom?

A hideout for soldiers during the Civil War?

A means of escape from Indians?

Nobody knows exactly when a series of tunnels that begin underneath several homes, including the home of Martinsburg founder Adam Stephen, on the eastern edge of Martinsburg were built or their original purpose.

A microgravity study started Wednesday afternoon might help yield some answers, or at least pinpoint the exact location of the tunnels.

Jeff Bray, with Lewisburg, W.Va.-based Maxwellton GeoSolutions Ltd., donated his time and equipment Wednesday to survey the area around The Adam Stephen House off East John Street to try to find the path of the tunnels.

An entrance to what might be a tunnel system is in the cellar of the circa-1789 Adam Stephen House and could be the reason Adam Stephen built his home there, said Keith Hammersla, curator for the home.

If safety allows it, Hammersla said he hopes the tunnels can be opened to the public. That possibility is likely years away, he said.

In the cellar

Spelunkers with Tri-State Grotto, a caving group, have been excavating the entrance to the tunnel in the cellar of the Stephen home for the last five years.

Decades ago, approximately in the 1930s, a private owner of the home dumped dirt down into the hole while replacing the kitchen floor, said John Di Carlo Jr., a member of the caving group who portrays Stephen in re-enactments.

To remove the dirt, Tri-State Grotto members have been using a device called a "wacker," which Di Carlo likened to a three-foot hammer drill.

The group also is excavating another possible tunnel entrance in the cellar of a home on East King Street, and have dug 40 feet down.

There are stories associated with the tunnels, including that of an elaborate cave network.

"As time goes on, things become a little more mythical," said Di Carlo, of Keedysville, Md.

Still, some theories might have been borne out. One of the stories is that the tunnels were used as a moonshining operation, and Di Carlo said broken fragments of a brown moonshine-type jug were found.

Jay McDowell
ALLIED HOME MORTGAGE CAPITAL CORPORATION

Thinking of buying a home?
In this **Hot** market, you need to be pre-approved before you shop!
Call Jay to get pre-approved! It's Easy, It's Fun & It's FREE!*
Click here for my ad and a unique valuable coupon.

*Some restrictions apply



ADVERTISEMENTS
TOP JOBS

[See all Top Jobs!](#)

- [Wedding Consultants](#)
- [Customer Service](#)
- 1 [Alterations / Shipping / Receiving](#)
- 2 [LTL Drivers](#)
- [Customer Care & Claims Professionals](#)
- 3 [Technical Representative](#)
- 4

Are you looking for your dream home?



Herald-Mail's Home Source

Feel the paper. Smell the ink.

Your source for local news!
HERALD-MAIL

CLICK HERE TO Subscribe today!
Call 301-733-5131 or 800-626-6397

iHireRealEstate.com
100's of real estate jobs and 1000's of real estate candidates! Instant...

EBay.com - Save Money and...
Find Job Title products and anything you are looking for on Ebay. Ope...

Ads By ContextWeb

Not concerned

[Submit Vote](#)

[View Results](#)

"We're finding things that match up to legend," he said.

Many people, most of whom are dead, remembered playing in the tunnels as children, Hammersla said.

For the most part, he said, the tunnels took advantage of the area's natural geology, but some portions of the tunnels are manmade.

A gravimeter

It was not shovels and picks that Bray used to try to find the path of the tunnels. His equipment consisted of a small GPS device and a box-shaped machine that contains a computer and a 1-inch quartz spring that is as wide as a couple of hairs.

The gravimeter measures fluctuations in gravity beneath the earth's surface. Because it takes its surroundings - buildings, walls and other items - into effect, Bray had to take his equipment home to do a final accurate analysis.

He said the results should be available no later than today.

Using small orange flags, two parallel lines were set up around the outside of the house, with data stations spaced 10 feet apart.

A reading was taken every second for a minute, totaling 60 readings per data station. Bray said he can discard any anomalies, such as a false reading caused by a passing car.

He squatted by the machine and watched with interest its reaction when a freight train rumbled past, just a few feet behind the house.

Typically, Bray said he would charge around \$1,500 to \$1,700 for the work he performed for the Adam Stephen Association.

Adam Stephen

Adam Stephen was born in Scotland, but his exact birth year is not known. Different articles and information give his birth year as between 1718 and 1721.

A surgeon, Stephen came to the United States in 1748 and settled in Fredericksburg, Va., to practice medicine.

In 1770 and 1773, he bought land totaling 818 acres with plans to create what is now Martinsburg.

Stephen served during the French and Indian War and American Revolution, but was dismissed from service. On Nov. 13, 1777, Stephen, who had obtained the rank of general, was found guilty of "misbehavior" during the battle of Germantown, Pa., and also of drunkenness in noncombat situations.

Days later, Gen. George Washington, a former political rival of Stephen, approved the dismissal and Stephen was cashiered out of the Army on Nov. 20, 1777.

Martinsburg was chartered in 1778. Stephen died in the town he founded on July 16, 1791, and is buried beneath a monument on South Queen Street.

Reader Comments:

From: princetennis 11/10/2005 10:23	This is very interesting! I hope it does open to the public in a few years.
From: jeannine 11/10/2005 12:58	"Many people, most of whom are dead, remembered playing in the tunnels as children, Hammersla said." Fantastic! What did they do, hold a seance?
From: rmarksb 11/10/2005 19:00	thats a good one

Add Your Comment:

Only logged-in users can post comments.
To log in, [click here](#). To create a user account, [click here](#).

Related Stories:

No related stories at this time

[Click here to register for your free Herald-Mail e-bulletin!](#)

[Back to top](#)

©1996 - 2005 The Herald-Mail Company
Local: (301)733-5131
Toll-free: (800)626-6397