

# Digital evidence mounts in Mount Jackson arson case

By Joe Beck

WOODSTOCK – The case against a Mount Jackson couple charged with arson has been slowed by what the prosecutor on Wednesday called a “voluminous” amount of digital evidence that must be provided to defense attorneys for their evaluation.

Shenandoah County Circuit Judge Dennis L. Hupp scheduled another hearing for Oct. 14 to give attorneys for Dolly and Robert Wimer time to review the evidence assembled by Commonwealth’s Attorney Amanda McDonald Wiseley.

“Your honor it is voluminous,” Wiseley told Hupp, adding that she spent an hour and a half copying files off of one data storage device to another.

The Wimers, both of 176 Brannertown Lane, and two co-defendants are facing a total of 17 felony counts related to a fire that destroyed a 9,200 square foot barn. The barn is part of an estate that has been the subject of a

bitter legal dispute between the Wimers and the sister of a deceased man who once owned it.

The Wimers and their two co-defendants were living at 176 Brannertown Lane at the time of the fire on July 27, 2014.

The property and barn once belonged to Robert Wine, who died in 2011, a year after he deeded the 227-acre tract to Dolly Wimer and three years after he named her as sole beneficiary of his will.

Wine’s sister, Anna Johnston, has filed a lawsuit in Rockingham County accusing Dolly Wimer of gaining control of the property by taking advantage of his declining mental state in the last years of his life.

The barn fire on Brannertown Road is one of four fires, three of them arson, in the Basye-Bryce area since February 2014.

Shenandoah County Fire Marshal David Ferguson said he has determined the most recent fire on June 27 at an abandoned two-story home at 3373 Orkney

Grade Road to have been caused by defective electrical wiring.

An arson at the Bryce Hotel at 1378 Orkney Grade Road on Feb. 23, 2014, was started by three juveniles who were arrested and prosecuted, Ferguson said.

Ferguson said the only arson classified as unsolved is a fire that destroyed an abandoned trailer at 4937 Orkney Grade Road on June 13, 2014.

Ferguson said anyone with information on any of the fires should contact his office at 459-6167.

Joyce Fadeley, the county zoning administrator, said she intends to contact the owner of the property on which the trailer was destroyed to get her to clean up the debris, which remains more than a year after the fire.

“It’s been a while,” Fadeley said of the length of time that has passed since the fire. “We try to give people some time to clean it up but at some point we have to give them a little nudge.”