



Mountain messenger

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The Weekend Newspaper for the Greenbrier Valley - Lewisburg, West Virginia

Rotaries, football team members volunteer with Penny Pitch Fundraising continues for area families

"No one is useless in this world who lightens the burden of another." — Charles Dickens.

As we get closer to our \$60,000 goal, we are filled with gratitude for everyone who has donated and for everyone who has helped this year. Rotary clubs in Lewisburg, White Sulphur Springs, and Western Greenbrier; Smoot Ruritans; Ronceverte Jaycees; members of the Democratic Women's Club; and the Greenbrier East Football Team are groups that have been working hard to make sure food is delivered and families in the program are having their immediate needs met. We are thankful for all of their work, and it is all of you who have donated that makes Penny Pitch possible! We are currently at \$43,050. Thank you!

- Donations:
- In memory of Richard & Sue Coffman - \$50
 - Marvin & Doris Godbey - \$50
 - In memory of Harvey Neel - \$100
 - Anonymous - \$1,000
 - White Sulphur Springs Lions Club - \$300
 - Everette Clendenen & Marietta Lyall - \$100
 - Carol R. Olson - \$50
 - Daywood Foundation (Charleston) - \$10,000
 - Richard & Patricia Ford - \$200
 - Eugene Jeffus and James Withrow, Jr. - \$200
 - In memory of Donnie Adwell from children & grandchildren - \$100
 - Edgewood Presbyterian Women (Lewisburg) - \$400
 - Grand Home Furnishings (Lewisburg) - \$400
 - Ted & Anne Knight - \$200
 - In memory of Virginia, Lee and Karen Goodall by Ken & Rachel Goodall - \$100
 - Wesley Sunday School Class of Lewisburg United Methodist Church - \$100
 - Clifford & Jennifer Huffman - \$150
 - In memory of Johnny & Elva Clemons. W.E. "Sniffy" and Tawnuah Surgeon - \$100
 - Bob & Jill Modlin - \$200
 - George & Betty Gillespie - \$50
 - Ed & Sue Rock - \$100
 - In memory of Andrew and Steven Andrew Detch from Helen Detch - \$500
 - In memory of Ron Wiseman from Midge Wiseman - \$50
 - In memory of Shelby Tomlinson from Dr. John Tomlinson, Sr. - \$50
 - Latelle and Amy Kirsten Lafollette - \$1,000
 - Margaret Lafollette - \$200
 - Dina and Joe Vaughan - \$100
 - Jeri S. Gammage - \$150
 - Judith C. Walz-Harris and Robert G. Harris - \$100
 - Michael Corley & Linda Knupp - \$750
 - Mildred L. Rutledge - \$100
 - Over the Hill Gang Bowling League - \$130
 - Linda Wheeler - \$200
 - David & Barbara Sanders - \$200
 - Genevieve B. Taylor - \$50

See "Penny Pitch" Page 5

Greenbrier Valley preps for expanding variety of outdoor adventures

A new bike park at White Sulphur Springs, continued construction of the Meadow River Rail Trail, a new gravel racing challenge, and efforts to complete the L&R Trail are all on the horizon in our area.

By Sarah Richardson

An economic boom is anticipated for the Greenbrier Valley region thanks to a variety of outdoor recreation projects currently in development across the county. The Greenbrier Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau hosted a meeting to discuss these projects and their plans for the region's outdoor recreation economy earlier this week. Members of the CVB, elected officials, and regional development

See "Outdoor Adventures" Page 11

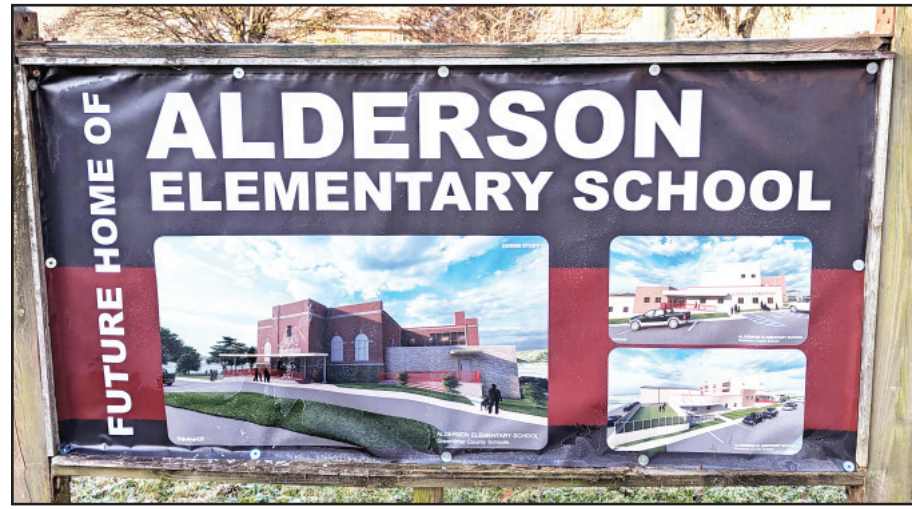


Clay Elkins and Sarah Elkins present plans for a bike skills park and new trails in the Greenbrier Valley.

Greenbrier County Schools breaks ground on new Alderson Elementary

By Adam Pack

On Dec. 13, a crowd made up of Alderson Elementary School students, parents, citizens, and local officials gathered to witness Greenbrier County Schools and the Board of Education break ground on the future site of Alderson Elementary School, the current Alderson Community Center and former Alderson High School and Junior High School. See "Alderson Elementary" Page 2



A sign at the site displays a mockup of the new elementary school's design.

School Board recognizes Service Personnel of the Year, finalizes fate of Rupert School

By Adam Pack

The Greenbrier County Board of Education met for their regularly scheduled meeting on Dec. 13 at 6 p.m. at the Kyle & Ann Fort Arts and Science Center. Present at the meeting were 2022 Greenbrier County Service Personnel of the Year, Jerry Baker and Tracy Walkup, custodians at Smoot and Rainelle Elementary. The two were honored as Service Personnel of the year earlier in 2022, but at the See "School Board" Page 2



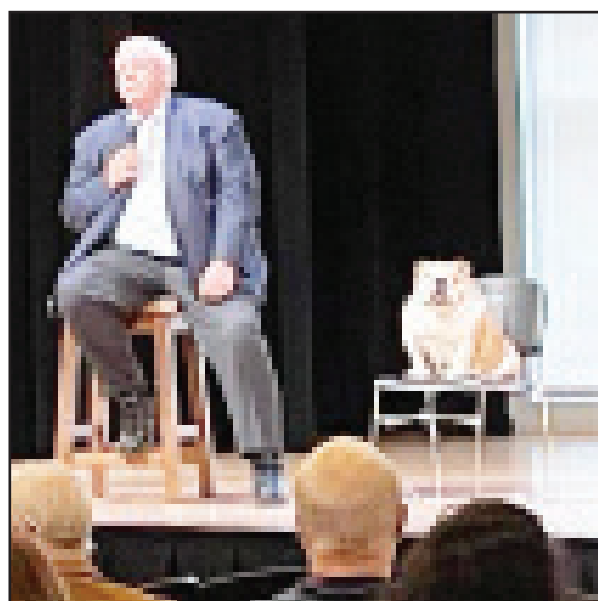
Jeff Bryant, Superintendent GCS (left); Tracy Walkup, Custodian, Rainelle Elementary; Jerry Baker, Custodian, Smoot Elementary; and Darlene Sparks, GCS Dept. of Human Resources.

WVSOM commemorated 50th anniversary with 'Founders Day' celebration

By Matt Young

WV Press Association
The West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine (WVSOM), on Monday, commemorated its 50th anniversary with a special campus "Founders Day" celebration. Gov. Jim Justice and Babydog were on hand for the event, along with WV-SOM President James W. Nemitz, several state and local officials, and surviving family members of the school's founders.

"This is a very special day - establishing Dec. 12 as WVSOM Founders See "Founders Day" Page 4



Gov. Jim Justice and Babydog were on hand for the "Founders Day" celebration. (WV Press Photo by Matt Young)

Contour Airlines off to flying start at LWB

By Adam Pack

The Greenbrier County Airport Authority met for their regular monthly meeting on Dec. 12, at 10 a.m. Air Director Brian Belcher began the meeting by reporting progress on the airport entrance.

"Work has begun on the entrance sign; the construction company has already set some buried rebar as well as PVC pipes in preparation for the pouring of a small concrete foundation. On that foundation will be stone [fascia], and then comes the installation of the sign itself," said Belcher. He stated that he felt he spoke for the whole commission when he said he was very excited about the sign finally being done, as its completion has run into many of the same problems that other building projects have in recent months with delays.

Belcher went on to add that the kick-off event for Contour was, "a huge success, with so many people coming out and showing interest and spreading the news." Furthermore, Belcher added that, "since then the working relationship has been great, with great service from Contour. They have been very on-time with only one cancellation so far." He added that the airline is "loaded up" through Oct. 31, 2023 with See "Contour Airlines" Page 3

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Inside This Week
Number of Sections: 1

GENERAL
Briefly 3
Club & Church 6
Classified 9
For the Record 3
Obituaries 5
Opinion 4

ENTERTAINMENT
Steppin' Out 12
Sudoku Puzzle 10
Dining Guide 10





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Alderson Elementary

Continued from Front Page

Described by the board in a post on the Greenbrier County Schools website as a “\$14,419,000 innovative adaptive reuse, renovation, and restoration” of the current community center, the project is expected to be completed around the end of 2024. The ceremony began with the presentation of the flags of the United States and West Virginia by members of the Greenbrier East JROTC, all three of whom were graduates of Alderson Elementary. The assembly was then led in the pledge of allegiance and The National Anthem by the Alderson Children’s Choir.



The Alderson Community Center, formerly the Alderson High and Junior High School, will be the site of the new Alderson Elementary upon completion of extensive refurbishing, renovations, and additions.



Members of the Board and distinguished guests: George Brooks, Greenbrier County Schools Director of Operations (left); Kurt Schmidt, Director of Architectural Services for the SBA; Matt Breakey of the Thrasher Group; Susan Bowyer, Alderson Community Center Board of Directors President; Ed Niswander, Principal of Alderson Elementary; Superintendent Jeff Bryant; and Board Members Jeanie Wyatt, Richard Parker, Andrew Utterback, Mary Humphreys, and Paula Sanford-Dunford

Greenbrier County Schools Superintendent Jeff Bryant then spoke, introducing the members of the board as well as honored guests, all of whom “had such a vital and crucial hand and had such vision to move forward and make this a reality, and without whom we couldn’t have done this.” Bryant noted the presence of each member of the Board of Education, the Board’s Chief Financial Officer David McClure, members of the Alderson Community Center’s Board of Directors including Board President Susan Bowyer, Dana Womack, Director of Architectural Services for the School Building Authority, Matt Breakley of The Thrasher Group, Ed Niswander, principal of Alderson Elementary, members of the City Council in attendance, and Alderson Mayor Travis Copenhaver.

as caretakers of the facility, it really is in amazing condition. It’s the way you kept it up, and only by that are we permitted to move forward with this project.” Bryant also mentioned the contributions of Hazel Reed and Kay Smith as being “the originators of the vision for this project.”

Also in attendance and given special mention were representatives from DCI Shires Inc., who are contracted to complete the renovation, refurbish, as well as construct additions planned for the building. Bryant concluded his remarks in saying that he and the board were so excited to have “a new, modern, clean, safe, and state-of-art facility for the students and faculty of Alderson.”

Board of Education President Jeannie Wyatt said, “For years we were at the drawing board trying to figure out how we can get a new facility so

that the students of Alderson would have a wonderful place to provide education to these students. For all those years, and all that work, I just want to say thank you; to the community, to the parents, to the students, to the staff and faculty for being patient with us.” Wyatt said that she and the board were so grateful to the School Building Authority, who were instrumental in funding the project, saying that they “saw our vision.” Wyatt spoke for all the excited faces in the crowd when she said “we cannot wait to get back here for the ribbon cutting ceremony.”

Dana Womack, director of Architectural Services for the School Building Authority, rose and extended the excitement and congratulations of the School Building Authority Committee members, its President, and Governor Jim Justice. He spoke

on behalf of the people of West Virginia’s “dedication to provide facilities for students to receive a quality education.” He reminisced about renovations to his own local high school, noting, “though they changed everything about it, they didn’t take away any of the history: I hope all of you here who remember this school have the same experience.”

Speaking next, Matt Breakey of the Thrasher Group expressed his pleasure at seeing all the plans, drawings, and work finally come to their beginning, and seeing the real point of it all; “the excited, exuberant faces of these kids in attendance here today.” Breakey relayed the correlation he sees between the building of this new school and the building of the Artemis Project: “this article stated that the Artemis Program will create a way-station on the moon, a way-station for researchers and explorers to go on to Mars and further out. Really, that’s what the building of this school represents; a way station to the exploration of each and every one of these students’ career dreams and goals, taking them out into this community, this county, and beyond.”

School Board

Continued from Front Page

board meeting they were formally recognized and given their unique trophies, a framed picture of each of the two with the students they serve.

Darlene Sparks of the Greenbrier County Schools Human Resources Department presented the awards “All you have to do is look at the photos [the awards] of these two with students and it melts your heart; thank you for the wonderful job you do for Greenbrier County Schools, and it’s obvious our students and staff love you, and we’re very fortunate to have you,” she said.



Jeannie Wyatt, Greenbrier County Board of Education President, and Meadow River Valley Association President Matt Ford sign the pertinent documents transferring the old Rupert Elementary School to The Association while Greenbrier County Schools CFO David McClure (left) and Meadow River Valley Association Vice President Dave Lungsten (right) look on.

The board then moved to finalize the transfer of the old Rupert Elementary School Property to the Meadow River Valley Association. Greenbrier County Schools CFO David McClure spoke, explaining that “we’ve been going through this process for two or three years now, and we’re so very pleased tonight to finish this process with the final transfer of the old Rupert Elementary School to the Meadow River Valley Association. Through the years, the board has had such a tremendous partnership with the MRVA, and we really believe in the work they’re doing in the community of Rupert and the Meadow River Valley.”

With that, Vice President of the Meadow River Valley Association, Dave Lungsten, addressed the board on behalf of the Association. “I just want to say thank you, especially

on behalf of Matt Ford, President of the MRVA, and I say thank you for all the support you’ve given for the last three going on four years... It’s just been a fantastic relationship.”

Lungsten detailed the work that is going on around the old elementary school and the plans that The MRVA has for the campus. “We’ve established an early childhood See “School Board”_ Pg. 3

Fatal crash in Rainelle December 11

On Sunday, Dec. 11, at approximately 6 p.m., members of the Greenbrier County Sheriff’s office were dispatched to a motor vehicle accident that occurred on US Route 60 near Rainelle.

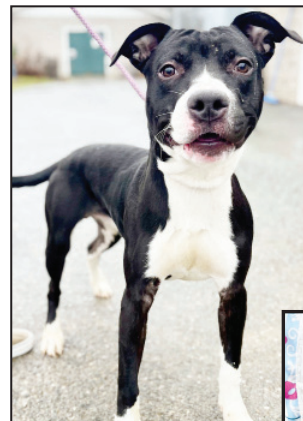
The subsequent investigation revealed the occurrence of a head on collision between eastbound and westbound vehicles.

The driver of one of those vehicles, identified as Dencil Kincaid, 50, of Meadow Bridge, WV, succumbed to his injuries at the scene. A passenger, as well as the driver of the other vehicle, were transported to medical facilities due to injuries sustained in the accident.

Multiple emergency services providers responded to the scene.

Deputy H. Rodriguez, of the Greenbrier County Sheriff’s Department, is the lead investigator.

PICK OF THE LITTER



DONTAE
Dontae is a one year old male pit bull terrier and weighs 54 pounds.



COLETTE
Colette is a one-year-old female domestic shorthair.

These and other animals are available at the Greenbrier Humane Society, located at 151 Holiday Lane off of Rt. 60 West in Lewisburg. They are closed Sunday and Monday, and are open from 11 a.m. through 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday.

Their cat adoption fee is \$65 and covers spay/neuter surgery, first kitty vaccinations, rabies vaccine, de-worming, toe nail trim and flea treatment.

Their dog adoption fee is \$85 and covers spay/neuter surgery, first dog vaccinations, rabies vaccine, de-worming, toe nail trim, flea bath and flea treatment.

Call 304-645-4775 for more information.

They also offer donation-based spay/neuter vouchers, and clinics are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. They use a lot of vets in the area but the clinics fill up fast! Fill out an application to help prevent animal overpopulation! Call 304-645-4775 for more information.

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Briefly

American Heritage Music Hall, Inc.

located at 496 Island Park, Ronceverte, is open to the public, all welcome, handicap accessible. Listeners and tourists welcome. Admission \$7 Tuesday nights, \$10 Saturday - Audience provides food. Doors open at 7 p.m. Jam & Dance every Tuesday 7 to 10 p.m. **New Year's Eve Dance on Dec. 31 will feature Ivan & The Outlaws 8 to 12 Midnight.** The Music Hall is available for weddings and parties. For more information call the Music Hall at 304-645-4667; Bill Evans at 304-392-6079; Grace Poe at 304-992-5852.

City of Ronceverte announces

Christmas decorating contest

The City of Ronceverte is partnering with The Sportsman Tavern for a town-wide Christmas decorating contest. The top three winners will receive gift cards, and judging will end on Dec. 23. Let's make the City of Ronceverte shine this holiday season!

Rainelle Town Council

meetings are held every second and fourth Monday of each month at 7 p.m. at Rainelle City Hall. The public is invited to attend.

Gbr. Co. Farmland Protection Board

meets on the fourth Thursday of each month at 10:30 a.m. at 804 Industrial Drive, Suite 5, in Maxwelton. The public is invited to attend. Call 304-520-3221 for more information.

For the Record

Deeds

Marianna Funk and Steven Funk to Jocelyn Dickinson and John Rios, Lot No. 163, West Hollow Subdivision, White Rock Mountain Retreat, White Sulphur District
Mary C. Jackson to Mark S. Gesner, 19.8 Acres, Frankford Tax District
Ridgeview Investment Properties, LLC to The City of Ronceverte, Lot Nos. 18 and 20, Ronceverte Corp., City of Ronceverte
Denita Marie Rhodes and Dwight Wayne Rhodes to Leslie Eugene King, Jr. and Kathryn Fry, 67.38 Acres, Meadow Bluff District
James G. McCutcheon and Malachi J. McCutcheon to Teresa Flint-Aarikson and Robert Aarikson, 2.41 Acres, Frankford District
Roger Todd Boone to Lance Chapman Pritt and Micah Nicole Pritt, 2.50 Acres, Irish Corner District
Morris Jarrell to Tim J. Lambert and Charity D. Lambert, 4.74 Acres, Falling Spring District
Michael R. Hunter and Pamela L. Hunter to Daniel J. Butler and Ashley L. Butler, 55 Acres, Meadow Bluff and Williamsburg Tax Districts
Abigail Baer to Caleb Lilly and Megan Cozort, Lot No. 36, Echols Acres Addition, Lewisburg District
Glen R. Diehl and Twyla R. Diehl, to Seal & Real LLC, 1.2 Acres, Falling Springs Corporation
Frank E. Holland to Tammy Morgan, Lot No. 27, Edgewood Addition, White Sulphur Corp.
Deborah S. Kyle to Deborah S. Peal to Christopher M. Harrah, Lot No. 5, Meadowbrook Estates Subdivision, Frankford District
Seneca Trustees, Inc. to PennyMac Loan Services, LLC, Lot No. 17, White Sulphur Springs District
Howard A. Hughes and Frances J. Hughes to Steven W. Erskine and Julie A. Erskine, 0.99 Acres, Frankford District
Jeffrey L. Cline and Bonnie J. Cline to David Charles Persinger, 3,928 Sq. Ft., Town of Rainelle, Meadow Bluff District
Roger Pence and Tamera Pence to David Blaine, 24.572 Acres, Williamsburg District
Wilma L. Feury to 706 Tuckahoe, LLC, 0.693 Acre, White Sulphur Corporation
Maura J. Lindbergh to Edith F. Arbaugh, 18,911 Sq. Ft., Lewisburg Corporation
Jerry A. Manspile to Brenda F. Harris, 0.11, Cottonwood Place, Town of Rainelle, Meadow Bluff District
Donna Canaan Gilkerson, Paula Canaan Reisz, and Mary Canaan Randall to Carolyn M. Hicks, 0.12 Acre, Town of Rainelle, Meadow Bluff District
Sandra C. Vanluik to Cynthia L. Deskins, 0.689 Acre, Lewisburg Municipality
James Christopher Carte and Gregory Carte to Holly E. Clark Jr., 0.202 Acre, Meadow Bluff District
Mark Vestal, Kevin Parker, and Kevin Wells to Greenbrier Ave. Church of God, Lots Nos. 35 and 54, Hughart Addition, Town of East Rainelle, Meadow Bluff District

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Public Meetings

Lewisburg City Council

will meet Tuesday, Dec. 15, at 7 p.m. in regular session in the Paul R. Cooley Council Chambers, 942 Washington Street, West. Also available via Teleconference. For information on how to participate on ZOOM contact Lewisburg City Hall 304-645-2080 by 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday. On the agenda:

- Ordinance:
 - Ordinance 312, Altice/Cebridge agreement, 2nd reading & public hearing
 - Ordinance 314, Historic Landmark Commission guideline update, 2nd reading & public hearing
- Resolution:
 - Resolution 502, Water System Improvement project pay request #6
 - Resolution 503, Storm water improvement project, pay request #1 (CDBG-MIT Funds)
- Communications from Mayor White:
 - Volunteer of the Year
- Communications from City Manager Hill:
 - Funding request - Shanghai Parade
- Communications from City Council Members:
- Communications from Chief of Police Teubert
- Communications from Fire Chief Thomas
- Communications from Council Committees:
 - Finance Committee Report
 - Greenbrier Historical Society State Historic Preservation office pass through grant
 - Police Lieutenant promotion with related pay increase
 - Disposition of retired police vehicles
 - Recording officer pay for minute taking
 - Water treatment plant maintenance and repairs - current plant
 - Greenbrier Valley Solid Waste, Inc.
- Public Works Department Report from Director Legg
- Approval of Minutes - regular session, Nov. 15, 2022
- Visitors' Reports: (5-min. limit per subject not on the agenda)

Lewisburg Planning Commission

will meet in a working session Thursday, Jan. 5, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. in the Paul R. Cooley Council Chambers, 942 Washington Street, West. On the agenda:

2. Comments from the Public
3. Review, consider, and discuss agritourism supplemental regulations
4. Review, consider, and discuss uses not permitted in the historic overlay
5. Review, consider and discuss the draft zoning map
6. Review, consider, and discuss the zoning map
7. Comments from the Commissioners
8. Comments from the Zoning Officer
9. Adjournment

The next scheduled meeting of the Lewisburg Planning Commission will be Thursday, Feb. 2, with a working session at 5:30 p.m. and a regular meeting at 7 p.m.

Notice of Public Hearing

Lewisburg Planning Commission will meet Thursday, Jan. 5, at 7 p.m. Also available via Teleconference. For information on how to participate on ZOOM contact Lewisburg City Hall 304-645-2080 by 4 p.m. on Thursday. On the agenda:

- Approval of Working Session Minutes - Nov. 3, 2022
- Comments from the Public
- Public Hearing for Conditional Use Permit, Monica Moore, 150 Scott Street - approval of 2 plus bedrooms for Air B and B.
- Public Hearing for Conditional Use Permit, Shuck Memorial Church, 841 Washington Street - request to build stage for Outdoor Activities in an OR Zone.
- Comments from Planning Commission Members
- Comments from Planning and Zoning Officer Marsha Cunningham

The next regularly scheduled Planning Commission Meeting will be Thursday, Feb. 2.

School Board

Continued from Page 2

earning center out there, the fire department now has some of that acreage for their use, and the only emergency heli-vac pad in the Meadow River Valley is now there. [...] Coach Tincher, he's taken the gym and now has the West-End Youth Sports League. This last piece, that three story building that dates back to the 1940's [the Old Rupert Elementary School], we're going to renovate that building and the Byrd Clinic will lease the first floor, and the top two floors will be low income senior housing."

In summary, Vice President Lungsten stated that the association "is very pleased" with the progress made so far. "We cannot highlight enough the support that the board and the staff have given us over these last several years. With that, before signing it away to us, I would like to announce to the board that this building, as of August 2022, is on the National Registry of Historic Places." The document was produced for both Board President Jeannie Wyatt and MRVA President Matt Ford to sign, deeding the Old Rupert Elementary School officially to the MRVA.

The Greenbrier County Board of Education meets again on Jan. 10 at 6 p.m. in the Kyle & Ann Fort Arts and Science Center. The public is encouraged to attend. Please call 304-647-6470 to confirm meeting time and date prior, as they are subject to change.

Contour Airline

Continued from Front Page

16 round-trip flights in that span. "That's a really good amount for an airport like this," he noted.

Coinciding with the arrival of Contour on Nov. 1, Ground Stop Gift Shop opened its doors in early November and is now selling snacks, beverages, and handmade gifts and collectibles. CFO Martha Livesay said, "They have some very talented crafters there who make some wonderful gifts and things, and they serve coffee, which the restaurant here (Mi Tequila) does not, so people enjoy that. We just hope more people stop by Ground Stop, both those traveling and local people too; we think there is a lot to offer them as well." Ground Stop has yet to begin marketing in earnest, but is looking for opportunities and invites locals and travelers alike to take a look around this Christmas season.

The airport's Part 139 Inspection for 2022 has officially been closed out, and initially very promising reports from inspectors on the ground have been officially recognized by a letter from the FAA earlier this month. The authority relayed that the letter records that LWB's Part 139 Inspection this year passed with high marks.

Greenbrier County Magistrate Court Convictions

Leonard Charles Hedrick, Rupert, 1) hunting under the influence of alcohol, GP, fine \$100; 2) hunt/shoot from roadway, fine \$20

Mark Anthony Haynes, Ronceverte, leaving scene with property damage, GP, fine \$100

Lisa Michelle Dorsey, Rupert, 1) unlawful methods of hunting - vehicle hunting, GP, fine \$40; 2) no blaze orange, fine \$20

Sheldon Wayne Lafon, Caldwell, failure to field tag, NCP, fine \$40

Joseph John Christian, Lewisburg, disorderly conduct, NCP, fine \$20

Alex David Bailey, East Haven, CT, non-resident fishing without license, GP, fine \$50

Robert I. Reyes, Philadelphia, PA, non-resident fishing without license, fine \$50

Eric Lewis Burns, Sinks Grove, 1) expired registration, fine \$50, GP; 2) no seatbelt, fine \$25; 3) expired registration, fine \$50; 4) driving suspended, fine \$100

Joshua Alexander Franklin, Lewisburg, failure to electronically check/register wildlife, GP, fine \$20

Eric Lyon Franklin, Rainelle, 1) illegal possession of wildlife, GP, fine \$50; 2) failure to electronically check/register wildlife, fine \$20

Dennis Waylon Ramsey, Rupert, cruelty to animals, NCP, fine \$300, restitution \$431.55

Richard J. Camden, Lewisburg, reckless driving, NCP, fine \$75

Myles Warren Ayers, Ronceverte, driving a vehicle while in an impaired state, less than .15, GP, fine \$100, jail 21 days, 12 months unsupervised probation

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Mountain Messenger

OPINION

Nature's Way

By Karen Cohen
Master Gardener/Photojournalist/Artist
Green for Life

Time to bring a tree inside! What? Yes, we have cut and dragged outside evergreen trees into our homes since the beginning of time. Maybe even the cave dwellers did it, just to liven up their interior caves a bit. Drawings on the wall, a few cut logs for sitting on, and a tree in the corner with some bird nests to adorn the branches to give it that realistic look. Add berries strung on deer gut string, why not! I suspect that even that long ago, there was a budding Martha Stewart running around everyone's caves trying to get them to spruce up their abodes.

Did she know what kind of tree was best for indoor usage? What kind can adapt to being sliced at the base, inserted into prongs and then kept alive with a daily glug of water? What tree shows best with your boxes of accumulated ornaments, including your mom's and maybe even grandmas?


Evergreen trees stay green all year round, hence the name. They do well in the cold or in the heat with varying shades of green depending on the variety. Evergreens have many different characteristics to choose from. Conifer trees bear cones and are not always evergreens but can be. Ginkgo trees are conifers and not evergreen, am I confusing you?

Common conifer evergreen trees are pine trees, cypress trees, cedar trees, hemlock trees, spruce, and fir trees. Conifer trees act as air purifiers and sound barriers, too. The Blue spruce is most valued for its blue needles that are tinged with silver and chosen often for yards as a display specimen. For indoors, Blue Spruce works well for holding up ornaments but the needles are sharp as are the needles of Scotch Pine trees. Ouch! These may not be ideal for little kids. Use gloves if you plan to decorate one.

Fraser fir trees are ideal. They have perfectly spaced, sturdy branches for hanging ornaments and lights, and retain their scent and needles long enough to last the holiday season. Balsam fir trees have flat needles and are wonderful to use to make garlands and wreaths from. A nice variety with benefits of lasting long and emitting a lemon smell is the White fir tree.

When you cut a live tree to bring inside, be sure you or your tree retailer will make a fresh cut straight across the bottom of the trunk right before bringing it indoors and placing it in water. A fresh cut will unblock any dried resin and give it a good start for drinking the fluids. Some retailers will sell live, potted trees to bring home. After you house them for the holidays, keep these in a sheltered space from snow and ice and in the spring you can pop them into the ground and grow one.

Hemlocks are fast growers but this species is being



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Naomi Smith, Office Assistant

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killed by an invasive bug called the hemlock wooly adelgid, found along the eastern coast from New England to North Carolina. The browning of needles is blamed on another critter, the hemlock sawfly whose larvae hatch and eat around the edges of the needles. Hemlocks, when not infested, can last over 300 years or more and grow typically to 70 feet. If you want to learn more about the plight the hemlocks all over the states are facing, check out this video called Cathedral: The Fight to Save the Ancient Hemlock of Cook Forest. Cook Forest State Park is in Pennsylvania. Right here in West Virginia, our largest hemlock forests are in Cathedral State Park in Aurora, WV. There are still untouched virgin forests with some trees reaching 90 feet in height and 16 feet in circumference. Worth a visit, for sure.

(Karen Cohen is a nature lover, organic gardener, avid explorer and photojournalist. Email tips, comments and questions to natureswaykaren@gmail.com and Happy Gardening!)

Commentary

AG Morrissey encourages careful consideration of holiday pet purchases

West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrissey is encouraging those considering a holiday pet purchase to watch for deceitful offers as they choose a companion that best fits their family or situation.

Dogs, cats and other animals appeal to people of all ages, and there is no shortage of pets that need a home, but anyone considering such a gift must proceed with caution.

The advice comes as part of the Attorney General's Holiday Consumer Protection Week.

"Bringing home a pet is exciting as you take on the responsibility of caring for a new animal companion," Attorney General Morrissey said. "However, it's important to ensure your pet comes from a reputable shelter or breeder, and watch for deceptive offers."

Unfortunately, representations of animals bought online or in stores can mislead consumers as to the true nature of the pet's health. Pictures can be falsified, and animals that appear healthy can become ill shortly after purchase.

Consumers can follow these tips when purchasing a pet:

- Consider a gift certificate to a local animal shelter or a promise to adopt. Doing so will ease the stress of a rushed decision and allow everyone to participate in making the selection.
- Never buy a pet without seeing it, especially from someone requesting an "adoption fee" or "shipping fee" via money order or wire transfer.
- When purchasing a pet from a breeder, research the breeder, visit its operation in person and ask questions.
- Get health records and verify the veterinarian's relationship with the pet.
- Secure proof of purchase with the breeder's full contact information.
- For pets purchased via transport, seek contact information for the veterinarian who provided documentation and vaccines. Also, verify the name and address of the transport company.
- Be suspicious of ads that offer popular, expensive breeds for free. Scammers may pose as a shipping company or courier to charge extra "shipping" fees for the animal.
- Require documentation for any registered or pedigreed pet, including its registration with the appropriate kennel club.

Consumers with questions regarding pet purchases can contact the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division 800-368-8808 or visit the office online at www.ago.wv.gov

Commentary

Holiday impaired driving enforcement mobilization begins

The West Virginia Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP) is conducting a high-visibility enforcement mobilization beginning now through New Year's Day as part of its ongoing efforts to reduce impaired driving in West Virginia. The GHSP is partnering with the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), as well as state, county, and municipal law enforcement agencies across West Virginia for this high visibility enforcement effort. This enforcement effort aims to keep drivers who are impaired by alcohol, drugs, or certain impairing medications off our roadways so that all road users are safe this holiday season.

According to data from NHTSA, 11,654 people were

killed in motor vehicle crashes that involved an alcohol-impaired driver in 2020. During the month of December between 2016 and 2020, more than 4,400 people were killed in drunk-driving-related crashes. Although it is illegal to drive when impaired by alcohol, in 2020 one person was killed every 45 minutes in drunk-driving crashes nationwide.

"West Virginia law enforcement officers have zero tolerance for impaired driving, especially during high visibility enforcement periods like this," said Bob Tipton, GHSP Director. "The privilege to drive carries with it many responsibilities. You, and only you, are responsible for your actions. One of the responsibilities required of drivers in West Virginia is to not drive while impaired by

alcohol, drugs, or impairing medications - whether prescribed or over-the-counter, such as allergy medicine."

In 2021, there were 280 total roadway fatalities in West Virginia. Of those, 46 involved an alcohol-impaired driver.

"The most tragic thing about the alcohol-related fatalities is that they are preventable," said Steven Jarvis, GHSP Impaired Driving Program Coordinator. "We want the motoring public to understand impaired driving isn't just a 'mistake.' Driving while impaired by alcohol or drugs is a selfish, deadly, and illegal choice - especially with the available options for ride share services and taxis."

The decision to drive sober should not be a difficult choice. In West Virginia, it is illegal to drive with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 or higher. Drivers need to ask themselves if the risks are worth the gamble. Not only do drunk drivers put their own lives at risk, they endanger everyone they encounter on the road. The costs can be financial, too. If you're caught drinking and driving, you could face jail time, lose your driver's license and your vehicle, and pay up to \$10,000 in attorney's fees, fines, higher insurance rates, and lost wages.

The GHSP reminds West Virginia drivers to celebrate with a plan this holiday season. There are many resources available to get drivers home safely. It is essential to plan a sober ride home before you ever leave for the party. The GHSP recommends these safe alternatives to drinking and driving:

- Remember that it is never okay to drink and drive. Even if you've had only one alcoholic beverage, designate a sober driver or plan to use public transportation or a ride service such as Uber or Lyft to get home safely.
- If available, use your community's sober ride program, such as IntoxiTaxi or similar programs.
- If you were not planning on drinking but end up having one, call a trusted sober friend or family member and ask them to drive you home.
- If you see a drunk driver on the road, contact local law enforcement or dial *77 for the West Virginia State Police.
- Do you have a friend who is about to drink and drive? Take their keys away and make arrangements to get your friend home safely.

"We want everyone to be as safe as possible on West Virginia roads this holiday season and year-round. We hope drivers will be safe and make responsible choices. Impaired driving is one hundred-percent preventable. Don't make a selfish choice that puts yourself and others at risk," concluded Jarvis.

Additional information about the 2022 Holiday Season Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over campaign can be found at nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/drunk-driving. To contact the West Virginia Governor's Highway Safety Program, visit highwaysafety.wv.gov or call 304-926-2509.

Founders Day

Continued from Front Page

Day," Nemitz told those in attendance. "Today we recognize the contribution of those who have come before us, and those who continue to move WVSOM forward as a leader in medical education and healthcare in West Virginia."

Prior to introducing Justice, Nemitz told the crowd, that, "This governor will go down in history as taking West Virginia from the brink of bankruptcy, to a state that has over \$1 billion in surplus, and growing every day."

Before delivering his remarks, Justice welcomed Babydog to the stage by leading the audience in a rendition of Jackson Browne's "Somebody's Baby," after referring to the bulldog as an "international superstar."

"This school is off-the-charts good," Justice said. "If you think of all of your accomplishments, it's unbelievable. It very well could contribute to our economy - in West Virginia - a billion-and-a-half dollars a year."

"Not only does it contribute that," Justice continued, "It contributes you as you run to the fire and save our lives over and over and over again. It's unbelievable - 50 years."

As part of the celebration, Justice issued a proclamation, officially declaring Dec. 12 as "West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine Founders Day."

"Now, I can't see the other print," Justice added with a laugh. "All I know is this says 'Gov. Jim Justice' under 'proclamation,' and it's got my signature. So it must be fancy stuff."

Dr. Robert Holstein, a member of both the WVSOM Board of Directors, and WVSOM class of 1979, was next to the stage, telling those in attendance, "I have witnessed, first-hand the history of this school - past and present. And I'm excited to see the unfolding of its future and its impact on medical education in West Virginia, and the nation."

"Our founders had a vision to populate West Virginia with Osteopathic physicians to meet the health care needs of its residents," Holstein continued. "They

dreamt big and rejected any thought of failure. We are here today to celebrate the fulfillment of that dream. WVSOM has changed the landscape of healthcare in West Virginia forever, and we're going to continue to do so."

The day's final guest speaker, Vice Chancellor of Health Sciences at the W.Va. Higher Education Policy Commission, Dr. Cynthia Persily began by offering her congratulations for the school's longevity.

"We are so proud of the work that you do here at WVSOM," Persily said. "I would think that the founders, though aspirational, could not even imagine the growth in enrollment, in research, in scholarship, in creativity and achievement, and the partnerships that you've realized today at WVSOM. Your school contributes so much to this community, to this state, and to the world. You teach doctors who are leading, and will lead for the next 50 years, and then some."

At the conclusion of Persily's remarks, Nemitz took a moment to acknowledge present family members of the school's founders, adding, "We owe a huge debt of gratitude to our four founders; Dr. Carlton Apgar from Huntington, Dr. O.J. Bailes from Princeton, Dr. Donald Newell, Sr. from the Oak Hill-area, and Dr. Frank Wallington from the Wheeling-area."

"Unfortunately, all of them are deceased," Nemitz noted. "But we are very pleased today that we have members from all four of the families with us. We truly appreciate what your family has gone through, done for our school, and done to create our school."

In further commemoration of the school's 50th anniversary, Nemitz explained, a time capsule containing WVSOM memorabilia will be buried on the campus grounds, and subsequently unearthed on Dec. 12, 2047 - the school's 75th anniversary.

In closing, Nemitz told the audience, "We're not done. We're going to continue to serve West Virginia first and foremost, as well as providing physicians throughout our country."

OBITUARIES

Mary Cook



Versailles-Mary Cook, 82, previously of Renick, WV, passed away Tuesday, Dec. 6, 2022, at Bothwell Regional Health Center.

It was on the 8th day of March in 1940 that George and Vesta (Poe) Blake welcomed their daughter, Mary M., into their home in Renick.

If the weather was nice out, Mary would be out tending her flower gardens. She also loved going antique shopping and finding special little treasures. She was an avid dog lover. Mary was always put together and looking very nice. Her greatest enjoyment came from spending time with her loving family and her animals.

Left to carry on Mary's legacy are her son, Thomas Wade Cook of Renick; her daughter, Jeannie Lawson-Cook and wife Sylvia of Versailles; six grandchildren, Ronald Cook, Jr., Jeffery Cook, Kash Cook, Amanda Harman, Josh Blankenship, and Jacob Blankenship; several great-grandchildren; two sisters, Stella Lewis and Josephine "Jo" Workman both of Renick; along with other relatives and friends.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Thomas Cook; two sons, Daniel and Ronald Cook; and one daughter, Marlene Cook.

Services will be at a later date in Renick. www.pagedady.com

Max Powell Harrah



Lewisburg-Max Powell Harrah, 79, passed away Thursday, Dec. 8, 2022, at Greenbrier Valley Medical Center.

Born Apr. 7, 1943, in Asbury, the son of the late John Milton "Mitt" Harrah and Elsie Vivian Hanna Harrah.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by two sisters, Patty Mall Harrah, and Margie Phyllis Linn.

Survivors include his children, Michael Harrah (Jennifer) of Asbury, and Melissa Garrett (Mike) of Roanoke, VA; brothers, Pat Harrah of Covington, VA, and Paul Harrah (Arlene) of Arizona; grandchildren, Stephanie, Sydney, Jaime, Shannon, Holly, Ian and Maddy; great-grandchildren, Mariah and Dylan; and several nieces, and nephews.

Funeral service was held Saturday, Dec. 17, at the Morgan Funeral Home Chapel where Rev. Ray Propps officiated. Burial followed in the Asbury

Methodist Church Cemetery. Visitation was Friday evening, Dec. 16, at the funeral home. Online guestbook may be signed at www.morganfh.net

Pauline Shawver Bowling Welch



Pauline Shawver Bowling Welch, 105, formerly of Quinwood, Covington, VA, and White Sulphur Springs, passed away peacefully on Friday, Dec. 9, 2022.

Polly, or Grandma Gert as she was affectionately called, was born on Jan. 6, 1917, to the late Hubert and Nettie Shawver.

She was preceded in death by her husbands, Noah Bowling (1970) and Floyd Welch (1986); sisters, Idella Coulter, Irene Fleshman, Helen Campbell and Helena Tully; and brother, Jennings Shawver.

Polly is survived by her son, Clyde L. Bowling of White Sulphur Springs; daughter, Betty Jo McNeel of Lewisburg; stepsons, Jimmy Welch (Aldean) of Covington, VA, and Michael Welch (Debbie) of Quinton, VA; and stepdaughter, Virginia Welch of Amelia, VA. She is also survived by her grandsons, Jimmy Bowling (Donna) of Maxwilton, Timmy Bowling of White Sulphur Springs, and Matt McNeel (Trish) of Richmond, VA; granddaughters, Mandy McNeel of Davidson, NC, Chanda McNeel of Parkersburg and Amanda Watson (Brad) of Waynesville, NC. She is also survived by eight great-grandchildren and one great-great-granddaughter.

Polly was a former employee of O. Ray Smith Company of Quinwood and Alance's Dress Shop at The Greenbrier Resort in White Sulphur Springs. She was a voracious reader, loved to garden, travel, take beach vacations, and spend time with family and friends. Her frog collection was legendary! She taught Sunday School for many years and loved serving the Lord. She will be remembered for her keen sense of humor, her giving nature, and her love of God and family.

She was a member of Quinwood United Methodist Church and later attended Calvary Christian Church in Covington, VA.

The family would like to express their gratitude to all of the wonderful caregivers, including Palliative and Hospice care.

Friends may visit with the family on Saturday, Dec. 17, at 10 a.m., prior to the service at 11 a.m. at Wallace & Wallace Funeral Chapel, Lewisburg,

with the Reverend Michael Warren officiating. Burial will follow in the End of the Trail Cemetery, Clintonville.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the Dementia Society of America, P.O. Box 600, Doylestown, PA 18901, dementiasociety.org or Lewisburg Hospice Care at 265 Maplewood Avenue, Lewisburg, WV 24901. Please send online condolences by visiting www.WallaceandWallaceFH.com

Nova Gaye Walker



Ronceverte-Nova Gaye Walker, 86, passed away Tuesday, Dec. 6, 2022, at the Peyton Hospice House.

Nova was born on July 22, 1936, in Fayetteville to the late John St. Clair Burgess and Beulah "Bea" Eloise Creger.

Nova began her career in Greenbrier County as the first secretary of Greenbrier East High School. She worked there from 1968-1989. She then went to the Greenbrier County Board of Education as its front office secretary until she retired in 1998. Nova enjoyed being and was a beloved wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. Family was everything to her and nobody ever left her house hungry.

She was preceded in death by her parents and her siblings, brother Jim Ritter and sister Minnie Ritter.

Left to cherish Nova's memory are her loving husband of 68 years, George Tom Walker, Sr. of Ronceverte; son, George Tom Walker, Jr. of Ronceverte; daughter, Debra Massey and husband Steve of Ronceverte, daughter, Michelle Bland and husband Harrell of Lewisburg; grandchildren, Krislyn Honaker and husband Jim of Ronceverte, Kourtney Miller and husband Creighton of Lewisburg, Walker Foster and fiancée Scarlett Keeter of Tappahannock, VA, and Michaela Meadows and husband Ethan of Morgantown; great-grandchildren, Callie Honaker, Annabelle Honaker, Emerson Miller, Watson Miller, and Lorelei Keeter.

There will be no service at this time. There will be a celebration of life at a later date.

Memorial donations may be made to Peyton Hospice House.

Please send online condolences by visiting www.WallaceandWallaceFH.com

Marissa Erin Mann-Bennett



Alderson-Marissa Erin Mann-Bennett, 27, passed away Friday, Nov. 25, 2022.

Born Aug. 1, 1995, at Ronceverte, she is a daughter of Steven Andrew Bennett and Lisha Erin Mann.

Marissa was a member of the River of Life Church in Alderson and was employed by The Greenbrier Hotel.

She was preceded in death by her grandparents, Ronald Bennett and Johnny and Geneva Mann.

Survivors include her children, who were her whole life, Octavia Rayne, Embers Storm, Zoey Jane, Maylein Dane and Ashton Andrew; her mother, Lisha Erin Mann (Jeff Meador) of Hinton; father, Steven Andrew Bennett

of Renick; sister, Makala Fox (Chris) of Hinton; brothers, Hunter Webb of White Sulphur Springs and Casey Bennett and fiancée Deana of Helena, Montana; her grandmother, Eva Bennett of Muddy Creek Mountain and a great grandmother, Helen Mann of Ronceverte. Also surviving are six nephews and numerous aunts, uncles, cousins and friends.

Funeral service was held on Wednesday, Dec. 14, at Wallace & Wallace Funeral Home in Lewisburg, where Pastors Anthony Carter and Youel Altizer officiated. Burial followed in McLean Cemetery, Ronceverte.

A visitation was held Tuesday evening, Dec. 13, at Wallace & Wallace Funeral Home in Lewisburg.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations of sympathy be made in Marissa Mann-Bennett's name to the trust fund at the Bank of Monroe in Lewisburg.

Please send online condolences by visiting www.WallaceandWallaceFH.com

When did Christmas lights become so popular?

Holiday lights are now everywhere come the holiday season. Private homeowners tend to hang the holiday lights outside their homes around Thanksgiving weekend and keep them up through New Year's Day.

Though it might seem like a tradition without a deep history, decorating a Christmas tree with electric lights can be traced all the way back to the 19th century. In 1882, Edward Johnson, who was a friend and colleague of the man who invented light bulbs, Thomas Edison, replaced candles, which had traditionally been used to briefly light Christmas trees, with light bulbs. But at the time of Johnson's innovation, the high cost and relative infancy of light bulbs ensured the idea did not catch on.

And though United States President Grover Cleveland used electric lights to illuminate a Christmas tree in the White House in 1895, it would be another eight years before General Electric would begin selling Christmas light kits. Those kits cost \$12 in 1903, which equates to several hundred dollars today.

The first outdoor Christmas light shows started to become popular in the 1920s, and this is the same time when commercial sales of Christmas lights picked up. In the 1960s, GE's decision to begin manufacturing Christmas lights overseas helped reduce the price of outdoor lights even further, thus paving the way for the tradition of decorating home exteriors with string lights during the holiday season to take a firm hold. And that tradition remains wildly popular today.



Continued from Front Page

Penny Pitch

- Sally A. Ford - \$200
- In memory of George Raines, Sr. from his family - \$35
- Ronceverte Baptist Church Men's Fellowship - \$100
- Matthew & Stephanie Campbell - \$75
- Ann H. Walker - \$200
- Kelly & Kay Sparks - \$100
- In Memory of Dora Hoke by Joe and Missy Darnell - \$50
- In Memory of Earl and Imogene Darnell by Joe and Missy Darnell - \$50
- Richard and Nada Smith - \$300

- Anonymous - \$1,000
- Alderson Quilts and Crafts - \$100
- In Honor of our 90 year-old sister Doris Tyree Watson of Auto, Renick - \$50
- In Loving Memory of Charles & Louise Longanacre, Marvin Wagner, Vida Wagner, Klase Ray Longanacre from Anita Wagner - \$200
- Anonymous - \$100
- John Wesley United Methodist Church - \$200
- Anonymous - \$100



Coaches Ray Lee, Aaron Baker, and members of Greenbrier East High School football team came to the fairgrounds to help load food boxes to be delivered to for Penny Pitch families.

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James F.B. Peyton Fund grant awarded to FRC

The Family Refuge Center is the proud recipient of the James. F. B. Peyton Fund grant award of \$40,000 for replacement windows at the Anne Blair emergency shelter. Our Anne Blair House provides emergency shelter and supportive services in a communal living setting to survivors of domestic and sexual violence 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at no cost to the survivor.

The WV Poison Center offers safety recommendations

Holidays are a time for joy, but it is important to take precautions for a safe and poison-free season. The West Virginia Poison Center offers these safety recommendations.

Button batteries:

Disc, button, or coin batteries can be found in many items, such as toys, musical cards and books, remote controls, and ornaments. These batteries are extremely dangerous and can cause severe injury or death if swallowed. Make sure all items that children play with have secured battery compartments, such as a battery area that requires a screwdriver to open. Keep all products containing accessible batteries up and away from children and pets.

Small magnets:

Some toys and novelty items (such as magnetic building sets, magnetic tiles, and magnetic sculptures) contain small, powerful magnets that can cause serious injury if swallowed. Avoid purchasing toys or desk accessories with magnets if there are young children in the home.

Water absorbing balls or beads:

Becoming popular in the last several years are toys that absorb water and expand, such as

water absorbing balls or beads. Most of these items are colorful and intriguing to children. These items can become dangerous if a child or pet ingests them. Avoid purchasing beads or balls that expand to larger than pea size. Keep unexpanded beads up and out of reach of small children.

Save the West Virginia Poison Center number: 1-800-222-1222.

Call the medical experts at the West Virginia Poison Center 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, even during the holidays, if a potential poisoning occurs. Do not wait for symptoms to appear.

The West Virginia Poison Center provides comprehensive emergency poison information, prevention and educational resources to West Virginians 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. The WVPC is staffed by nurses, pharmacists and physicians with special training in treatment of poisonings. Located in Charleston, WV, the WVPC is a part of the West Virginia University-Charleston Division. Toll-free: 1-800-222-1222. Website: www.wvpoisoncenter.org

WVDEP sends out survey for program expansion

Due to the continued interest in the pilot phase of its newly established Dilapidated Properties Program, the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (WVDEP) distributed a second online survey to county and municipal leaders across the state Friday to gather information and seek input as it works to expand the program.

The WVDEP sent out a second online survey to all 55 counties and 168 municipalities in West Virginia, including those who are already participating in the program, to get updated information about what each is doing or would like to do in dealing with dilapidated structures in their areas. The agency's initial questionnaire went out in August of 2021.

Gov. Jim Justice announced \$9.2 million in grant funding for the 21 communities participating in the program's pilot phase in September.

The WVDEP is administering the funding, which will be provided as reimbursement for demolition projects and qualified associated expenses.

"We've received calls from county and local officials all over the state, expressing their interest in tearing down these structures to improve their communities," said WVDEP Cabinet Secretary Harold Ward. "Because of this strong interest and the support of Gov. Justice, we are working to launch an expanded second phase of the program. To do that, we need to get an updated look at how communities are handling this issue and their needs."

Responses to the survey are due by 5 p.m. on Friday, January 6, 2023.

Counties or municipalities that have not received a link to the survey or that have questions about the program should contact REAP program director Sandy Rogers (Sandra.D.Rogers@wv.gov, 1-800-322-5530) or John King (John.M.S.King@wv.gov, 304-414-9760).

In 2021, the West Virginia Legislature passed Senate Bill 368, which authorized the WVDEP to develop a statewide program to assist county commissions and municipalities remediate abandoned and dilapidated structures.

After months of extensive due diligence and a data-driven selection process, the WVDEP identified 21 communities to participate in the program's pilot phase.

Upon reviewing this data and selection process, Governor Justice requested the Legislature to approve a transfer from the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund for the pilot program. That request resulted in the passage of Senate Bill 722 earlier this year, which transferred \$10 million to the program.

Selected communities will have 12 months to spend up to their approved budgeted amount, with the possibility for a single six-month extension. No payments will be made until demolition work is completed and all required supportive documentation has been submitted.



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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The West Virginia Division of Personnel, invites applications for the position of **Correctional Counselor 2**.

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Under general supervision, the Correctional Counselor II will function as a member of a team providing services to an assigned caseload of juvenile residents living in a unit in a West Virginia Juvenile Correctional or Detention Facility. The work of a Correctional Counselor II will consist of services for the juvenile residents of said facility. Areas of responsibilities will include individual implementation of treatment programs; guidance, administration and evaluation of need and/or risk assessments; family counseling; acting as a role model for the residents; recommendation of treatment programs to assist the resident in controlling and overcoming problems; as well as general guidance of residents. Will perform other duties as assigned. Youth Reporting Center.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:
Training: A Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with a major in criminal justice, corrections, psychology, sociology, counseling, counseling and guidance, education, therapeutic recreation or closely related field.
Substitution: None.

SALARY: \$2,420.58 - \$4,478.00 Monthly, \$29,047.00 - \$53,736.00 Annually
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David Jonese at David.r.jonese@wv.gov
Mail to: David Jonese at
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Please include posting number YRC23POC03

For additional assistance please contact
David Jonese 1-304-647-7509.

APPLICATIONS MAY BE FILED ONLINE AT:
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Terra Skaggs, Director of School Based Health,
to: tskaggs@rmchealth.org.



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Dear Recycle Lady,

A Look Back

Dear Recycle Lady,

Most wrapping paper comes on a long roll. Can the roll be recycled with cardboard?

Wrapper

Dear Wrapper,

Yes, the wrapping paper tube can be recycled with cardboard. All those gift boxes you find under the tree after opening packages can also be recycled with cardboard. Just be sure they are clean, dry, and empty! Besides recycling, the empty wrapping paper tube can be used to rewind used wrapping paper for safe keeping until you need it again.

Dear Recycle Lady,

Can you explain about various plastic bags - which are recyclable here and which are not? I see that the plastic wrapping around Kroger toilet paper is recyclable with their plastic bags. What about other toilet paper wrap, vegetable and fruit bags (such as apples or spinach)? What about bird seed bags? Is there a way to tell?

Need Clarification

Dear Need Clarification,

Recycling plastic film is often puzzling and confusing. Toilet paper wrap, bags that are used for fresh produce, zip-top storage bags, plastic wrap on cases of items such as soda bottles, diapers, disposable cups, plates, paper towels, bread, newspapers, grocery bags, and dry-cleaning bags are all recyclable at Kroger and Walmart. Plastic bags that contain frozen foods and vegetables are not recyclable as they have layers of additives to preserve the food until you use it. Bird Seed bags are a heavier plastic, so check the bag for a #2 or #4 recycle label. If there is no recycle label, the bag doesn't recycle. Other plastics bags and wraps are more difficult to identify. If there is

no recycle symbol, or a #2 or #4, better not recycle it. "When in doubt, throw it out." Some plastic bags, wraps, and film have invisible ingredients that are added for product protection, thus can be contaminants in a film recycling stream. Whatever plastic film you may be recycling, be sure it is clean and dry. Remove any receipts and cut off any labels that are stuck on the plastic. According to American manufacturers, recycling plastic film provides valuable materials for manufacturers and contributes to sustainability.

Dear Recycle Lady,

After all packages are opened Christmas day there is always a pile of ribbons and bows left. Are ribbons and bows recyclable?

Love Christmas

Dear Love Christmas,

Ribbons and bows make packages festive and pretty, but they are definitely a no-no for recycling. If ribbons get into any of the baling equipment, they can bring everything to a halt. Bows are less hazardous to equipment than ribbons, but they usually have a plastic component and glue that sticks the bows to the packages. Both components make bows non-recyclable. Please do not take any ribbons, bows, twine, or anything long and stringy to a recycling center. Whenever you are opening packages keep a bag or box handy for collecting the bows and ribbons. They are reusable many times!

Have questions about recycling, or interesting information about recycling? Send questions or requests to recyclelady@greenbrier-swa.com. Dear Recycle Lady is sponsored jointly by the Greenbrier Recycling Center and Greenworks Recycling.



By William "Skip" Deegans

When thinking about eastern shipbuilding centers, the cities of Newport News, Virginia and Bath, Maine come to mind. Charleston, West Virginia might not register, but it was the port of a prominent shipbuilder in the early 1900s. Ward Engineering Works was founded in 1892 by Charles Ward. Located on the south bank of the Kanawha River, the company built ships until 1931. One of the largest ships that Ward Engineering built was the side-wheel St. Genevieve Ferry that is shown in the undated photo. Built in 1922 of solid steel, the St. Genevieve was 375 feet long, 80 feet wide, and weighed 1,667 tons. It was built for the Missouri-Illinois Railroad to ferry railroad cars across the Mississippi River from St. Genevieve, Missouri, to Kellogg, Illinois. Operated by a 10-man crew, the St. Genevieve could carry

18 railroad cars. It operated for 60 years before being retired in 1961.

Another ship built by Ward Engineering was the stern-wheel Scott towboat that was completed in 1930. Built as a dredge tender for the U. S. Army to use on the Ohio River, the Scott's name was later changed to the P. A. Denny when it was bought by Lewisburg's Lawson Hamilton. As an excursion boat it was a popular site on the Kanawha River for a number of years. Later, it became a floating classroom. It has been reported to be in dry dock in Ohio for repairs.

Photo: courtesy of University of Wisconsin-Madison Libraries.

Sources: West Virginia News, University of Wisconsin-Madison, The Charleston Daily Mail, Southern Illinoisian, www.shipbuildinghistory.com.

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SCRAMBLERS
solution

1. Legend 2. Spear
3. Idea; 4. Insert

Today's Word
GRANDPA

Weekly SUDOKU Answer

4	6	3	2	5	7	1	8	9
9	7	5	8	1	3	6	4	2
2	1	8	9	4	6	5	3	7
3	9	7	5	6	8	4	2	1
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8	3	9	6	7	5	2	1	4
7	4	1	3	2	9	8	6	5
6	5	2	4	8	1	7	9	3

Super Crossword

Answers

S	E	N	S	O	R	D	I	V	I	D	E	B	E	D	M	A	T	E	
A	T	O	M	I	C	R	A	I	D	E	R	E	M	P	E	R	O	R	
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M	I	N	I	C	A	M	A	N	D	R	E	I	L	E	N	O	R	E	
A	N	E	M	O	N	E	S	O	S	O	N	S	A	S	S	E	D		

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Lore
G L E N E D

Piece
R E A P S

Belief
A I D E

Place
R E S T I N

TODAY'S WORD

"It looks like Santa Claus but it sounds like _____."

HOCUS-FOCUS BY HENRY BOLTIHOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Cane is different. 2. Chair back is missing. 3. Cap is different. 4. List is smaller. 5. Hair is different. 6. Antenna is smaller.



LEGAL

The Pocahontas County Libraries and Visitor Information Centers is seeking proposals for replacing the roof at the McClintic Public Library in Marlinton, WV.

Proposals should include detailed plans, products, timeline, warranty, and pricing for removal & disposal of existing shingles and installation of new roofing. Roofing type/system to be selected/proposed by contractor, and installed to industry standards and manufacturer's requirements. Area of roof is estimated at 10,000 square feet. Project should include roofing with minimum 30 year guarantee, and installation of ice and water shield protection, underlayment, and replacement of damaged sheathing as needed. Areas around the skylights will need additional treatment / leak protection. An alternate proposal may be submitted which removes or replaces the skylights.

Contractor will be selected based on a combination of factors, including strength of the proposal, expertise/past performance/references, insurance/warranty/guarantee information, scheduling assurances, base and alternate cost proposal, and any other factors demonstrated to be in the best interest of the Library.

All prospective contractors must have current WV business & contractor licenses, \$1,000,000 of liability insurance and appropriate Worker's Compensations insurance, with required licenses and certifications for specific trades.

Proposals must be submitted in writing to PCL & VIC at 500 8th St, Marlinton, WV 24954, or by email attachment to director@pocahontaslibrary.org on or before December 19th at noon. Proposals will be discussed by the Library Board of Trustees on December 20th at their monthly board meeting, beginning at 6:00 p.m.

Site may be viewed at 500 8th Street, Marlinton, WV. Inspection can occur during 10:00-6:00 Monday through Friday. For further information, please contact library director, Cree Lahti at 304-799-6000 or at director@pocahontaslibrary.org

LEGAL

BID NOTICE

Greenbrier County Schools is looking for Bids to rekey schools to a factory existing key system. Please note all keying needs to be coordinated through Tim Vannoy with the Oscar Henry Company with a 20 each master keys per school and 6 each keys per door. Replacement of all mortise and cylinder locks, mortise cylinders and rim cylinders that are not Sargent. All cylinder locks are to security class room 10G38 LL 26D. All new locks, cylinders and keys must be Sargent originals. No substitutions will be accepted. All keys are to have visual key control. A key cabinet needs set up at each school. Training needs to be provided at each school on the new key system. All county maintenance employees need training on installing and lock smith. Work needs a warranty for one year from time of install. The Bid needs to be for materials, labor, installation and training. Contact David Workman, Supervisor Maintenance for any questions and to schedule time to visit schools. (304-646-5732; david.workman@k12.wv.us)

Schools are: Lewisburg Elementary, Eastern Greenbrier Middle School, Roncerverte Elementary, Frankford Elementary, Smoot Elementary, Western Greenbrier Middle School, Rupert Elementary, Greenbrier West High School, Crichton Elementary and Rainelle Elementary

Bid Opening is scheduled for December 28th, 9:00 a.m., at Greenbrier County Schools, Office of Operations, 391 Judyville Road, Lewisburg, WV 24901.

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Super Crossword THAT '70s SHOW

- ACROSS**
- 1 Motion detector, e.g.
 - 7 Portion out
 - 13 Person sleeping next to you, often
 - 20 Like many nuclei
 - 21 Surprise attacker
 - 22 Nero or Napoleon
 - 23 "Hello, Dolly!" star
 - 25 Capital of the country Georgia
 - 26 Doe's dear?
 - 27 Alley -
 - 28 Sousing sort
 - 29 TV's Cheers, for one
 - 30 Top pilot
 - 31 Ice sheets
 - 33 1960s-'70s talk show host
 - 37 She played Bree on "Desperate Housewives"
 - 42 Al Bundy portrayer Ed
 - 43 Nebraska city
 - 44 Jekyll's bad side
 - 45 She played the mother on "Lassie"
 - 49 Football's Joe
 - 51 Country next to Georgia
 - 53 - a soul
 - 54 "Like - not!"
 - 55 Suffix of beliefs
 - 58 Ending for serpent
 - 59 Microscope component
 - 62 Her first Vogue cover was in 1986
 - 66 Green and Gore
 - 67 - matter of fact
 - 68 Japanese dog
 - 69 Video game pioneer
 - 72 - glance
 - 75 Music genre for brooders
 - 76 Co-author of the 2006 bestseller "Three Cups of Tea"
 - 81 Like low-fat mozzarella
 - 86 Eggs, in labs
 - 87 Pro's vote
 - 88 Dot in the sea, to Jorge
 - 89 Actor Baldwin
 - 90 Tunneling rodents
 - 93 What to do after hiding, in a kids' game
 - 95 "M" star
 - 98 Big snakes
 - 101 - Gras
 - 102 Perfectly
 - 103 "Blue Velvet" singer
 - 105 "The Color Purple" novelist
 - 109 In - (irritated)
 - 110 Habited sister
 - 111 Slip- (some shoes)
 - 112 Links peg
 - 114 Boatload
 - 115 Pod veggies
 - 119 Affluent Rio neighborhood
 - 122 Sitcom associated with nine featured first names in this puzzle
 - 125 Hand-held filming equipment
 - 126 Soviet statesman Gromyko
 - 127 Lost lady in "The Raven"
 - 128 Stinging-tentacle reef dweller
 - 129 "Already?"
 - 130 Got lippy with
 - 6 32-Down brand since the early 1900s
 - 7 Curtain
 - 8 Actor Holm
 - 9 French wines
 - 10 Linguistic expressions
 - 11 Teeth: Prefix
 - 12 Work unit
 - 13 Process by which an electron is emitted
 - 14 Involve in contention
 - 15 Print resolution abbr.
 - 16 Baseball's Ott
 - 17 Popular font type
 - 18 Puccini opera
 - 19 Iroquois tribe members
 - 24 Liquor, slangily
 - 29 Elton John's " - and the Jets"
 - 31 Italian car
 - 32 Soft drink
 - 34 Zen master's question
 - 35 Suffix with form
 - 36 Tony-winning actress Johns
 - 37 Tennis' Seles
 - 38 Very valuable violins
 - 39 "Pest" of kiddie lit
 - 40 Beet variety
 - 41 Letter stroke
 - 45 Scoff
 - 46 - kwon do (martial art)
 - 47 Tolkien brute
 - 48 TV "Science Guy" Bill
 - 50 Frontiersman Wild Bill -
 - 52 L-P linkup
 - 56 - Lankan
 - 57 Tumbler's surface
 - 60 Wildlife-tracking ID
 - 61 Balletic bend
 - 63 Thanksgiving side servings
 - 64 Joking type
 - 65 Water barrier
 - 70 Tot amuser
 - 71 Add up to
 - 72 State as fact
 - 73 City in Ohio
 - 74 Luke and Leia's father
 - 75 "And on and on": Abbr.
 - 77 Architect Ludwig Mies van der -
 - 78 Eden dweller
 - 79 Actress Greta
 - 80 Jewish month after Adar
 - 81 Baby food
 - 82 Malted quaff
 - 83 No longer in the mil., e.g.
 - 84 1973 Jim Croce hit
 - 85 Gourmet mushrooms
 - 91 Class for tots, for short
 - 92 Buckwheat noodle of Japan
 - 94 Fail to put in
 - 96 Caviar source
 - 97 The Doors song with a Calif. city in its title
 - 99 Refrain from imbibing
 - 100 "Holy" council
 - 103 Gives rise to
 - 104 Shiny plastics
 - 105 Jungian inner personality
 - 106 Fictional sleuth Arsène
 - 107 Plotless
 - 108 Prefix meaning "people"
 - 113 Spanish river
 - 115 Bits of wit
 - 116 Baseball's Slaughter
 - 117 Farmland unit
 - 118 Shanty
 - 120 Pick-up-sticks math game
 - 121 Prefix with car
 - 122 Classroom aides: Abbr.
 - 123 Antique Olds
 - 124 Actress Arthur

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦

- ♦ Moderate
- ♦♦ Challenging
- ♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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CLUB & CHURCH

Church Bulletin

Christmas Cantata at Old Greenbrier Baptist Church in Alderson

The Old Greenbrier Baptist Church Choir and Friends will present their annual Christmas Cantata on Sunday, Dec. 18 at 3 p.m. at the Old Greenbrier Baptist Church in Alderson.



The title is "A Promise Kept," arranged by Marty Parks. Come and listen as the choir presents a joyous Christmas musical. For centuries, God spoke through prophets who told of the coming of a King, a Redeemer, a Savior. And when at last he was born, these prophecies were seen for what they really were - not just predictions but promises. The Cantata will be directed by Dell Wood and accompanied by Nancy Wood.

The participating choir members are: Sopranos - Rose Carter, Charlotte Grimmett, Jo Honaker, Sylvia Keaton, Carolyn Jo Knapp, Mary Mitchell, Patty Reinhold, Sophie Pace, Shirley Tolsa, Liz Wood, and Louise Wood. Altos - Cheryl Bice, Carrie Bice, Sandy Elam, Lea Ann Gwinn, Lynda Neff, and Phyllis Wykle. Tenors - Joe Bradley, Greg Holliday, Peggy Patterson, Curtis Pauley, Tony Tolsa, and Brennan Wood. Basses - Darrell Croy, Jason Farmer, Bob Holliday, Charlie Mulkey, Lawrence Lewis and Tim Price. The narrator for the Cantata is Sheila Harris. The soloists are Greg Holliday and Brennan Wood.

We invite the public to attend this Christmas Cantata and worship with us through music.

A Word With You From Pastor Dean

According to Webster, the expression "Keeping up with the Joneses" means "showing that one is as good as other people by getting what they have and doing what they do." Of course, the expression usually refers to "things" or "possessions." It actually is a form of covetousness. But the expression also seeps into the lives of Christians who try to appear as committed to Christ as some other person(s). The Apostle Paul warns us:

For we do not presume to rank or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they have no understanding. (2 Corinthians 10:12)

Our quest as believers is not to be like anyone else but Jesus Christ...and being like Jesus means we are not interested in "keeping up" with anyone, but allowing the Person of the Holy Spirit to take control of our individual lives for the purpose of ministering to and evangelizing those around us. The Christian life is not competition, not comparison, but rather, humble ambassadorship, service,

and servanthood. This is Chamber's point in today's My Utmost for His Highest:

"Christian perfection is not, and never can be, human perfection. Christian perfection is the perfection of a relationship with God that shows itself to be true even amid the seemingly unimportant aspects of human life. When you obey the call of Jesus Christ, the first thing that hits you is the pointlessness of the things you have to do. The next thought that strikes you is that other people seem to be living perfectly consistent lives. Such lives may leave you with the idea that God is unnecessary - that through your own human effort and devotion you can attain God's standard for your life. In a fallen world this can never be done. I am called to live in such a perfect relationship with God that my life produces a yearning for God in the lives of others, not admiration for myself. Thoughts about myself hinder my usefulness to God. God's purpose is not to perfect me to make me a trophy in His showcase; He is getting me to the place where He can use me. Let Him do what He wants."

God wants us to quit us-

ing others as some kind of standard of how things should be in our lives, but rather, be sensitive and obedient to what God calls us to be and do no matter to what and where He directs us. At the Judgment Seat of Christ (1 Corinthians 3:7-15), the issue will not be a comparison with anyone else. The issue will be...were we being true and faithful to our Lord Jesus. My prayer for you and me this morning is this: Lord, keep us close to You... closer than anyone else around us. May our focus be on how You want to use us in the lives of others. We don't care about the "Joneses," we care about Your purpose for our lives wherever You may lead. Keep us humble and mindful of what Jesus taught His disciples:

25 But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles domineer over them, and those in high position exercise authority over them. 26 It is not this way among you, but whoever wants to become [c] prominent among you shall be your servant, 27 and whoever desires to be first among you shall be your slave. (Matthew 20)

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Emmanuel Community Church

Dean Brdlik, Pastor

For more information: dmbdlik@gmail.com 304-667-7247

Service times: Sunday 9:30 AM, 10:30 AM; Wednesday 6 PM

Ladies of the Henning Church of God have Christmas celebration

The Ladies of the Henning Church of God held their Christmas celebration on Tuesday, Dec. 6, in the church fellowship hall. Joan Vance started the meeting sharing about figgy pudding and some of the traditions and how it is made. She had made some for the group. Barb Seldomridge led in prayer before the group enjoyed a delicious dinner prepared by Carole Spencer. The president, Carole Spencer, opened the meeting and led in prayer.

Dyan Hefner brought the devotion, "A Permanent Companion," by Gail Galloway. Most girls get a new doll every year for Christmas. They have new models every year that can do many things. A family had a visitor and he asked the little girl, "Do you like dollies?" She had a whole family of dolls and she had a favorite doll. Her favorite doll was tattered, dilapidated, no hair, nose broken, and an arm and leg missing. The little girl proceeded to tell the visitor, "If I didn't love her, no one else would." God is just like this little girl. He loves us if we are tattered and have broken lives when no one else would. Wherever we are, God is always present. He sent his son for his birth to be celebrated at Christmas and also, Easter when he died and was resurrected. God gave his son for us. She also shared about Cohen Bramlee, a little boy with an undiagnosed illness that has been in the hospital for almost all of his life which is around ten years. The doctors have reached their limitations in knowing how to treat him. We should feel much compassion for his mother, Carrie, because she has been at his side through all of this and if she would lose him, she would have to learn how to live again outside of the hospital and get to know her other children again. Please pray for this need.

All reports were dismissed due to Christmas.

Carole reminded the group that the church will be going Christmas caroling on Dec. 14. We will serve the Maxwellton Ruritans on Dec. 15. The church will host Community Carols, Candles and Cookies on Dec. 16 at 7 p.m. All are welcome to attend. Sunday morning, Dec. 18 at 11 a.m. the choir shall present the Christmas cantata, "Bethlehem Morning." Carole thanked the group for all the donated food pantry items. The items will go to Renick and Williamsburg food pantries. The group voted to donate money to the Laugh group at church to help with their Christmas projects. The group also voted to donate to Toys for Tots.

The next meeting will be Jan. 10 and Carole Spencer dismissed in prayer.

Attending were Alice Coff, Angie Scott, Barb Seldomridge, Carole Spencer, Cindy Fleshman, Donna Scott, Dyan Hefner, Fran Spencer, Greyson Brookman, Jamie Harvey, Joan Vance, Kim Brookman, Marty Burns, Pauline Perkins, Patty Owens, Peggy Seldomridge, Sue Hunt, and Pastor Robert O. Hefner, Jr.

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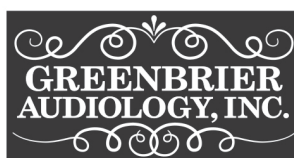
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STEPPIN' OUT

Carnegie Hall-O-Ween events and classes fun for the entire family



Cleo McLaughlin with her award-winning jack-o-lantern

Carnegie Hall's inaugural Hall-O-Ween Week was a howling good time and due to its success will become a Halloween tradition. From Oct. 22 through Oct. 28, Carnegie partnered with the Greenbrier Historical Society (GHS) and the West Virginia Storytelling Guild to bring a week's worth of special family fun events and informative opportunities leading up to Halloween and Trick or Treat.

The five nights of classes included Make a Leather Mask with Luke Davis, Mad Scientist Slime Lab with Harmony Flora, Spell Books and Potion Bottles with Teri Hartford, and Medicinal and Culinary Bitters with Jan Darrah.

More than 80 people attended the two nights of guided cemetery tours

hosted by the Greenbrier Historical Society, and a presentation of the archived historical records of the Greenbrier County Ghost presented by Kasadi Shock of GHS.

Participants enjoyed a special storytelling night "These Haunted Hills," by members of the WV Storytelling Guild, along with the evening's custom cocktail that used a hand-crafted warming bitters blend created by CH teaching artist Jan Darrah for our Medical and Culinary Bitters workshop.

Lastly, the Hall hosted a free Bring Your Own Pumpkin (BYOP) Pumpkin parade for members of the community, including spooky treats and prizes.

According to Carnegie Hall Education Director Harmony Flora, "Our first annual Carnegie

Hall-O-Ween week was a very fun addition to the educational programming here at the Hall." She added, "It's great to be able to use a themed class like a slime lab to teach STEAM concepts, and even better when we all get to have a lot of messy fun along the way. I also appreciate the amazing staff at the Historical Society for partnering with Carnegie Hall for this new series and for adding an authentic historical element to our spooky celebrations. I'm already looking forward to next year's Hall-O-Ween!"

For a complete list of classes and workshops and to enroll visit carnegiehallwv.org/classes-and-workshops or pick up a Classes & Workshops brochure at 611 Church Street, Lewisburg.



Teaching Artist Teri Hartford shows students how to make a spell book

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Celebrate the Season with a Holiday Reading



Linda Zimmer

Actor and Puppeteer Linda Zimmer will read one of Beatrix Potter's favorite stories: The Tailor of Gloucester on Thursday, Dec. 22, at 1 p.m. at White Sulphur Springs Public Library. This story is set on a snowy Christmas Eve when a band of loyal mice come to the aid of an old gentleman tailor.

Linda Zimmer is a renowned puppeteer and creative arts specialist. She has honed her performances in many different forums including The New Deal Festival in Arthurdale, WV, WV University Children's Hospital, and on Mr. Rogers Neighborhood. She is also a member of the Beatrix Potter Society of North America. This society is committed to promoting the study and appreciation of the life and works of Beatrix Potter, writer of many children's favorite story books including The Tale of Peter Rabbit.

Light refreshments will follow this program. This is a free program and open to all ages. Children should be accompanied by responsible adult. The library is located at 344 W Main Street in White Sulphur Springs. Please call 304-536-1171 with any questions.

Report: Continuous eligibility for Medicaid, CHIP benefits WV kids

By Nadia Ramlagan for WVNS

Despite economic uncertainty of the pandemic, the number of West Virginia kids with health coverage remained roughly the same between 2019 and 2021, according to a new report.

The Georgetown University Center for Children and Families report finds the number of uninsured kids nationwide dropped by 5% in the last three years. In West Vir-

ginia, Julianne Yacovone - director of child health with West Virginians for Affordable Healthcare - said the number of kids statewide with no health insurance has kept steady, at around 13,000. She said the state's 12-month continuous eligibility for Medicaid and CHIP has kept more kids and their caregivers healthy.

"We have seen," said Yacovone, "that when parents go in for those necessary appointments,

and parents are getting the care, the prescription they need, children are more likely to be covered."

She added that children in low-earning families were more likely to gain coverage due to pandemic-era policies, noting households of three making under \$55,000 a year saw the largest gains.

According to Census Survey data, West Virginia has had the second-lowest median household income among the states. Yaco-

vone added that rates for flu and Respiratory Syncytial Virus - RSV - across the state have climbed high enough to temporarily shut down schools. She said she believes more families have been able to receive flu shots and other medical care this fall without worrying about their health insurance lapsing.

"I could only imagine," said Yacovone, "how much higher our rates of flu and hospitalizations

for flu would be if people didn't have access to that coverage that ensured that they got those vaccinations."

Executive Director of Georgetown University's Center for Children and Families Joan Alker explained that while West Virginia families benefit from continuous coverage, states that haven't implemented similar protections will likely see a spike in uninsured kids in

2023.

"This continuous coverage protection is likely to expire early next year," said Alker. "And we have estimated that the child uninsured rate is very possibly going to double when that happens, which is a very scary thought."

Seventeen states and the District of Columbia currently do not have continuous eligibility for kids covered through Medicaid or CHIP.

WV to become first state in the country to digitize vehicle titles

This week, Gov. Jim Justice announced that in the first quarter of 2023, West Virginia will become the first state in the country to digitize vehicle titles and the process to acquire vehicle registrations.

West Virginia's current services will be expanded to facilitate a fully digital process, enabling online, mobile, and contactless services for vehicle retailers, lenders, insurance carriers, and West Virginians through the DMV's online portal.

West Virginians will be able to access and keep their vehicle title online or on their smartphone, much like an airline boarding pass. The portal will allow West Virginians to conduct all title and registration related transactions remotely, a first in the United States. This will all be accomplished using a solution provided by NIC West

Virginia and Champ Titles, Inc.

This modernization to the DMV aims to end long processing times while reducing costs and errors. The new system will simplify title management and distribution.

To reshape how stakeholders interact in the process, NIC and Champ Titles are changing the way that vehicle titles are created, managed, and transferred in West Virginia. Existing, tried and true DMV services used by citizens, dealers, and businesses are being enhanced to work with a completely modernized management system, the Champ Titles Digital Title and Registration Suite ("DTRS"). DTRS is a comprehensive vehicle title administration solution to manage titles, registrations, liens, and dealer licensing.

"We are proud to be the first state to allow this trans-

formational technology to be a reality for all members of our community," said Everett Frazier,

Commissioner of West Virginia's Division of Motor Vehicles.

Among the benefits, it is estimated that the DMV's new process will reduce the number of pieces of paper currently used by 4,000,000 per year, the days vehicles sit in salvage yards waiting on titles by 1,000,000, and significantly reduce the time that West Virginians need to spend in DMV offices processing title and registration related transactions.

Information regarding the exciting changes that are coming, and what citizens can expect, will be shared, as available, through press releases and on the DMV website.

STEPPIN' OUT

Outdoor Adventures

Cont. from Front Page



The Kate's Mountain Challenge will hold their first event next summer, and aims to bring visitors to the Greenbrier Valley.

leaders shared project details and ideas for furthering the Valley's already extensive slate of outdoor activities.

Andrew Williamson, the Director of Outdoor Community Development with the WVU Brad and Alys Smith Outdoor Economic Development Collaborative (OEDC), was in attendance to give an overview on the importance of developing strong outdoor recreation based infrastructure in today's economy.

"There is an economic battle going on right now, and it's even more important post-Covid. We aren't competing with each other; West Virginia and Appalachia as a whole are competing with the Rocky Mountain west, the Midwest, the Southeast, and the West Coast. Now more than ever, people are looking for 'sense of place' first," said Williamson.

The Brad and Alys Smith OEDC has a focus on "advancing West Virginia through outdoor recreation," and aims to replenish the state's population to the historical numbers it had in years past. "We are not trying to grow the population, but many of our communities have had way more residents," he explained.

Calling outdoor recreation "a tool for vibrancy, attraction, and retention," Williamson focused on the importance of developing a diverse range of activities including trails, safe biking locations, family-friendly outdoor environments, and more. He highlighted the importance of community bike parks, stating that parks with something to offer all ages and skill levels are important for inclusivity. "From youth to retirees, and everyone in between," he said that providing locations for family gatherings helps bolster "a sense of place" and can help improve the overall health of the area.

Williamson also focused specifically on trails and their importance to both outdoor recreation and overall community development. "Trails are a conduit to our public lands," he said, and explained that the variety of activities that trails open doors to is fundamental to growth. A majority of outdoor activities are directly dependent on trail access, whether it's a greenway trail, waterway trail, nature trail, motorized trail, etc. "Without trails, you cannot have or grow an outdoor economy."

Locally, this is apparent with the multi-use function that the Greenbrier River Trail already offers. It provides a location to walk, run, bike, ebike, horseback ride, gain river access for swimming, kayaking, floating, fishing, and more. One trail can be multi-use and enhance a whole region by expanding overall outdoor access.

"What I really love to see are these trails that are connecting communities, connecting states, crossing jurisdictional and political boundaries, which is really great when we can connect our communities and really maximize this," he said.

Community bike park and trail development un-

derway

Further updates and details were also released for the new bike skills park at White Sulphur Springs. Originally planned to be located at Martin Field, it has been proposed to be relocated to the Hope Village area. Bike park organizers Clay Elkins, Sarah Elkins, and Max Hammer have been working diligently to secure final plans and funding for the park, which is still in initial phases. The WV HubCAP program awarded \$12,500 with a \$2,500 match from the WV OEDC to design a skills park, and Nature Trails LLC has now completed a plan set and budget estimate. Common components of a bike skills park include a pump track, dirt jumps of various degrees of difficulty, technical rock features, log and wood features, flow trails, and skills areas. The variety of design means there is something for everyone; from children just starting out learning how to bike to those more experienced who are ready for larger jumps and need a controlled environment to practice.

"All we originally said was that we needed a pump track, because we do not have easy trails here," said Sarah Elkins. "Our kids have to be as crazy as we are, because unless they have learned to mountain bike somewhere else, we don't have a 'green' trail. We throw our kids out on aggressive, hard trails."

A pump track is a place where bikers can build skills that they can later use on a trail, typically involving bumps and banked turns that help improve balance and maximize momentum.

Sarah explained that after winning a grant, they expanded their vision to include a whole bike skills park. She said that since the founding of the Greenbrier Valley Hellbenders Youth Mountain Bike Team five years ago, team numbers have tripled each year. As a 501(c)3, the Hellbenders secured a \$50,000 trail accelerator grant from the International Mountain Biking Association, which was matched with another \$50,000 by the OEDC. These funds led to a comprehensive development plan for purpose-built bike trails throughout Lewisburg and White Sulphur Springs.

"Just behind the White Sulphur Springs Fish Hatchery, and up there on that ridgeline, you can put in about eight to 10 miles of trails around there, conceptually," said Clay Elkins. Between the fish hatchery land and an adjacent city parcel, there is ample room to add a variety of outdoor features. He said that on Stonehouse Road where the water plant is, there is space to add bike areas and another river access to provide a short water trip downstream to Caldwell. "Something you can do just after work." Dorie Miller Park, after the Public Works buildings are eventually removed from the park lands, will also offer space to add bike features and other park items.

"Our next plan is to put it out to bid and start raising money for it," said Clay, referring to the bike skills park at Hope Village. "These things aren't cheap, but the return on them is phenomenal."

Gravel racing coming to White Sulphur

Earlier in the week Clay and Sarah presented their plans to the White Sulphur Springs City Council, who were enthusiastic to support the proposed park. Area lawyer Shawn Romano was also on the agenda, but with his own presentation as he announced a date for a new gravel racing event that will promote bicycling tourism in the Greenbrier Valley.

The Kate's Mountain Challenge, a gravel bike race with proposed lengths of 22, 30, 50, and 70 miles, will start and end at Big Draft Brewery in downtown White Sulphur Springs. All distances will bike five miles to the top of Kate's Mountain, with the longer routes then going to Glace, or as far as Crows. Romano cites an anticipated 400 racers attending the race, which will bring an estimated \$240,000 economic impact to the Greenbrier Valley if each participant brings their partner or one friend with them to the event.

"Unlike most events in the surrounding area, the ability to start and finish the event in a town with shopping, amenities, and lodging provides an opportunity to attract more racers, more non-riders, and to convince them to 'make a weekend' of the event," cites his proposal. According to a 2019 WVU Extension Service study of the economic impacts of mountain biking and bike trail events and festivals in the Mountain State, the median age of riders is 44, 78% of them have an income above \$60,000 per year (with 47% having an income above \$100,000), and that half of their biking trips take place within 250 miles of home.

The Kate's Mountain Challenge is also a part of the West Virginia Gravel Racing Series, a five race cumulative series which includes races throughout the state. Races that are part of this series include: The Lost River Classic, Hardy County; Gravel Race Up Spruce Knob, Pendleton County; Rolling Coal, Shinnston and Harrison County; and Rowlesburg Dirty Double, Preston County. Romano expects several dozen entrants to The Challenge will be racers competing in the entirety of the West Virginia Series.

The Kate's Mountain Challenge has been set for July 22, 2023.

Meadow River Recreational Corridor Project continues

Matt Ford, who spearheaded the Meadow River Recreational Corridor Project, presented an overview of work done so far on the Meadow River Rail Trail near Rainelle, and details on the Meadow River water trail. "This corridor is 'between the Gorge and the Greenbrier,' that's a tagline if there ever was one," said Ford. He said that the Meadow River offers both flat water and white water, and goes by Rupert and Rainelle. The Rail Trail and the water trail are side-by-side, much like the Greenbrier River Trail, and passes through Fayette County and Greenbrier County. He explained that this trail project has been ongoing for over a decade, and that the floods of 2016 provided a setback for the construction of the trail. However, recent construction has seen repairs of slips to the trail and vital bridge repairs. There are three phases to the project, with Fayette County funding current construction of the Russellville Bridge.

He noted that parking and access are also a focus for the development of the region, as ease of access is important for both locals and visitors.

A five acre site that was once a landfill for the Rainelle area is also being explored as a site for development. Located beside the river, it could be an ideal site for river access. The DEP has already performed a site inspection, and further testing is planned to evaluate the overall safety of the site.

"The plan is quite literally to turn trash into treasure here, because the property is not being used because of the old landfill use. As long as the environmental piece works out, we will be able to improve the environmental condition here," Ford explained.

A new collaboration with Greenbrier West High School aims to help kids connect with the area, and hopes to help encourage graduates to stay in the state by giving them an outlet to help improve their town.

Ronceverte anticipates L&R Trail progress

Dan Withrow noted that they are looking at completing the final segment of the L&R Trail, which will connect Lewisburg and Ronceverte. He said that roughly three miles of anticipated trail are being anticipated for the next phase, "and we are really shooting to have that done by next summer."

How "Winter Wonderland" Came to be



"Winter Wonderland," with its vivid cold weather imagery, seems like it was tailor-made to sing around Christmastime. But much like "Jingle Bells," the song wasn't actually written for the holiday season. The lyrics were penned in the 1930s by Richard Bernhard Smith, who was suffering from tuberculosis at the time and holed up indoors. Smith stared out his window observing kids playing innocently in the snow and wrote a poem evoking feelings of the carefree days he once knew. Smith's friend and musician Felix Bernard took the lyrics and composed a melody to go with them. Even though the song never specifically mentions Christmas, it quickly became a holiday standard.

"Winter Wonderland"

Sleigh bells ring, are you listening,
In the lane, snow is glistening,
A beautiful sight, we're happy tonight,
Walking in a winter wonderland.

Gone away is the bluebird,
Here to stay is a new bird,
He sings a love song, as we go along,
Walking in a winter wonderland.

(Chorus)
In the meadow we can build a snowman,
Then pretend that he is Parson Brown,
He'll say: Are you married? We'll say: No man,

But you can do the job while you're in town.

Later on, we'll conspire,
As we dream by the fire,
To face unafraid, the plans that we've made,
Walking in a winter wonderland.

(Chorus)

When it snows, ain't it thrilling,
Though your nose gets a chilling
We'll frolic and play, the Eskimo way,
Walking in a winter wonderland.

Walking in a winter wonderland,
Walking in a winter wonderland.

Lyrics by Richard Bernhard Smith; melody by Felix Bernard
Lyrics courtesy of Christmassongs.net



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