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Sunny Days Preschool Hosts Graduation Ceremony



Sunny Days graduates are pictured above (l-rt) in their caps and gowns. (front row) Paisley Sigley, Blakely Goulette, Collins Radcliff, Bristol Sayers, Vivian Harvey, and Lakelynn Bruce. (2nd row) Reese Woods, Kade Garrison, Barrett Corley, Ethan McNemar, and Addy Martin. (3rd row) Oaklyn Anton-Lambert, Henry Maxwell, Harlan Rodeheaver, Dior Smith, and Owen Jefferies.

By Leigh C. Merrifield

On Saturday, May 16th, at 11 a.m., the stage at Lincoln High School's auditorium was decorated with balloons and butterflies to celebrate the graduation of 16 four-year olds from Sunny Days

Preschool. Family members were treated to a Power Point presentation exhibiting pictures of each of the graduates from preschool entry to the present time.

Speaking of butterflies, the children in fact recently got to watch in their classroom as

butterflies transformed from an egg to a caterpillar and then shed their cocoons, spread their wings, and learned to fly. Owner and school director Mrs. Karnis made the comparison that children, just like butterflies, start out small and fragile, but grow and also learn to fly, in a manner of speaking! And just as all butterflies are exquisite, they are also different types, shapes, and colors; and so too are children very unique individuals with distinctive personalities; yet each is a beautiful masterpiece! But recognizing the students' many differences and meeting each of their needs requires a special passion and commitment to guide and support them during their initial introduction to a school environment.

Mrs. Karnis was anxious to jump right into her profession following her graduation from Fairmont State College in May of 1982. Within just four months of receiving her degree in Child Care and Development, she approached the board of the First Baptist Church in Shinnston with hopeful plans to locate her school in their facility; and with their approval, the doors to Sunny Days opened in September of that same year. Now, 44 years later, she is still in that same secure environment and has been a driving force in helping well over 1,300 youngsters flourish during their formative years – and with the same enthusiasm she had on

See "Preschool" Pg 5

Low Turnout in Primaries Provides Few Surprises Despite Gubernatorial Endorsements

By Stephen Smoot

Though Governor Patrick Morrisey and various political organizations sought to inject statewide primaries with intraparty partisanship, few surprises emerged in last week's primaries.

Primary elections serve as the main way that modern political parties select nominees. Traditionally, primaries are closed to non party members. That said, for a number of election cycles the West Virginia Republican Party had allowed for those registered with no party to vote in its primaries. Last year, the state GOP reversed that decision and created some confusion to Republican-leaning voters not registered with that party.

That also may have served as a reason, alongside intensely negative campaigning, for low turnout. In Harrison County, 22.72 percent went to the polls.

Susan Thomas, Harrison County Commission President, ran unopposed for her seat. Martin Howe won nomination for that seat with 2,242 to Mickey Petitto's 1,800 even. Incumbents prevailed

in the Board of Education race with Frank Devono Jr garnering 5,142, Mary Francis Beto Smith with 5,054, Tom Tucker got 4,841, and Justin Caroli 4,261.

Gov. Morrisey for the 2026 primary rolled out an effort to strengthen his base in the State Legislature with those who he felt best supported his economic development and social conservatism goals. He also weighed in against some who traditionally back those ideals, but opposed the Governor in other ways.

Some long-standing incumbents were targeted by the Governor. This played out in the Republican primary for the 87th district. Incumbent Gary Howell (R-Mineral) held off Morrisey-endorsed Mineral County Commissioner Charles Staggs to take the nomination 784 to 653. While the Governor's endorsements won between two-thirds and three-fourths of their races, most were incumbents and many had no opponent. In races where the Governor worked to oust Republican incumbents, he did not fare as well.

The Governor also targeted, among others,

See "Primaries" Pg 5



(L-R) Luis Quintana, Cathy Spain and Jim Hunt

Luis Quintana and the Energy of Newark



By JIM HUNT

Building Amazing Cities

For the Harrison County Journal

One of the joys of my many years associated with the National League of Cities has been the interesting people I have had the opportunity to meet. Some are mayors, some are councilmembers, some are city managers, and some are community leaders who simply care deeply about the places they call home.

One very special person I have known for many years is Luis Quintana, a veteran councilmember from Newark, New Jersey.

Luis has an infectious personality. At National League of Cities conferences, he is rarely seen standing alone. There always seems to be a crowd gathered around him, with people laughing, talking, taking pictures, or catching up on the latest news from Newark. He has that rare ability to make people feel like old friends, even if they have just met him.

Luis has served for more than three decades in Newark city government, which is no small feat. Newark is a great American city, but it is also a tough political city. To enter public life there is difficult. To stay in public life there for thirty-two years says something about a person's stamina, relationships, and connection to the community.

A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to attend a community awards breakfast in Newark during Luis's campaign for an unprecedented ninth term on the Newark City Council. I attended with my colleague, Cathy Spain of Bearing Advisors, and we were both impressed by what we saw.

The event was held at the historic Robert Treat Hotel in downtown Newark. Before and after the breakfast, Cathy and I had time to walk around downtown and take in the city. We had dinner at an Irish pub near the Newark branch of Rutgers

See "Hunt" Pg 5

Mental Health Awareness Month Reminds Us We're Stronger When We Show Up for One Another

By Brad Story, CEO of the West Virginia Behavioral Healthcare Providers Association

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, a time to remind ourselves of something deeply important: every person we meet may be carrying burdens we cannot see.

In West Virginia, we understand hardship. But more importantly, we understand resilience, too. Our communities have weathered economic uncertainty, addiction, loss, natural disasters, and personal struggles that would test anyone's spirit. Yet through it all, one thing has always defined West Virginians: when times get hard, we show up for each other.

Mental health deserves that same sense of shared responsibility and compassion.

We are living in a time when

the world can feel tense, divided, and overwhelming.

Social media amplifies anger. Headlines bring stress. Many people feel isolated, anxious, exhausted, or simply unseen. Behind closed doors, countless families are quietly struggling with depression, substance use, trauma, grief, or loneliness.

Mental health challenges do not discriminate. They affect people in every town, social class, school, workplace, and family.

The statistics are sobering. 1 in 5 adults in America experienced mental illness in the past year. 1 in 20 adults experienced a serious mental illness. Among the youth, 1 in 5 young people have a mental health condition, with anxiety being the most common.

Nearly 35 percent of mental illness emerges by age 14, and almost two-thirds appears by age 25. Most alarming of all, in 2023, 20 percent of high school students in the United States seriously

considered suicide.

At the same time, nearly 30 million Americans still lack access to affordable, comprehensive mental health and substance use treatment.

These numbers are not just statistics. They represent our neighbors, our coworkers, our classmates, our veterans, our parents, and our children.

At the West Virginia Behavioral Healthcare Providers Association, our nearly 40 member organizations see every day the impact mental health and substance use challenges can have on families and communities. Covering all 55 counties, our providers large and small are working tirelessly to care for West Virginians through counseling, recovery services, crisis support, and compassionate treatment.

In 2025, our providers served nearly 100,000 adults and more than 24,000 children.

Their counselors, therapists, recovery specialists, and frontline staff are helping people

See "Mental Health" Pg 5



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OPINION

De Officiis and the Wereth 11

By Stephen Smoot

Among the last works of the great Marcus Tullius Cicero was *De Officiis*, or “On Duties.” In the last year of his life, with his career work of strengthening the old Republic burning down around him, Cicero addressed this treatise to his son to explain duty.

His words’ impact carried his message over the centuries and shaped the ideals of America’s Founding Fathers. In a sense, Cicero’s ideal of duty is the American ideal of duty going back to the beginning.

Towards the opening of his work, Cicero shares the basic human instinct, that of each individual’s own survival, stating that “Nature has endowed every species of living creature with the instinct of self-preservation, of avoiding what seems likely to cause injury to life or limb.”

Cicero then relates later in that paragraph that departure from instinct separates man from the beasts, and it is right that he remove himself from that basic instinct as much as possible. “Man—because he is endowed with reason, by which he comprehends the chain of consequences, perceives the causes of things, understands the relation of cause to effect and of effect to cause, draws analogies, and connects and associates the present and the future—easily surveys the course of his whole life and makes the necessary preparations for its conduct.”

In other terms, man has the capacity to measure basic instinct against higher values and morality. He can act against his individual instinct, but in the cause of duty, virtue, and honor.

“Nature likewise by the power of reason”, as Cicero explains, gives mankind a path by which he may set aside the notion of what is best for him to serve what his best for his spouse, his children, his family, friends, community, even the nation at large.

Humanity also brings a “search for truth” about “the wonders of Creation”, a “feeling for . . . propriety.” Cicero notes that “It is from these elements that is forged and fashioned that moral goodness which is the subject of this inquiry—something that, even though it be not generally ennobled, is still worthy of all honour; and by its own nature, we correctly maintain, it merits praise, even though it be praised by none.”

And sometimes, that moral goodness is intentionally hidden from public view until truth demands its revelation.

In the Year of Our Lord 1941, after the Empire of Japan launched a destructive surprise attack on United States forces at Pearl Harbor, Aubrey Stewart of Piedmont, West Virginia, chose to do his duty for his country.

Stewart had a good-paying job at West Virginia Pulp and Paper, the respect of his friends and the community, and had aged beyond the years in which the United States military would have

See “Smoot” Pg 7

ACROSS

- 1 Clipboard’s larger relative
8 Nintendo game system
11 Styled after
14 Funny Foxx
19 Law of motion topic
20 Behind bars
22 Fabric design
23 Execute the opening pool shot perfectly?
25 Iowa senator Joni
26 Mid-voyage
27 Inquire
28 Unable to find your pool stick?
30 Actor Caine
34 1950s-’60s Egyptian president
35 Puts spin on a pool ball with no further tricks?
42 Animal throat
44 Chicken —
45 River of Bern
46 “Cops” sound
47 Office scribe
49 Road furrow
50 Basie’s music
53 Pool triangle packed in a suitcase?

- 56 Ultimatum end
58 Assist
60 Anticipates a treat, maybe
61 Stridex target
62 Some schlumpy physiques
66 Bits of land in the ocean, in French
67 Label anew
69 Toddler who’s a whiz at pool?
72 Really heavy herbivore
76 Lacklester
78 Street in Manhattan’s Alphabet City
80 Scandinavian thunder god
81 Having a trio of components
86 Alex and — (jewelry brand)
87 “Quickly” or “slowly,” e.g.
89 Perimeter of a pool table that people have plopped down on?
92 Habituate (to)
94 Org. for cavity fillers

- 95 In spite of the fact that, in brief
96 Itty-bitty
98 Scot’s refusal
99 Ocasek of the Cars
100 Put a tear in
101 Resume play after accidentally sinking the white pool ball?
106 “Othello” victim
109 Pool variety with 22 balls
110 Observe a hole in a pool table?
115 La mer filler
116 Love god
120 Jetson boy
121 Last shot of a pool game?
125 Be at a slant
126 Mass in the throat
127 Admiral Nelson
128 Liv of “Super”
129 Riddle-me —
130 Facial locale
131 Frightful flies

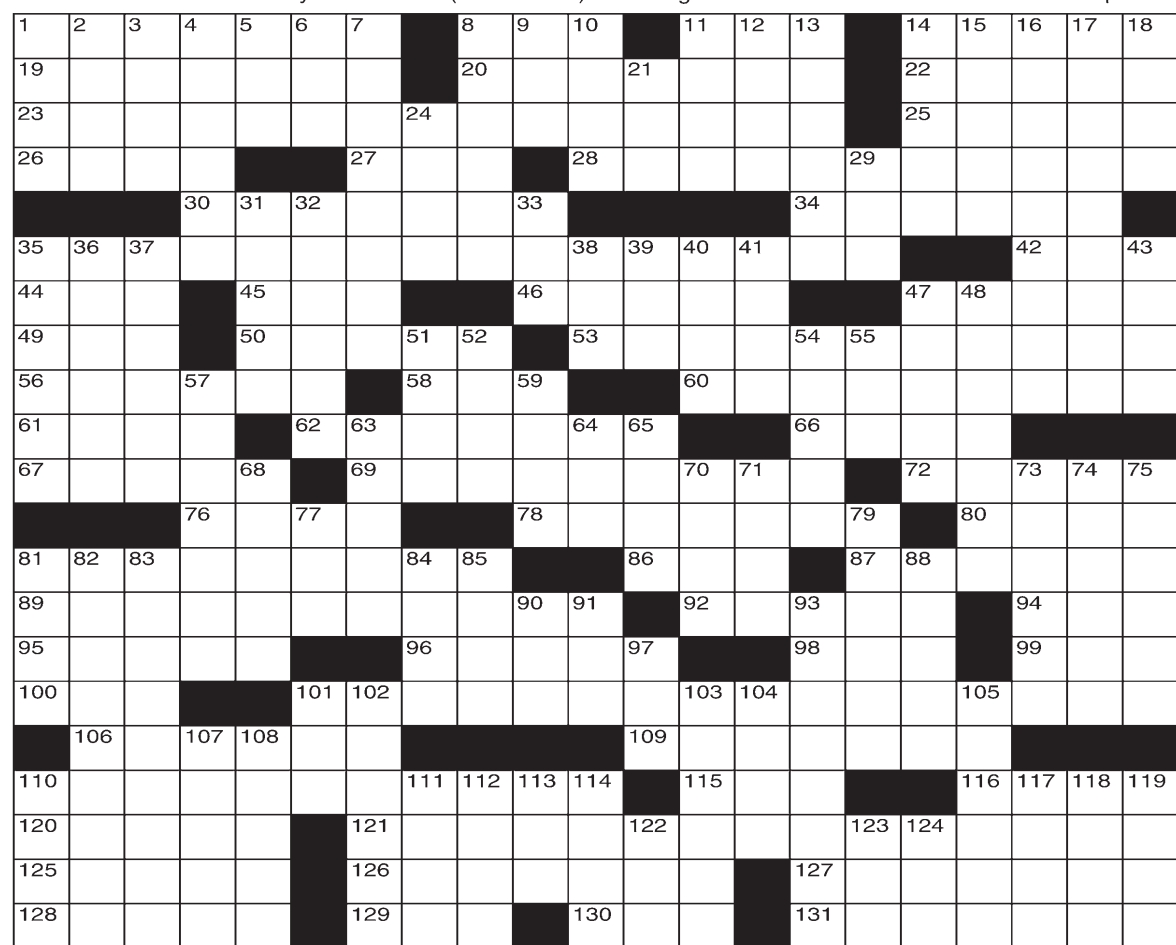
DOWN

- 1 Peru’s largest city
2 Santa — (some winds)
3 Certain small pooch
4 Reveries
5 Zeta follower
6 [not my typo]
7 Desert region in Africa
8 Devitalize
9 Vacation stop
10 Long-range nuke carrier
11 Gets mature
12 Grasslands
13 Last name of singer Adele
14 Many PC pics
15 Alcove-hiding tapestry
16 Mixture baked in pies
17 Aetna offering
18 Kin of -ess
21 Grande of pop, for short
24 “Ozark” actor Morales
29 “Uh-uh”
31 “No bid”
32 Attacked as a cat might
33 The, to Jules
35 Hoopla
36 Info provider
37 Breadth
38 Not a one
39 “Despicable Me” antihero
40 Thigh locales

- 41 Actress Swenson
43 Pad thai pans
47 Cut, as ties
48 Reality shows, to some people
51 Not a one
52 Singer Barry
54 Similar
55 Baseballer Hodges
57 Guides, biblical-style
59 “A little dab’ll —”
63 Mahmoud of Palestine
64 “seaQuest —” (sci-fi series)
65 Old Big Apple stadium
68 — -Roman
70 Decade divisions, in Rome
71 Lay waste to
73 “— Huckabees” (2004 film)
74 Swedish, say
75 Jerry of stage and screen
77 “The Simpsons” character once voiced by Hank Azaria
79 Ex-president Obama

POOL PLAY

- 81 Old autocrat
82 In a spiral-shaped way
83 1960s World War II series, with “The”
84 Ostrich kin
85 Arena level
88 John of plows
90 Ottawa loc.
91 Abbr. on a bad check
93 Not looked for
97 Cen. divisions
101 Tiny drink
102 Over the line
103 Central New York lake
104 Complain
105 Turkey’s tallest peak
107 Breadth
108 More bashful
110 Ohio-to-Utah direction
111 Suffix with fungi
112 Large joint
113 Berlin article
114 General — chicken
117 Witty sayings
118 Steinbeck migrant
119 Old Olds cars
122 Large joint
123 Call for help
124 Uno tripled



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Find the Super Crossword Answers on Page 4!

THIS WEEK IN West Virginia History



May 26, 1923: Playwright Maryat Lee was born in Kentucky. In 1970, she moved to Summers County and developed her Eco Theater into a national organization.

Charleston WV – The following events happened on these dates in West Virginia history. To read more, go to e-WV: The West Virginia Encyclopedia at www.wvencyclopedia.org.

May 21, 1853: William M. O. Dawson was born in Bloomington, Maryland, just across the Potomac River from what is now the Eastern Panhandle. In 1905, he became West Virginia’s 12th governor.

May 22, 1880: West Virginia businessman and politician Vernon E. Johnson was born in Berkeley Springs. He served six terms in the legislature, including twice as Speaker—one of only three West Virginians to hold that office on non-consecutive occasions. At 34, he was the youngest Speaker ever elected in state history.

May 22, 1947: Supreme Court Justice Margaret “Peggy” Workman was born in Charleston. In November 1988, she became the first woman elected to the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals and to statewide office in West Virginia.

May 23, 1862: In what became known as the Battle of Lewisburg, Union troops repelled a

Confederate advance, killing 38 and wounding 66, while losing only 13 men. Following the battle, Confederate dead lay in the sanctuary of the Old Stone Presbyterian Church.

May 23, 1941: Rod Thorn was born in Princeton. Declared by the legislature a state “natural resource,” Thorn attended West Virginia University, where he was an All-American guard. Thorn had a distinguished NBA career as a player and executive, which included drafting Michael Jordan.

May 24, 1896: Confederate General John Echols died in Staunton, Virginia. Echols served in the Kanawha Valley in 1862 and commanded Confederate forces at their defeat at the Battle of Droop Mountain in November 1863.

May 25, 1903: Industrialist and philanthropist Bernard Patrick McDonough Jr. was born in Texas. Starting with a Parkersburg construction business in the 1930s, McDonough built a Fortune 500 company with operations in hand tools, building materials and barge building. The Bernard McDonough Foundation remains one of the largest private foundations in West Virginia.

May 25, 1937: William H. “Teepi” Kendrick died in Morgantown. Kendrick was a pioneer in West Virginia’s 4-H program. He broadened the program to emphasize more than just agriculture, and he was primarily responsible for establishing the state 4-H camp at Jackson’s Mill.

May 26, 1802: City founder Alfred Beckley was born in Washington, D.C., where his father, John, was serving as the nation’s first Librarian of Congress. John Beckley established what would become the Raleigh County seat in 1838 and named it for his father.

May 26, 1895: Athlete Ira Errett “Rat” Rodgers was born in Bethany. He was WVU’s first football All-American, lettering in 1915–17 and 1919.

May 27, 1912: Golf legend Sam Snead was born at Ashwood, Virginia. When The Greenbrier reopened as a resort after World War II, Snead returned as the golf pro. Snead is tied with Tiger Woods for most career wins on the PGA Tour: 82.

May 27, 1922: Labor leader Bill Blizzard was acquitted of treason charges following the 1921 Battle of Blair Mountain. The trial was held in the Jefferson County Courthouse in Charles Town, where John Brown had been convicted of treason against Virginia in 1859.

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John James Olson
John James Olson, 80, of Mannington, passed away on May 6, 2026.

With heavy hearts and deep sorrow, we announce his passing. Though our hearts are deeply broken by the loss of our beloved Dad, we find comfort and peace in knowing he is now resting eternally in God's loving care, surrounded by His everlasting grace and safely embraced in the arms of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Born on October 23, 1945, in Brooklyn, New York, he was the son of the late John Olson and Christina VanDerBeck.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by the love of his life and wife of 40 years, Ruth Gonzales-Olson, affectionately known as "Luv Luv"; his brother, Alex Olson; and his sisters, Alice Passantino, Suzanne Olson, and Diane Tillander.

He is survived by his children: daughter Summer Massey (Kevin) of Texas; daughter TerraLee Vera of Pennsylvania; daughter Corrina Wenck of Nebraska; son Robert Olson of Pennsylvania; and daughter Nicole VanName-Olson of Kansas; son George Tyler (Julie) of Henderson Nevada; daughter Sherry Smith (Peter) of Canton MA. He is also survived by his sisters, Linda Juszczak (Charles) and Emily Weil; and his brothers, Victor Gaspar and Gary Gaspar.

He also leaves behind fifteen grandchildren, Michael Vera, Robert Vera, Jessica Vera, Vincent Vera, Michael Wenck, and Destiny Wenck Princeton Tyler, Trenton Tyler, Clayton Tyler, Christian Tyler, Sierra Tyler, Julia Quinn, Aidan Quinn, Ronan Smith, Killian Smith; two great-granddaughters, Taylor Enriquez and Lillian Enriquez; along with thirteen nieces and nephews.

John James Olson was a devoted man of faith and a member of Mannington Church of the Nazarene and Park View Church of the Nazarene. He found joy in life's simple and meaningful moments - playing chess, reading and writing poetry, listening to music, playing video games, and spending cherished

time with his beloved dogs. A gifted writer and creative spirit, he was also the proud published author of four books.

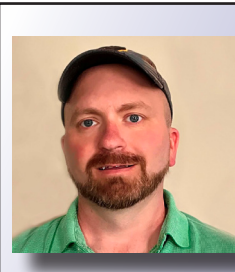
He truly loved his job at Job Squad and cherished the friendships he made there. He had a deep passion for his work and thought of his coworkers as family. The love and friendship shared among his work family brought him great joy throughout his life.

Above all, John will be remembered for his gentle heart, unique spirit, creativity, quiet wisdom, humor, storytelling, love of music, and the special way he loved those around him. Many will also remember his thick hair and striking blue eyes, which seemed to catch the attention of everyone he met. His life touched many in different ways, and his memory will continue to live on through all who knew and loved him.

Though his earthly journey has ended, we take comfort in knowing he has found eternal peace in Heaven above. May he now walk beside our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and rest forever in His heavenly kingdom.

Friends and family will be received at Harmer Funeral Home on Monday, May 18, 2026 From 4:00PM to 7:00PM. A Funeral Service will be held on Tuesday May 26 at 12:00PM with Rev. Michael Delligatti officiating.

On to higher education...



The Story Behind the Photo
By Bobby Bice

With May being the month for high school graduations, I thought I would select a photo from my collection that touches base on continuing education. The accompanying image shows the five children of Howard and Maud (Weaver) Hurst. The Hurst Family lived along Haywood Road, just outside of Shinnston. While seeing an old photo of siblings is far from unusual, the little "story" behind this photo is the fact that each sibling graduated Shinnston High School and went on to attend Alderson-Broadus College in Philippi. I don't remember having ever met the youngest child, "Butch", but I did know the other four siblings in the photo.

Lois, the oldest of the Hurst children and seated at center in the photo, was born in Clarksburg and spent her early years of education at the Alta Vista Grade School in the Broad Oaks section of Clarksburg. Her parents moved to Shinnston where Lois graduated with the class of 1928. She went on to attend A-B College. She married a man who later became a minister while she played piano for dozens of churches; they had no children. Lois was a teacher in her early years, but later became a published author of poetry and short stories and was active in a local Shinnston poetry club, The Rhymers.

Bernice, standing at back in the photo, was a Shinnston High graduate with the class of 1929. She went on to attend A-B College, where she excelled as part of the women's basketball team. Her career stayed with educating young people, eventually becoming a principal in the Harrison County school system. She married and had one daughter, who many will remember as being their physical education teacher, Jo Ann Jones.

Theda, seen at left in the photo, was the middle child and youngest of the three girls. She graduated Shinnston High School in 1934 and headed to Philippi to be the third of the family to attend A-B. Theda later spent many years working in Washington, DC. She married twice and had one daughter, also named Theda, who is well-remembered as a Shinnston and Lincoln High School teacher, "Mrs. Tichenor".

Robert, referred to as "Bob", is shown at right in the accompanying image. He graduated



"Taken about 1925, this image shows the five children of long-time Shinnston residents, Howard and Maud Hurst."

Shinnston High School in 1937. While attending SHS, he excelled in basketball and was offered a scholarship to attend A-B College. While there, he met and married his wife and became the father of one daughter. Bob was drafted into the Army for service during World War II and spent 33 years being employed by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.

Howard, known as "Butch" to Shinnston-area childhood friends, but referred to as "Cap" by his lifelong adult friends, was the youngest of the Hurst children and is being held by his oldest sister, Lois, in the photo. He graduated SHS in 1942 and then headed off to the army after being drafted into WWII. While home on furlough, he got to spend time with his niece who he said had grown into a little "nick-nack." From that moment on, the niece began being referred to as "Nick-Nack". As she grew older, the name got shortened and she became widely known as simply "Nack" (Mrs. Tichenor mentioned above). After the war, Butch headed to A-B College, where he graduated and then began a long career of working for both the B and O as well as the C and O Railroad. Like his brother Bob, Butch's railroad employment lasted for 33 years. He spent much of his career as a railroad Police Officer. "Butch" died in 2017 at the age of 92, leaving behind a wife and two children.

And that is this month's story behind the photo!

History Museum Funds Future With Scholarship Award



Pictured are Ted Wolfe Harrison County Genealogical Society, Kathryn Southall and her parents Richard and Debra Southall.

The Clarksburg History Museum hosted the presentation of the Harrison County Genealogical Society's yearly scholarship award. The winner is Kathryn Raye Southall a student at

RCB High School. She was presented a \$1,000.00 check toward her future endeavors. Her parents are Richard and Debra Southall. She is planning on attending Fairmont State University and

major in computer science. She traced her family lineage back 7 generations to Barnabas McHenry who was born in 1715 near Ballyreagh Castle in Antrim, Ireland.



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“Preschool”

cont. from p. 1

her opening day in 1982!

Don't think for a moment that her job is easy; however, with 10 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren, she is accustomed to and tolerant of a little noise and chaos, and she has learned that keeping youngsters engaged typically involves a variety of activities!

Part of Sunny Days' success is likely due in part to Mrs. Karnis' endless creativity. She frequently reflects on her curriculum and alters her lesson plans, striving to improve and enrich them to enhance the students' experience. Sunny Days' program not only introduces basic concepts such as the alphabet, numbers, shapes, colors, etc., but also promotes kind and respectful interaction with peers, patience, sharing, following instructions, and behavior

guidelines. While discipline and manners are not ignored, the program also incorporates art projects, music, physical activity, story-telling, play-time, field trips and holiday parties. And this year, Mrs. Karnis has noticed children taking a real interest in some STEM experiments they have done as well!

Mrs. Karnis commented, “From the very beginning, I have been so blessed. The Baptist church has been very generous and supportive to us. I have also had skilled, reliable teacher's assistants; Lexie Barnes has been with my school for at least 20 years, and Autumn Sendling joined me 15 years ago. We all work well as a team and we have established a steady routine. Also, the parents of my students have been very accommodating partners. The first of the school

year can sometimes be challenging because children in a school setting for the first time often suffer from separation anxiety.” “But, she added, “working together with parental backing, we seem to always handle it quite well within a few weeks.”

Sunny Days Preschool has earned an excellent reputation through the years, and the Shinnston community is fortunate to have this school in its midst. It is a wonderful testimony to the school's status that enrollees are not just local children, but some have traveled from Marion, Doddridge, Lewis, Barbour, and Monongalia Counties.

Mrs. Karnis concluded, “These 44 years have been a rewarding journey that is not yet ending. I still love doing what I do! It has been and still is a labor of love for me.”

“Hunt”

cont. from p. 1

University, and we noticed how active the downtown was on a Saturday night.

One thing that caught my attention was the Whole Foods grocery store downtown. In many large urban cities, grocery access has become a real challenge, with neighborhoods becoming what are often called food deserts. Newark appears to be pushing back against that trend. The store was busy, and it felt like the community had embraced it as part of downtown life.

The awards breakfast itself was held in the beautiful ballroom at the Robert Treat Hotel, and people began arriving early. The atmosphere was festive, warm, and filled with the kind of energy that only a true community gathering can create.

Cathy and I were welcomed with kindness, and more than a few people seemed impressed that

Luis's friends had traveled from out of state to be there. We heard stories from community members about Luis as a young boy working on city council campaigns, long before he would become one of Newark's best-known public servants. Those stories reminded me that politics, at its best, is not just about campaigns and elections. It is about relationships, neighborhoods, families, and trust built over many years.

There are few things more American than events that bring politics and community together. In cities like Newark, people gather at breakfasts, parades, fairs, church halls, and community celebrations to support candidates they know personally. Children attend with their parents and grandparents. Meeting the mayor or a councilmember becomes part of a family tradition.

As we left Newark, we could see the skyline of New York City and the activity around Newark Liberty International Airport. Large cities get their share of criticism. To those who live on quiet streets or acre lots in the suburbs, the density and pace of a city like Newark can seem overwhelming.

But there is also something powerful about that energy. Big cities have a rhythm, a history, and a spirit that cannot be duplicated.

Luis Quintana represents that spirit. He is not just a councilmember. He is a reminder that public service is built one handshake, one conversation, and one relationship at a time.

As a postscript, Luis Quintana was elected to his ninth term on the Newark City Council, leading the at-large ticket. For his friends in Newark and across the country, it was a victory worth celebrating.

“Primaries”

cont. from p. 1

incumbent Tom Takubo (R-Kanawha) from the 17th District. He prevailed 3,858 to 3,019 for Chris Pritt.

At the top of the ballot, United States Senator Shelley Moore Capito fended off multiple challengers to win nomination by the Republican Party. She earned twice the number of votes cast for all her challengers combined. State Senator Tom Willis, who had knocked off the former State Senate President Craig Blair in the last cycle, tried to attack Sen. Capito from her political right and made controversial accusations against her and her staff.

In Harrison County, Sen. Capito received 2,873 to 636 for Willis. On the Democratic side, Rachel Anderson earned nomination over four other contenders. In Harrison County, Anderson received 2,225, Jeffrey Kessler 858, Zachary Shrewsbury 455, Rio Phillips 306, and Thornton Cooper 185.

Riley Moore ran unopposed for his seat in the Second Congressional District. While Ace Parsi

took the nomination from the Democratic Party, Stephanie Spears Tomana was the top vote-getter in Harrison County.

For the 12th Senatorial District, Republican Ben Queen fended off a challenge from Joseph Earley. Across the district, he won 3,718 to 3,098 while in Harrison Queen got 2,389 to 1,834. Lynette Murray ran without opposition.

In the 69th Delegate District on the Democratic side, Jocelyn Blackwell took the nomination with 514 votes to Lou Assaro's 339. In the 70th, Democrat Shannon Welsh defeated Jackson Howe 751 to 668 for that nomination. Robert Garcia ran unopposed for the Democratic nomination in the 71st and no Democrat ran in the 72nd

Republican results in Delegate primaries start with Danny Hamrick earning 572 votes to win nomination over Keth Marple with 540 and Andrew Yost with 188 in the 69th. The 70th showed a tight race with Paul Howe holding a slight 399 to 384 vote edge over Salvatore Bombardiere. In the 71st, another tight race has Tim McNeely with

686 over Laura Kimble with 682. For the 72nd, Clay Riley topped Megan Krajewski 734 to 314.

In the aftermath of the race, Governor Morrissey declared that his faction had prevailed, citing the total percentage of endorsements that moved on successfully in the primary. His supporters posted artificial intelligence generated imagery celebrating the wins.

The Governor released a statement on social media saying “West Virginia Republicans spoke with one voice Tuesday: we're done with the status quo . . . we are ready to fight for our state's future, nominating Republicans who share that vision.”

Critics, however, indicated that much of that number came from unopposed incumbents. Melody Potter, former West Virginia Republican Party Chair, stated on social media that “all of the nasty mailers, endorsements, etc. have done very little to change the composition of the Legislature. West Virginia is better than this. Let's bring integrity back.”

“Mental Health”

cont. from p. 1

heal, supporting families in crisis, and bringing hope to our communities across our state.

But we also know recovery is real. Hope is real. Healing is possible when people are supported, connected, and treated with compassion instead of judgment.

That is why Mental Health Awareness Month matters. It's not simply about awareness campaigns or wearing a certain color ribbon. It's about creating a culture where people feel safe asking for help and where checking in on someone should be second nature.

Sometimes the most important thing we can do is simple: make the call, send the text, ask the question, or just sit quietly beside someone who needs support.

For our young people especially, connection matters. Many teenagers and young adults today face pressures previous generations never experienced — constant digital comparison, social isolation, uncertainty about the future, and growing anxiety. Adults must help create environments where young people know it's okay to talk openly about mental health and where seeking help is viewed as a strength, not a weakness.

No one should have to struggle alone.

This month, I encourage every West Virginian to check in on a friend, family member, coworker, or neighbor. Be patient with one another. Listen more closely. Extend grace.

Support local mental health and recovery services. And if you are struggling yourself, know this: asking for help is not a sign of weakness, but an act of courage.

Mental health is health. And caring for each other is still one of the greatest strengths West Virginia has ever known.

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WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Division of Highways
NOTICE TO CONTRACTORS

Bids will be received electronically by the West Virginia Department of Transportation, Division of Highways through the Bid Express Bidding Service (www.bidx.com) and by sealed proposals (only when prequalification is waived) being received at its office in Building 5, Room 843, 1900 Kanawha Boulevard East, Charleston, West Virginia until June 09, 2026 at 10:00 AM (Eastern Standard Time). The bids will be downloaded and/or opened and read publicly thereafter for the construction of the following project(s):

Call Contract	State Project	Federal Project	Description
018	2024990269	S399-RPAVE-26 00	STBG-2026(070)D
			PAVEMENT MARKINGS
			2026 RPM
			Various Locations Statewide
			COUNTY: TUCKER

Proposals will be received from prequalified and West Virginia licensed contractors only except that on Federal-Aid Projects a contractor's license is not required at time of bid, but will be required before work can begin. Registration is required with the Department of Administration, Division of Purchasing, in accordance with Chapter 5A, Article 3, Section 12 of the West Virginia Code. All contractors submitting bids on project(s) must include one of the following forms properly executed with each proposal: Proposal Guaranty Bond, Cashier's Check, or Certified Check for \$500.00 or 5% of the total bid, whichever is greater.

The West Virginia Department of Transportation, Division of Highways reserves the right to defer, delay or postpone the date for receiving and publicly opening proposals for any project designated in this advertisement, without the necessity of renewing such advertisement. The deferment, delay, postponement, and the date that proposals will be received and publicly opened will be available on www.bidx.com.

The West Virginia Department of Transportation, Division of Highways hereby notifies all bidders that it will affirmatively ensure that in any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, minority business enterprises will be afforded full opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex or national origin in consideration for an award.

LEGAL

Excess Property

The City of Shinnston passed an Ordinance (26-001) to sell real or personal property without public auction. If interested in any of these items, please contact the City of Shinnston at 304-592-2126, these items are on a first come first served basis.

1. 2008 Top Brand equipment trailer 7x18.	\$3,000.00
2. 60-inch Swisher ATV pull behind finish mower, 14.5hp.	\$1,000.00
3. 6-foot Siterace three-point hitch cutting bar.	\$1,000.00
4. 5-foot Land Pride finish mower.	\$1,000.00
5. 6-foot Land Pride rear blade.	\$750.00
6. 6-foot Land Pride rear rake.	\$500.00
7. 53-inch Land Pride brush hog.	\$1,500.00
8. 55-inch Land Pride box blade.	\$1,000.00
9. 2007 Chevrolet Silverado	\$3,000.00
10. 2013 Ford Taurus	\$4,000.00
11. 2013 Ford Taurus	\$4,000.00
12. 2014 Ford Taurus	\$4,000.00



The Write Stuff



Lincoln High School's Irissa Earnest earned 1st place in the Young Writers Contest with her piece titled, "Love Doesn't End After Death."

Treasurer Pack Announces West Virginia SMART529 Account Holders Surpass \$1 Billion in Total Assets Saved

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — State Treasurer Larry Pack today announced West Virginia-based account holders of the SMART529 Program have surpassed \$1 billion in total assets saved for the first time in history.

"This achievement means West Virginians realize the benefit and value of investing in our state's SMART529 plan to save for their child's education," Treasurer Pack said. "This milestone underscores the meaningful impact of our program in expanding access to higher education opportunities and improving long-term outcomes for West Virginia families. If we want a stronger economy, we must do everything in our power to invest in a well-trained workforce, as well as the next generation of West Virginia leaders."

Nationally, West Virginia's SMART529 Plan has more than \$3.4 billion in assets under management.

There are three plans available

to West Virginia participants: SMART529 WV Direct, SMART529 Select, and The Hartford SMART529. West Virginians can invest in any of these three options. SMART529 Select and The Hartford SMART529 are available nationwide.

SMART529 is West Virginia's federal and state tax-advantaged plan designed to help families save for both K-12 and higher education expenses. Savings may be used for tuition, fees, housing, meals, books, computers, supplies, and more. These savings can be used nationwide and around the globe at thousands of colleges, universities, and technical schools.

The SMART529 Program is issued by the Board of Trustees of the West Virginia College and Jumpstart Savings Programs and administered by Hartford Funds. Complete information about SMART529 plans and investment options is available at www.SMART529.com.

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"Smoot"

drafted him. Yet he felt the call of duty, enlisted in the United States Army, and was processed into service not long after in Clarksburg.

His service, and his powerful sense of duty, would end during the Battle of the Bulge alongside his comrades-in-arms, only months before war in Europe would come to a close.

Duty, especially based in moral goodness, can even rise higher than volunteering to serve, and perhaps the sacrifice for, one's country. Cicero stated that "all that is morally right rises from some one of four sources: it is concerned either (1) with the full perception and intelligent development of the true; or (2) with the conservation of organized society, with rendering to every man his due, and with the faithful discharge of obligations assumed; or (3) with the greatness and strength of a noble and invincible spirit; or (4) with the orderliness and moderation of everything that is said and done, wherein consist temperance and self-control."

By the winter of 1944 and 45, Stewart had risen to the rank of Staff Sergeant and served in the 333rd Field Artillery Battalion. Their job lay in working the 155 mm howitzers in support of advancing Allied infantry. The 333rd was a segregated black unit, as President Harry Truman's desegregation of the armed forces lay in the future.

By this point, the walls of Allied forces had closed in on the Third Reich of Adolf Hitler. His armies remained in full retreat for almost a year and he calculated that one last effort could break his enemies and win the day for himself and his twisted idealistic visions.

German armies in the West took the offensive and drove United States and British forces into temporary disarray. All this came during one of the most frigid and unforgiving winters in living memory there.

Stewart and 10 other soldiers in the 333rd got separated in the confusion and made their way to the village of Wereth in Belgium.

Cicero explained the relationship between duty and its establishment of the "common bonds" connecting people "Of this again there are two divisions—justice, in which is the crowning glory of the virtues and on the basis of which men are called "good men"; and, close akin to justice, charity, which may also

be called kindness or generosity."

He added also that "the first office of justice is to keep one man from doing harm to another, unless provoked by wrong."

Stewart and the other men quickly were offered shelter by a family in Wereth. The family had every intention of providing a safe haven for the men until the danger had passed.

The danger then came almost to the family's doorstep. The nearby SS unit had received word that American soldiers had found refuge in the town and they came with the intention to kill instead of capture. All knew that black soldiers would endure the worst possible treatment at their hands.

Stewart and the others then made a decision against every instinct of survival, but in line with every morally good sense of duty. They left the home to ensure the safety of those strangers who cared for them, unwilling to risk the lives of Belgians they had never known before.

When next Sergeant Stewart and the others were found, it was months later. Those who found him experienced the full horror of what the SS did to each man. Each were brutally tortured and left to die in the ice and snow. A storm covered their remains until spring.

Their sacrifice was covered as well. Cold War priorities quickly replaced those of World War II. As the Spencer Tracy film Judgement At Nuremberg suggested, it was seen as more important to recruit West Germany as an ally than bring to justice all who had committed atrocities in the war.

Cicero lists two types of injustices in the overt wrong that one can do to another. The SS troops who tortured and killed soldiers with no capacity to defend themselves perpetuated that. Cicero also noted another "on the part of those who, when they can, do not

cont. from p. 2

shield from wrong those upon whom it is being inflicted."

The intentional shelving of the story of what happened to those soldiers represented an injustice perpetrated on them, but a small group of men's tireless efforts reversed that. Kip Price of Piedmont, then Marion County, and Paul Frederick McCue of Clarksburg, a World War II veteran who just turned a century old, took up the cause of the Wereth 11 to share their virtue with the world.

These men brought the story of the Wereth 11 to United States Senator Joe Manchin, who honored their virtuous dedication to duty in Senate Resolution 99 in the 115th Congress, which was passed unanimously.

Price and McCue have one more goal to achieve in the service of ensuring that the story of sacrifice, virtue, and duty remain perpetuated. They wish to see that every state from whom the Wereth 11 served have its Legislature pass resolutions creating a special commemorative day to remember these men each year. Stories of virtuous sacrifice do deserve such an honor.

And, alongside their personal heroism, therein lies the point. American youth are less virtuous than in the past because notions of virtue, duty, and honor have passed from fashion. Many have a hard time imagining themselves rising above convention without models of duty, honor, and virtue. Passing a commemorative day not only honors their heroism, but will help instruct future generations in those values our nation's Founding Fathers held most dear.

And what better lesson could children learn than that, especially on Memorial Day?

The West Virginia State Legislature needs to pass this measure to honor these common men and their uncommon sacrifice in the name of duty, honor, and virtue.

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Thank You For Reading



An Age Old Hope

I read recently that the “Kindness Matters” movement began about 15 years ago – with the hope that it would become popular in schools and on social media to neutralize negative behavior and bullying. Unfortunately, it didn’t quite kick the bullying; some people still seem to enjoy taunting, intimidating, and embarrassing others. And it’s not just kids who are guilty of this; adults are often guilty as well. Fine example, they’re setting, huh?!!!!

Actually, hoping to impress kids with the value of being kind started well before this movement 15 years ago. My memory takes me back 45 years ago when my son was just three years old. Each day when he came home from nursery school, we had a couple of hours of quiet mother/son time as we sat and watched Sesame Street and Mr. Rogers Neighborhood together. Fred Rogers was a strong believer in teaching kids at a young age about being kind to others, and he often emphasized to parents the significance of setting the example themselves to show compassion for others. In his words, “Of all the things you can be, begin by being kind, and be the reason someone smiles today.”

Quotes about the worth of kindness go back even further! American – British author Henry James, who lived from 1843 to 1916, is also quoted for his remarks about the importance of being kind to others. So the hope that kindness would become an increasing habit among human beings has a long history.

Being kind, respectful, and compassionate to others is a wonderful habit to develop ... and it can have a lasting effect on people ... without costing you a cent, it could be the richest gift that person will receive! Even the simplest gestures may brighten someone’s day.

For example, open the door for someone or offer them your seat if waiting in line; give someone a compliment, acknowledge someone else’s efforts, express your appreciation, send a card or call someone who is home-bound, listen intently to someone having a problem – although you may not be able to offer a solution, sometimes all they need is to vent and air their frustration, so you have helped them by simply being a good listener. Don’t be quick to judge others; accept that not everyone will be of the same opinion, but it doesn’t have to cause anger. These are the things we need to teach our children to make this world a better place.

If you watch the news, you don’t often see many examples of kindness in our world today. I wish we could change that, and perhaps all it takes is to consciously make it a habit in your life to be kind in your actions and words. It doesn’t take a lot of effort; just remain mindful that being kind *could be* a ripple that turns into a big wave!

Remember too that kindness should not be a ‘performance’ to make yourself ‘look good’; it should be something you do without expecting any gratitude at all.

If kindness becomes a part of your daily habits, you will find that the joy you give to others will be a joy you will feel within yourself as well. It’s never too late to work on forming a new GOOD habit!

Quote of the Week: “Three things in life are important. The first is to be kind; the second is to be kind; and the third is to be kind.” ~ Henry James

Shinnston City Council Approves Police Dept.’s Drone Request

By Leigh C. Merrifield

Shinnston City Council met on Monday, May 11th and first approved (with a few minor corrections) the minutes of a Resumed Meeting (of 3-9-26), a Regular Meeting (of 4-13-26), a Public Hearing, a Special Meeting, and a Work Session (all of 4-21-26).

City Manager Tori Drainer gave her executive report, detailing all matters that Council needed to be informed of. These items included:

- The water tap the City has on Haywood Road for Lumberport water customers has shown fluctuating usage during the past couple of weeks with only about 250-270 gallons being utilized.
- DEP’s REAP Program has been launched. The City is on the list for application information for this grant, which would enhance recycling opportunities.
- Hydrants are still actively being flushed, leaks are being fixed, and blacktop is being patched.
- The Shinnston Pool manager with help from a group of volunteers have been handling a list of tasks at the Park.
- 19 ½ hours were spent on a recent weekend, painting the pool which should be ready for opening day on May 23rd. Mrs. Drainer suggested using epoxy paint for the pool next year because it lasts much longer.
- The Gravel Grinder race hosted by Pike St. Bikes will be at the Park on May 16th.
- An easement for Rail Trail traffic on Lee Reger Builds property was set up in 2001; however, that will be released and the Rail Trail will then no longer affect that property.
- 23 building permits were issued; one new business license and five renewed licenses were issued for 2025-2026.
- Mountain State Safety has been working with City employees, replacing parts for AEDs.
- Public Works has been busy with tap installations, a water disconnect, meter readings, hydrant flushing, replacement and repair of service lines. They helped with pool cleanup, completed street sweeping, have been cutting grass and weed-eating in town, as well as cleaning around the shop.
- The dilapidated property across from the

Shinnston Post Office has been purchased by Rob Hawkins, formerly owner of Pizza Express. As soon as the paperwork is finalized, it will be torn down.

Mayor Kovalck reminded everyone to vote on May 12th and also announced that Museum Director Debra Herndon has invited Council to hold its next meeting there.

Councilperson Julia Currey stated that there is a drainage problem on Vincent Street that needs attention. Mrs. Ferris also mentioned that lower Ferguson St. needs some paving attention.

Council discussed a request for a \$1,000 donation from the group hosting the Party on the Green this year. Considering that the City will pay for porta potties, trash barrels and removal, along with the cost of liability insurance for the event, that would bring their donation close to \$2,000. They voted to stick to their former donation of \$500. The City Manager said that moving forward, those who request donations like this need to inform the City prior to the end of the year before their budget is finalized. She also volunteered to pass along information and paperwork to them so they could perhaps apply for help from the County for their event.

The Shinnston Police Department has requested the purchase of a drone, and SPD Officer Nick Fiber spoke to Council about its value to police for suspect apprehension and search and rescue efforts. He said that it pairs well with law enforcement and would be used a lot – even to assist the Fire Department if needed. Officers will be required to train and take specialized courses to operate it. Council agreed due to its ability to offer quick deployment. The City Manager will create a resolution for this purchase.

Former Museum Board members Woody Maley and Bobby Bice were reappointed to the Museum Board.

A few budget revisions were discussed, and it was noted that an advertisement for the sale of 12 pieces of excess City vehicles and equipment would be published in the paper soon. The City Manager said that anyone interested should contact the City Office. They will be sold on a first come, first served basis.

Following an executive session, the meeting adjourned.

What Do May Flowers Bring? Absolute Joy and Beauty



Pictured are Erica Perry, Clarksburg Library Children’s Librarian, and children and mothers as the children prepare a flower in a cup for their mothers for Mothers Day.

the Clarksburg Public Library Children’s department, who passed out books to the children. They also supplied fresh flowers for their children to plant in a cup as a special gift for their mothers. Approximately 80 flowers were prepared for their mothers by the children. Erica Perry, Clarksburg Public Library Children’s Librarian assisted the children on this project.

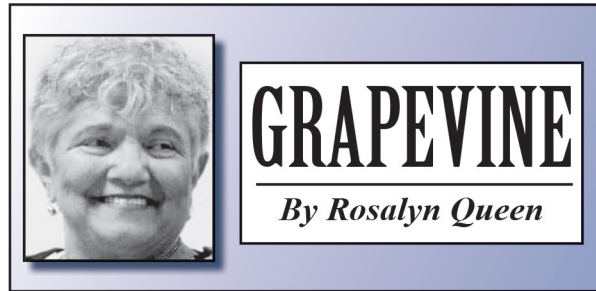
The committee plans on having different projects such as this every week.

Music was supplied by a local band throughout the market. There was also a food truck for individualS to get lunch or just a snack.

The Clarksburg Farmers Market is located in the Farmers Tractor Supply parking lot on Emily Drive. It will be open every Saturday morning throughout the summer from nine until one o’clock . President is Betty Waddy and Bill Yoke serves as treasurer..

Get ready for a beautiful summer, stay healthy and until next week “Now You Have Heard It Through The Grapevine.”

vegetables to plant. There were also hanging flower baskets that made great Mothers Day gifts. There were several booths with deserts and home canned jellies. There was a vendor with baskets and even a knife sharpening booth. You could also find home crafted items. One booth offered scented soaps and other scented items for the home. This week featured



The Clarksburg very hard to expand the Farmers Market Market vendors and to opened on Saturday get varied vendors that to a great crowd and would attract and meet to approximately 20 the needs of the public. vendors. The board The vendors included and committee worked beautiful flowers and

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March and April Students of the Month



Christine Jones is the daughter of Crystal McClung and the late Jeff Jones, and the granddaughter of Patsy Tucker and Jim Tucker.

It appears Christine will finish high school with several noteworthy accomplishments. She has maintained a 4.0 GPA and ranks among the top 25 students in her graduating class. She is a completer of the two-year cosmetology program at United Technical Center, and has been the recipient of several Top Scholar awards.

Christine has been an active member of the marching and concert bands, a three-year member of the theatre program, and was inducted into the National Music Honor Society.

Outside of school, Christina enjoys hanging out with her best friends and boyfriend, doing arts and crafts, and going mushroom hunting through the woods.

Following graduation, Christine plans to graduate from the three-year cosmetology program and obtain her license to become a Vivid hair colorist.



Haleigh Airhart is the daughter of Craig Airhart and Ashleigh Helmick.

Haleigh has distinguished herself throughout her high school career through academic achievement, musical talent, and theatrical success. Throughout her four years at Lincoln, Haleigh has maintained a 4.0 GPA and ranks among the top 15 students in her graduating class. Alongside her academic accomplishments, she has been heavily involved in the school's music and performing arts programs.

Haleigh has been an active member of the Lincoln High School marching and concert bands, where she plays the alto saxophone. During her time in the concert band, the group earned superior ratings and was selected to perform at Disney in December 2025, a notable honor recognizing the band's excellence and dedication.

In addition to her musical involvement, Haleigh joined the Lincoln High School theatre department during her senior year. She earned the lead role of Persephone in *Hadestown: Teen Edition*, showcasing her talent on stage and contributing to the success of the production.

Following graduation, Haleigh plans to attend Fairmont State University, where she intends to pursue a doctorate in psychology.



Chance Anthony Wyne is the son of Jennifer Biesczad and Jason Wyne, and the grandson of Bonita Totten of Clarksburg, Jeff Wyne of Arlington Addition, Sue Benedum of Clarksburg, and Ronald Biesczad of Harrisville.

Throughout his high school career, Chance has demonstrated exceptional academic success, maintained a perfect honor roll record while earned multiple Top Scholar awards. His commitment to excellence and strong work ethic have made him a respected student among both peers and faculty.

Athletically, Chance played on Lincoln High School's freshman basketball team before continuing his basketball career in league play during the remaining three years of high school. His teams brought home league championships in two of those seasons. Chance rarely misses an opportunity to play.

Outside of athletics and academics, Chance is well-known for supporting Lincoln's softball team, attending nearly every game. He also enjoys photography and has captured countless moments from Lincoln sporting events, as well as games involving younger Shinnston teams. In his free time, he enjoys camping, fishing, and spending time outdoors with family and friends, all while balancing two part-time jobs.

Following graduation, Chance plans to attend Fairmont State University, where he has been accepted into the Bachelor of Science program for Electrical Engineering.

He then stated that "my motion is to turn over Summit Park and West Virginia Girls Softball Association and that our attorneys sign a lease and that we're not responsible for any of that because that's the way it's working." That would take the form of an "exclusive lease" includes the entire Park in toto, all parts of the facility, but also all of the operational responsibility to maintain it.

Trey Simmerman, County Attorney, brought forth the possibility of covenants agreed to by Harrison County and it was stated that the item may have to be brought back in the next meeting.

Commissioners did pass the motion, however.



Jaxson Poe is the son of Daniel and Elizabeth Poe of Shinnston, and the grandson of Les and Sharon Edinger of Elkins and Donald and Judy Poe of Arthurdale.

Jaxson has built an impressive high school career marked by academic excellence, athletic leadership, community involvement, and service. Poe has consistently demonstrated dedication both inside and outside the classroom. Academically, he ranks in the top 20 of his graduating class and is recognized as a PROMISE Scholar. Throughout high school, he has completed numerous honors, Advanced Placement, and college-level courses while maintaining a 4.5 GPA. He also served as Treasurer of his class.

Athletics played a major role in Jaxson's high school experience. He participated in soccer for four years, wrestling for three years, and baseball for three years. During his senior year, he served as captain/co-captain of the wrestling team. Poe also qualified for the state wrestling tournament during both his junior and senior years.

Beyond academics and athletics, Jaxson was involved in school organizations and community service. He participated in Key Club and Student Council for four years and was a member of both the National Honor Society and National Science Honor Society for two years. His volunteer efforts included Feed-A-Family, the LHS Red Cross Blood Drive, field day activities, and helping with the local elementary school book fair.

His achievements have earned him several honors, including Top Scholar in Biology and Natural Resources and the National Wrestling Coaches Association High School Character and Leadership All-American Award.

Outside of school, Jaxson enjoys deer and turkey hunting, fishing, lawn care, and spending time with family and friends. He is also employed at Shinnston Ace Hardware.

Following graduation, Jaxson plans to attend West Virginia University to pursue a degree in Environmental Engineering. He also intends to continue serving in the West Virginia Army National Guard.

Harrison County Commission Considers Future of Softball At Summit Park

By Stephen Smoot

The issue came up in a letter to the West Virginia Girls Softball League, who had been using Summit Park as a home base for play in recent years.

After installing a donated batting cage at the facility, Lynette Gain, President of the league, heard from the Harrison County Commission.

The letter read "within forty-eight (48) hours of receipt of this correspondence, please remove the batting cage . . . in the image below." It stated that changing the "infrastructure" of the park required a formal meeting and Commission vote. Additionally, the letter requested proof that the League had obtained sufficient liability insurance for use of the facility.

Gain spoke during the public comment period of the last meeting, saying We came here about it was almost three years ago with the agreement that we would get the fields, all three fields, and be able to have a complex out there for just softball. There's not very many places in this county, if any places in this county, that is just dedicated to softball."

"It was my bad," Gain stated upon admitting that she did not realize that adding the cage would require a formal process. "So today, I'm asking that maybe we can get that voted that we can keep that since we have a tournament this this weekend."

Kenny Hall, a Lewis County contractor and owner of Central West Virginia Elite, explained that if the "city" provided materials, his construction company would work to build a third field and provide modern concessions. He added that the softball tournaments held could draw many hundreds to the area while also giving local teams the chance to compete in and out of state.

He closed with It's it's honestly it's life changing for these kids. It's been a blessing for me as a father. I have I have two daughters. There's nowhere in my county that is strictly softball oriented like this."

Commissioner David Hinkle led discussion on the agenda item concerning the Park, stating that structures had arisen "without permission." He then stated that there had been "issues with the leasing of that ballpark since day one. First lease wasn't followed . . . We revoked that lease, opened new lease. And now we take care of 100 percent." Hinkle stated that there were "no consequences" for non fulfillment of the lease.

He added that they also closed the park to the public and that "You all entered into an agreement for use, not to be the boss."

Hinkle then related with frustration that the League had not provided evidence of a liability policy upon request and also that they were not "up to date with the Secretary of State's Office" with its requirements. He then pointed out that "you use the park's address for your organization of where your organization exists."

"I can't speak for the other two, but it seems we've gone off the rails when it comes to what you think that you can do with the park and what's being allowed to be done at the park. And we're in a loggerhead as far as I'm concerned on continued use" because, as Hinkle described, the League had breached the most recent agreement it signed.

Hinkle did express appreciation "for what you all do," and said "I'm okay with giving you a second chance, but it is a county park."

He went on to propose that the County Commission return Summit Park to its former parent organization and that the League purchase the facility from them, but also stated that action need not be taken that day. Hinkle emphasized again that the facility belonged to the public for public use.

"The public wants to go out and have a softball game on it, it's going to happen," Hinkle said, pointing out that Harrison County paid for Park utilities and citing earlier claims about money earned from concessions.



Lest We Forget Celebrate • Honor • Remember

On Memorial Day, we pay tribute to those who fought and made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. Their courage and service will never be forgotten, and we owe them and their loved ones a debt of gratitude that can never be repaid. Let us always remember that freedom is not free.

★★★★★★★★

From the Staff of
**The Shinnston News &
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