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Lecia Louellen Coen



Lecia Louellen Coen, 80, of Gypsy, passed away on July 17, 2026 at Maplewood Healthcare Center. She was born in Siminole, WV on April 29, 1946 to the late Donald Thurman Stire and Delia Maude (Lindsey) Stire.

She is survived by one daughter, Pamela Koon of FL; four sons: Donnie Leasure, Donald Leasure and companion Jan, Billy Leasure and wife Marisol and Gary Leasure and companion Debbie; two grandsons: Steven Shuman and wife Leah of VA and William Leasure; one brother, Kenny Stire and wife Carol of Lumberport; one sister, Lois Markley and husband Dave of Shinnston as well as many nieces and nephews.

In addition to her parents, Lecia is preceded in death by her husbands: Ralph Phillips and Cecil Coen; one daughter, Nancy Leasure; one son, Gene Leasure; six brothers: Donald Junior Stire, Frank Stire, Chuck Stire, John Stire, Thomas Stire and Robert Stire and four sisters: Stella Wright, Shirley Bunnell, Mary Ellen Stire and Betty Gore.

Family and friends will be received at Dorsey Funeral Home, 701 S. Pike St., Shinnston on Saturday, July 25, 2026 from 11:00AM until time of service 1:00PM with Pastor Delores White officiating. Interment to Lumberport Lions Cemetery.

Dorsey Funeral Home is honored to be handling the arrangements for the Coen family.

Jackie Hurst, Sr.



Jackie Eugene Hurst, Sr., 87, of Lumberport, passed away on July 18, 2026 at his residence. He was born on December 17, 1938 in Sardis to the late Clarence Hurst and Tressie (Valent) Hurst.

He worked for Clarksburg Casket Company for 41 years. Jackie proudly served in the United States Army. He enjoyed fishing, hunting, working on cars and remodeling homes.

Jackie is survived by his wife, Shirley Ann (Cottrell) Hurst of Lumberport; four sons: Jackie Eugene Hurst, Jr., of Lumberport, Bradley Wayne Hurst and fiancé Jessica Iquinto of Bridgeport, Michael Edward Hurst and companion Tammy Finley of Bridgeport and Jeffrey Allen Hurst and wife Tammy of Clarksburg; six grandchildren; seven great grandchildren; three brothers: Bob Hurst of Galloway, Chuck Hurst and wife Kenna of Salt Lake City, UT and Jesse Hurst of Bridgeport; two sisters: Betty Bowen of Sardis and Helen Gillis of St. Louis, MO as well as several nieces and nephews.

Family and friends will be received at Dorsey Funeral Home, 701 S. Pike St., Shinnston, for visitation on Thursday, July 23, 2026 from 2:00PM until 8:00PM. Funeral service will be Friday, July 24, 2026 at 11:00AM with Pastor Jeff Stire officiating. Interment to Lumberport Lions Cemetery. Military Honors will be provided by Harrison County Honor Guard and United States Army.

Dorsey Funeral Home is honored to be handling the arrangements for the Hurst family.

Clyde (Ed) Edward Weaver, Jr.



January 15, 1950 - July 18, 2026

Clyde (Ed) Edward Weaver, 76, of Shinnston, passed away peacefully on Saturday, July 18 at United Hospital Center. He was born on January 15, 1950, in Monongah, to the late Clyde Weaver, Sr. and Lola Mae Wells. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his half-siblings, Sandra Bray Ledbetter and Richard Bray.

Ed graduated from Shinnston High School and went on to work 33 years at the Clarksburg Casket Factory until they closed. He then worked at Ruskin Manufacturing until he retired.

Ed could be found most mornings of his retirement with his loyal group of friends at McDonalds. He spent his days attending gun shows, car shows, auctions, flea markets, and yard sales, and was often caught cruising around town with his dog, Daisy. He enjoyed fishing and shooting, and was a member of the

Appalachian Rangers Muzzleloading Club.

Ed was always looking out for those who needed a helping hand, and opened his home to many over the years. He never hesitated to rescue a dog in need of a home or throw a cheeseburger at a hungry teenager.

Ed is survived by his wife of 47 years, Cherita Starr (Dennison) Weaver of Shinnston; his sons Derek Michael Weaver (Heather) and Benjamin Lee Weaver (Sherry) of Shinnston; grandchildren Bryce, Haden, and Reese Weaver and Eleanor and Charlotte Weaver; brothers John Weaver (Linda) and Charlie Weaver (Brenda) and half-brother Merrill Bray (Priscilla); and several nieces and nephews.

Family and friends will be received at the Harmer Funeral Home in Shinnston on Wednesday, July 22, 2026, from 3:00 pm until 8:00 pm. A funeral service will be at the funeral home on Thursday, July 23, 2026 at 11:00AM. Interment will follow at Shinnston Memorial Cemetery.

The family kindly requests that in lieu of flowers, donations be made to Harrison County Humane Society in Ed’s name. <https://www.hshcwv.org/donate.html>

A service of Harmer Funeral Home, Shinnston.

“Hunt”

life had taken them, they shared a common starting point. For one weekend, the years and the miles between them did not seem to matter.

Saturday evening featured a delicious buffet, a trivia contest and plenty of laughter. A class picture captured the smiles of graduates celebrating this remarkable milestone. The years had changed them, as years change us all, but they had not dampened the group’s spirit.

These graduates attended high school before cellphones, personal computers, social media or flat-screen televisions. They could not instantly text one another or preserve every high school moment in hundreds of photographs. If someone moved away, staying connected required letters, long-distance telephone calls and real effort.

Yet they built lives, raised families, pursued careers and achieved success that was never guaranteed—especially for many children of coal miners, factory workers and working families. They carried with them the lessons of their parents, their community and a school that expected them to find their place in the world.

The weekend was scheduled to end with breakfast on Sunday morning, but classmate Chuck Stanaker had one more surprise. After everyone finished eating, he invited the group outside to see his fully restored 1978 Volkswagen bus.

Chuck had taken what was once little more than a rusted hull and brought it back to life. With its pop-up camper raised and its vintage details carefully restored, the bus offered a true look back in time.

The classmates gathered around it

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with the same excitement they might have shown as teenagers when shiny cars and hot rods attracted everyone’s attention. For a few moments, they seemed to travel back to a time when a new set of wheels represented freedom, independence and all the possibilities of the open road.

Naturally, they posed for one more photograph. Standing together in front of the Volkswagen bus, they were not simply looking at a vehicle from another era. They were looking back at a time in their own lives when the road ahead seemed endless.

Soon, everyone returned to their homes and their lives. Their children and grandchildren may have asked how the reunion went. But, like most young people, they probably cannot fully understand the journey these graduates have traveled—or how much it means to stand beside someone who knew you before you became the person you are today.

Those four years at Shinnston High helped shape their lives. Graduation started a clock that has now been ticking for half a century. At this point in life, there are fewer ticks remaining than have already passed, which makes every gathering and every friendship a little more precious.

But you would not have known that from the laughter, the hugs and the smiles as everyone said goodbye.

For a few hours, they were not retirees, grandparents or people carrying the responsibilities and scars of a lifetime. Standing beside that Volkswagen bus, they were simply classmates again—the kids of Shinnston High—ready to climb aboard and see where the road might take them next.

cont. from p. 1

“Party”

Minor recalled that many times in recent years, he has seen people at this event that he rarely sees on a regular basis, but they come out to enjoy the camaraderie and fellowship, meeting and greeting old friends, and it also offers an opportunity to form new bonds.

Scudere mentioned how surprising it is that many who attend this event travel from long distances to enjoy this day connecting with people. “I would say this occasion is really a celebration for Shinnston and a good way to promote our city as well as support local businesses,” he added.

While some may consider small town living to be a rural existence and a rather slow-paced atmosphere, that is not always the case. In Shinnston, for example, there is a strong sense of community; friendships are meaningful and enduring; it offers a safe and wholesome environment for families; and folks take great pride in their roots here.

Organizers are expecting a large crowd! It’s a day to socialize and connect with others, enjoy good music, eat, drink and be merry! Remember there is NO CHARGE to attend and NO NEED to make a reservation. Just show up, feel free to come and go

as you please. Bring lawn chairs, set up canopies for shade, bring coolers and food – or visit local eateries if you prefer. Stroll the downtown streets and perhaps stop at the Bice-Ferguson Memorial Museum, which, thanks to Museum Director Debra Herndon, will be open that day from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Take in its collection of historical artifacts, its new and impressive photography display, and abundant memorabilia in the Alumni Room.

Setup for the “Party on the Green” will begin at noon and music commences at 12:30 p.m., continuing until midnight. Local talent will be featured – including pop/country/bluegrass singer and songwriter Andy Benson, followed by 3 TEEZ BAND with rock’n roll from the 70s and 80s, and the Marshall Lowry Band with more rock & roll. The evening will close with Karaoke handled by Jennifer Tonkery from 10 p.m. until midnight.

Mark your calendars for Saturday, August 15th and come prepared to have a great time!

Many thanks to those supporters hosting the event this year - the City of Shinnston, SHS Class of 1968 members, Casey’s of Shinnston, and the Shinnston Lions Club.

cont. from p. 1

“Citizen of the Month”

camaraderie.” The event, held this year on August 4 and on the first Tuesday of August annually, exists “to make our neighborhoods safer, more caring places to live.”

Seventeen cities across the Mountain State host the event. In North central West Virginia, this includes Clarksburg, Bridgeport, Morgantown, Fairmont, Weston, and Glenville. Shinnston has participated in past years as well.

After last year’s successful event, WBOY quoted Lieutenant Dan Messenger from the Clarksburg Police Department as sharing that the “idea . . . is to bridge the gap between the community and law enforcement so that when children especially are encountered with first responders, they don’t panic., they realize we’re not there to hurt them.”

Attendees can enjoy a fair style atmosphere with games, family-friendly activities, food, giveaways and prizes, public safety demonstrations, and tips on preventing and/or avoiding crime. Bridgeport’s also includes a mechanical bull, slides, and even an obstacle

course with fireworks capping off the night.

In the region, Clarksburg, Bridgeport, and Fairmont all will participate for 2026. Clarksburg’s will take place at VA Memorial Park on Tuesday Aug 4 from 5 to 8 p.m.

The Bridgeport Police Department will hold their National Night Out at The Bridge, kicking off the fun at 6 p.m. Both Bridgeport City and Harrison County Sheriff’s Department officers and deputies will be on hand.

“Strong relationships of mutual trust between police and the communities they serve,” notes a Department of Justice website on “Importance of Police-Community Relationships . . .” are “critical to maintaining public safety and effective policing.”

It adds that “community members’ willingness to trust the police depends on whether they believe that police actions reflect community values.” One of the suggested steps towards better relations includes “maintain focus on the importance of collaboration and be visible in the community.”

And The Winner Is Philly



The Bottom Line

By Bill Nestor
Sports Editor

The biggest decision of the summer came down this past week courtesy of LeBron James, the most sought-after free agent this year has had NBA fans holding their breaths waiting for his decision. Only the ones with the largest lung capacity have been able to hang on as free agency started nearly a month ago, back on June 30.

The process has taken so long for James that the commissioner of the National Basketball Association, Adam Silver, has ben prodding King James and his posse to make a decision so he can put together a schedule. After all, could you imagine a pro game on Christmas Day without the face of the league?

James didn’t take to being hurried along and at age 41, this is more than likely his final move, which puts that much more significance behind it as he makes one final push to catch Michael Jordan. Jordan has six championships while LeBron has four. Jordan won all of his titles in Chicago, while James has won each of his with different teams.

James appears to be concerned with overtaking Jordan as the all-time greatest basketball player. The King is the NBA’s all-time leading scorer and he does own three Olympic gold medals along with 10 NBA Finals appearances. However, his winning percentage, when it matters the most, doesn’t come close to Jordan’s. Mike was a perfect six of six, putting him at 100 percent

while James sits at 40 percent. James is highly intelligent both on and off the floor. Every move he makes is calculated and choosing a new home means everything in his chase of greatness. Not only was he taking his sweet time, he was providing time for suitors to stockpile as much talent as possible. James was looking for the best place to win and there were several teams that were openly courting the 23-year veteran. For a while the front runners looked like franchises that had his friends on the rosters. Golden State seemed like the logical choice because of his relationship with superstars Steph Curry and Draymond Green. Green even opted out of his contract to free up money to go after more talent in hopes of landing Lebron.

If the Warriors could have traded for Anthony Davis, they might have been able to reel in James. He and Davis won a championship together with the Lakers during the lockdown of the pandemic. AD was traded away and LA has not been a contender since then, which is exactly why the King left Hollywood.

Golden State couldn’t land Davis and LeBron got away. The saying in the NBA is the West is the best and the East has the least. In other words, the road to the Finals is easier in the East so James took his talents to the “City of Brotherly Love.” In Philly, he joins Joel Embid, Tyrese Maxey, Jaylen Brown, and V. J. Edgecombe. The 76ers pulled off a huge trade in getting Brown from Boston, which helped get LeBron.

The master behind all these moves is the President of basketball

Tee It Up!



By Bill Nestor

This week’s edition of “Tee It Up” takes us to Mount Clare, just outside of Clarksburg, to the historic Bel meadows Golf Course. This 18 hole par 72 that ranges 7000 yards from the tips opened in 1966 and was designed by Robert Trent Jones.

Bel Meadow has been the host of several big events throughout the years such as the West Virginia Open with previous winners including Sam Snead.

Well-placed hazards, glasslike greens that are protected by bunkers, and huge timber provides a challenge to even the lowest handicap golfer.

The round starts out easy enough

with the double digit handicap holes, but business picks up later on the front side. Holes six, seven, and eight are the fourth, sixth, and second hardest on the course. The entire back nine keeps golfers on their toes and number 17 is the signature hole of this legendary tract. A dog leg left over water is a true risk-versus-reward off the tee.

You won’t believe the staff here at Bel Meadow and the 19th hole offers an inside/outside option to have a cold beverage and replay your round. The pro shop has all of your needs for your round covered. If there isn’t a tournament being played, the course is usually easy to get around in a reasonable time, making Bel Meadows a fun round to play this golf season.

operations, Mike Gansey. Gansey and James go back to 2001 when they were two of the top players in ohio. Gansey is a former WVU standout from 2003-2006 and had made quite a name for himself in the League.

After all, he won the lottery! That will do it for now. Until next week . . . take care and God Bless!!!

WVDE Joins Harrison County Schools to Share the Path Forward



Associate State Superintendent Jeffrey Kelley and Alexandra Criner addressed the Harrison County Board of Education last week on the partial intervention.

By Stephen Smoot

Over the past year and a half, a number of county school systems in West Virginia have run into fiscal problems. Many of those, including Harrison County, found themselves with higher numbers of staff than could be paid through the school funding formula and/or a special levy approved by voters.

Harrison County Schools employed approximately 150 more students than state aid or levy funding could pay without cutting into financial reserves. While Frank Devono Jr of the Harrison County Board of Education in a release that the system still enjoyed financial stability, the West Virginia Department of Education disagreed.

Devono cited what he and the Board saw as progress toward fiscal stability, including the controversial and painful closing of Liberty High School, in recent years.

WVDE officials also alleged that the Harrison

County Board of Education stepped too far into the administrative purview of the Superintendent and central office, especially in personnel matters.

Just as it has done in counties such as Hancock, Randolph, Roane, Upshur, and others, the WVDE partially intervened in the administration and operation of Harrison County Schools.

After attendees stood for and recited the Pledge of Allegiance, officials from the WVDE introduced themselves and spoke.

Associate Superintendent for the WVDE Jeff Kelly introduced himself and also Alexandra Criner, Director of the Office of Accountability for that organization.

Criner spoke at length about what the Board, Superintendent, and other officials could expect during the intervention process. She also discussed the path to successful resolution by the close of 2026.

She said, “Our office recently conducted on-site *See “Schools” Pg 5*



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Super Crossword

Answers

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“Schools”

cont. from p. 4

monitoring activities in Harrison County Schools.

Through those reviews, several systemic concerns were identified involving governance practices, financial management and staffing, and the need for a targeted review of special education services.

These findings ultimately resulted in the West Virginia Board of Education authorizing a partial state intervention.

I want to emphasize that accountability reviews are not intended to assign blame or diminish the important work occurring in our schools.

Rather, they’re designed to identify conditions that may affect the county’s ability to provide a thorough and efficient education system and to ensure that appropriate supports are put in place when concerns are identified.

Throughout this process, we have continued to recognize the dedication of Harrison County’s teachers, principals, service personnel, and support staff.

Our observations confirmed that many professionals throughout the district remain deeply committed to serving students and families.

The issues identified by the office of accountability are primarily systemic in nature and require attention at the organizational and leadership levels to ensure long term stability and success.

The purpose of the intervention is to improve governance and operational practices, ensure compliance with state and federal requirements, and establish a pathway toward local control through demonstrated progress and accountability.

The intervention should be viewed as an opportunity for improvement, not as a judgment of the many dedicated educators working in Harrison County Schools.

As we move forward, the Office of Accountability will continue to work collaboratively with county leadership, the local board of education, administrators, and school staff.

Last week, staff from the office of accountability met with the central office staff to establish protocols for the agenda items identified as requiring state superintendent approval.

Items that have been preapproved will appear in a separate section of the board agenda with the remainder of the agenda proceeding as usual.

Over the course of the next three months, the WVDE will conduct on-site reviews in at least three additional areas of operation.

In November, we will schedule a meeting with the superintendent and board president to review

the progress that has been made in addressing the identified findings.

The West Virginia Board of Education is tentatively scheduled to hear an update in December of this year.

The cycle will then continue with the examination of additional areas followed by training and technical assistance to address any findings with progress updated to the WVBE approximately every six months.

Success will depend on transparency, adherence to established roles and responsibilities, sound stewardship of public resources, and an unwavering focus on student achievement and well-being.

Our collective goal is straightforward to ensure that every decision, every resource, and every action supports the educational opportunities and outcomes that Harrison County students deserve.

We remain committed to providing guidance, monitoring progress, and supporting the county throughout this improvement process.” Criner concluded.

Additionally, the Harrison County Schools Superintendent, Donna Stutler, now reports to the State Superintendent of Schools.

Dr. Jenny Santilli, one of the new members of the Board of Education apologized for asking a “newbie” question. She inquired about when the Superintendent and Central Office should start looking at staff to student ratios, noting the expectations of the State.

“Those decisions should start, really in August when you have kids in school.” said Criner, who then added that “the sooner you start looking at your numbers and what decisions can be made, the better off that you’re going to be as far as making the right decision and looking at the impact and doing everything correctly.”

Kelly explained that “I know staffing season occurs, in the spring, but the process that contributes to that really begins soon here in August when kids start rolling through the doors.” He shared that officials could work with “a predictive state there in September, once things have settled down as to what that might look like,” although “ultimately, the official number will come in October.”

He then stated that “the numbers, the overages will be, calculated based on those numbers and come to the county usually in December . . . And then subsequently, you make those decisions on staffing in the the staffing season, in the spring.”

Enrollment may also decline after Oct 1, Kelly said.

Santilli then asked about employees with 200 day contracts versus other classifications of personnel. Kelly explained that 200 day contract employees would remain “business as usual” but that those above that threshold would require State preapproval for hire, transfer, or elimination.

Next, Board members and Kelly worked through the “nuts and bolts” of how WVDE oversight would work with the County chain of command and also public meeting requirements. Kelly stated that the WVDE might request that a meeting agenda item scheduled be tabled so that State officials could review the matter and discuss further with the Board, “especially . . . high cost items.”

Later in the meeting, Kelly informed the County Board that “historically” the State has performed full takeovers, but not this time. “We kind of individualized this plan and, probably (that is) the first time we’ve done it that way . . . I think we probably wanted you guys to have a little bit of skin in the game whenever we get staffing season.

Board member Douglas Hogue brought up a potential issue that he shared may have contributed to the problems faced by HCS. He stated that “for whatever reason, after our assistant superintendent retired, we chose, for whatever reason, not to replace the assistant superintendent.”

Hogue went on to add that the lack of “somebody there that she trusts” to support the work of a Superintendent who serves “one of the larger counties in the state.”

Kelly responded with “I’m not going to tell you right now whether that would be a fantastic idea or a terrible idea,” but stated that since this would be a newly created position, the WVDE would have to study the proposal first.

Hogue replied after some discussion that “I just think that it’s it’s foolish for us not to have an assistant superintendent . . . that’s my opinion and I’m sticking to it.”

Later, Hogue discussed mistakes and reminded all “there was only One who was perfect and He hung on the Cross.” He asked that State officials explain mistakes made and how to avoid them going forward and also requested that he have the chance to meet with officials one on one from time to time to ask questions and receive explanations.

Kelly spoke to reassure the Board that “we’re not going to focus too heavily on what’s in the rearview mirror” but establish a collaborative effort to fix the problems and prevent recurrence. “This is the time for a little bit of a reset.”

“Lightning Bugs” Flee Cities for Dark Skies Zones, Bringing Tourists to See the Show

By Stephen Smoot

For more than a decade, most new lighting for structures and also automobiles have come from light emitting diodes, or LED lighting. LED lighting comes recommended for providing more light at a more energy-efficient rate.

It also seems to have come at the cost of many areas losing out on the early summer tradition of lightning bug, or firefly, watching.

Three years ago, the California Department of Transportation and the University of California at Los Angeles conducted a joint study on the effects of LED lighting on animals, including bioluminescent species such as lightning bugs. Studies have shown in the past several years that increasing nighttime artificial lighting disrupts communication and mating patterns, driving populations away from cities and suburban areas.

The little bugs whose rear ends light up to the delight of children of all ages do so with two purposes in mind. First and foremost, the blinking of their bright behinds creates patterns that attract mates. Fireflies also warn potential predators to back off. To those who might eat them, a firefly’s blood is both toxic and noxious tasting.

Interestingly enough, one species of fireflies cannot create its own light producing substance so it eats the species that can do so to absorb those substances from them.

The United States hosts a surprising, perhaps even bewildering, diversity of species of insects whose rear ends light up on warm summer nights. Over 150 bioluminescent bugs are known to live in the United States. In some areas, they refer to these creatures generally as “fireflies.” Many West Virginians and others in the Eastern United States prefer the term “lightning bugs.”

For much of the past 100 years, people have steadily expanded the capacity of artificial light to mitigate the darkness, but only in the past 20 years have LED lights emerged as more powerful, yet also less power consuming, alternatives to traditional lighting.

Avalon Owens, a Harvard University researcher, wrote that “bioluminescent firefly beetles have a complex relationship to light.” She adds that “Like many other nocturnal insects, adult fireflies use circadian changes in the intensity and spectra of ambient light to time their nightly courtship activities.”

Owens adds that when these insects encounter more intense areas of artificial light at night (called ALAN



Tourists travel every June to the light show put on by synchronous fireflies each June. Photo courtesy of Pocahontas County.

by experts), it affects their abilities to use their natural light to signal potential mates or to also warn of danger. Populations of fireflies near cities may be dwindling from the effect. “Cold” LED lighting, such as blues or violets, negatively affects these insects the most.

Lightning bugs, for many, come with memories of childhood. For generations, kids poked holes in the lids of jars, dropped grass or leaves inside, and then raced off to find some luminescent insects to place inside for observation.

According to the Oregon-based Xerces Society For Invertebrate Conservation, many will travel to enjoy the quiet spectacle of lightning bugs blinking on and off at dusk. They state that “firefly tourism is a quickly growing industry in the U.S. (and) can be a boon to local economies and help more people to experience the wonder of fireflies.”

Krista Noe, an ecologist with the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources, told West Virginia Explorer that “West Virginia’s kind of been a haven” for lightning bug populations. Although light pollution has increased in the Mountain State somewhat, it has not done so at the same rate as other neighboring states.

West Virginia has 33 known species of lightning bugs with one, the Potomac Firefly, native to the South Branch River watershed. Noe wrote that “the Potomac firefly is associated with cobble-shores that have lots of saplings and driftwood along major rivers.” The state attracts both northern and southern oriented species, which gives West Virginia an unusually rich bounty for researchers and enthusiasts.

And enthusiasts do come to West Virginia to scope out the different species, much like some enjoy the habit of bird watching and marking down species seen.

Watoga State Park hosts one of the most sought-after species of synchronous lightning bugs. In this site and almost nowhere else, one can see an entire field of lightning bugs light up at the same time. For those who travel to see them, this represents a truly dazzling display of dynamic nature. The park also hosts special hikes during their peak month of June to see the light show.

While Watoga State Park has international dark skies recognition, other sites in the state meet almost all of the same criteria. Spruce Knob, Dolly Sods, Calhoun County Park, and other remote locations far from city lights may also boast similarly spectacular displays.



Don't Give Up On A 'Gray Day'

Problems and frustrations are universal; we all have them. We are all crayons trying to live in the same box even though some of us are different colors. But here is a similarity we have. We all have days when our crayons are just “gray”, and these are the days when we need a little encouragement and inspiration.

Even though our difficulties on those gray days may be entirely different, they nonetheless leave us feeling “blah”. Have you ever had days like that?

Here’s an example: Perhaps no matter how hard you try, you still haven’t done things to the satisfaction of others. Or maybe you said something unintentionally that a friend took the wrong way and was insulted. Maybe you have a little one who is temperamental and no matter what you try to do to appease him or her, you fail. Or, let’s say you are trying your best to raise a teenager the right way but suddenly you wonder if it would not be easier to nail Jello to a tree! Or, how about this one – No matter how diligently you work, your efforts seem to go unnoticed. For whatever reason, things just don’t turn out right.

Here is a cute little story that gets to the point! A six-year old named Benny decided one Saturday morning to fix his parents some pancakes. He found a big bowl and spoon, pulled a chair to the counter, opened the cupboard and pulled out the heavy flour canister, spilling it all over the floor. He scooped some of the flour into the bowl with his hands, mixed in most of a cup of milk and added some sugar, leaving a floury trail on the floor which by now had a few tracks left by his kitten.

Benny was covered with flour and getting frustrated! He just wanted this to be a nice surprise for his Mom and Dad, but it was not working out as he’d planned. He didn’t know what to do next – whether to put it all in the oven or cook them on the stove - neither of which he really knew how to operate. Suddenly he saw his kitten kicking from the bowl of mix and reached to push her away, knocking the egg carton to the floor. Frantically, he tried to clean up this monumental mess but slipped on the eggs, getting his pajamas white and sticky.

As you can imagine, it was about this time when he looked up and saw his Dad standing at the door! The boy was more than a little scared of what his Dad’s reaction might be, and his eyes welled up with crocodile tears. He began explaining that all he wanted to do was make breakfast for his parents! Yet he fully expected to be harshly reprimanded for the mess he had created.

To his great surprise (and relief!), his father picked up his crying boy, hugged him and managed to get his own pajamas sticky in the process. He father understood that the mess had not been intentional. His son had wanted to do something nice, but things had gone “gray”.

Let’s think about it, this is how God deals with us. We try to do something good in life, but it turns out messy sometimes. Our failure may bring us to tears as well because we don’t know how to fix things. But that’s when God picks us up and forgives us and loves us anyway. So don’t stop making pancakes; keep trying; and sooner or later you’ll get it right.

Quote of the Week: “Good intentions sometimes backfire, but it doesn’t mean we should stop trying!” ~ Author Unknown

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“Smoot” cont. from p. 2

problem and compensate me for my trouble.”

Indeed now every cabin had standing water. All passengers had to incur more and more trouble because the Captain could not repair the leak.

The Captain responded, “We had a chance to address the issue before it became a problem. You refused to cooperate. Now we all suffer and each of us will have to sacrifice a lot to set the issue right again.”

Some in West Virginia have opposed a variety of projects to expand the capacity of power production and the ability of the grid to distribute that power within the PJM system to where it needs to go to prevent shortages.

When people say “no” they need to know what they are saying no to.

West Virginia is not an island in the power producing world. The Mountain State is, if you will, part of a unified grid system with 12 other states. It truly does not matter why the rest of the grid needs the power, whether for data centers or Tiddly Winks. A need exists and if it is not met, all will face mountain problems with electric power.

Without upgrades and improvements in both production and transmission, the grid will experience periods of failure. People with the most vulnerabilities, such as the elderly, will

Secretary Warner calls on West Virginians to support flood cleanup and recovery efforts

Charleston, W.Va. – WV Secretary of State Kris Warner issued the following message to business owners across central West Virginia. The email was distributed to businesses in 12 counties in an effort to provide assistance and resources for residents, communities, and business owners affected by recent flooding.

Dear West Virginia Business Owners,

Catastrophic flooding has devastated portions of Lewis and Upshur Counties, causing widespread damage to homes, businesses, and critical infrastructure. After witnessing the destruction firsthand, I respectfully ask my fellow West Virginians to consider supporting the residents, communities, and business owners affected by this disaster.

Many families have been displaced, and local businesses have suffered extensive losses. Business owners now face the difficult task of cleaning up, rebuilding, and restoring their livelihoods while many residents work to recover from the loss of their homes and personal property.

There is an immediate need for qualified contractors, skilled tradespeople, equipment, supplies, and volunteers to assist with cleanup and rebuilding efforts. Any resources, services, financial support, or other assistance your business or organization is able to donate would be sincerely appreciated by the affected communities.

If you are interested in helping, please contact the

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suffer the most in such situations.

And West Virginia is in a position to both “do our part” while also reaping benefits of added tax revenues for schools, fire, EMS, water, sewer, and other basic needs.

This multi-state grid rises and falls together the same as passengers on a single boat in the middle of the ocean. There is no such thing as West Virginia having an ability to hoard its own power production for its own use.

West Virginia does not need to just say “yes” to anyone’s first offer and “no” is just not sustainable.

The proper answer is “yes,but.” Negotiate with these companies to get the most benefit for the projects that need to happen. Make the most of the opportunity to work with these outfits to get reasonable amounts of help for community needs.

local emergency management agencies listed below to coordinate assistance.

Lewis-Gilmer E-911 Center
304-269-8235

Upshur County Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management
304-472-4983

Additionally, diapers, feminine hygiene products, box fans, and extension cords are especially needed in Upshur County and may be donated to:

West Virginia Wesleyan College
151 Cebe Ross Drive
Buckhannon, West Virginia

Thank you for your time and willingness to help your fellow West Virginians during this difficult time. Your support will help these communities recover and rebuild.

Sincerely,
Kris Warner
WV Secretary of State

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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 September 15, 2026 at 10:00 AM (Eastern Standard Time). The bids will be downloaded and/or opened and read publicly thereafter for the constructions of the following project(s):

Call	Contract	State Project	Federal Project	Description
001	2026170003	S317-50-19.75	00	STBG-0050(504)D
				PEDESTRIAN/BIKE FACILITIES
				HARRISON & DODDRIDGE COUNTY
				ADA RAMP BUNDLE
				HARRISON & DODDRIDGE COUNTY
				ADA RAMP BUNDLE
				COUNTY: DODDRIDGE, HARRISON

Proposals will be received from prequalified and West Virginia licensed contractors only except that on Federal-Aid Projects a contractors' licence 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

(Cert. No. 179174 Cato Energy)

To: SANDRA L BURT, SANDRA BURT, or heirs at law, devisees, creditors, representatives, successors, assigns, all known heirs, guardians, conservators, fiduciaries, administrators, lienholders, co-owners, other parties having an undivided interest in the delinquent property, and other parties that may have an interest in the subject property.

DISTRICT COAL-OUTSIDE DISTRICT MAP 285 PARCEL 0073 00010000

You will take notice that Cato Energy, the purchaser of the following real estate, Certification No. 179174, located in COAL-OUTSIDE DISTRICT District, 1 LOT PT #6 0.72 AS LIMESTONE, which was returned delinquent or nonentered in the name of BURT SANDRA L, and was sold by the deputy commissioner of delinquent and nonentered lands of HARRISON County at the sale for the delinquent taxes made on 10/09/2024, Cato Energy requests that you be notified a deed for such real estate will be made on or after 09/21/2026, as provided by law, unless before that day you redeem such real estate. The amount needed to redeem on or before 09/21/2026 will be as follows:

Amount equal to the taxes and charges due on the date of the sale, with interest, to 09/21/2026	\$	3571.53
Amount of taxes paid on the property, since the sale, with interest to 09/21/2026	\$	0.00
Amount paid for the Title Examination and preparation of the list to be served and for preparation and service of notice with interest to 09/21/2026	\$	1496.31
Additional Statutory Fees with Interest to 09/21/2026	\$	0.00
Total Amount Payable to Sheriff - cashier check, money order, certified or personal check must be made payable to The Honorable Sheriff of HARRISON County.	\$	5067.84

You may redeem any time before 09/21/2026 by paying the above total less any unearned interest. Given under my hand 7/16/2026

Christal G. Perry
Christal G. Perry
Deputy Commissioner of Delinquent and Nonentered Lands of HARRISON County, State of West Virginia

Please return this letter and payment to the West Virginia State Auditor's Office, County Collection Division 1900 Kanawha Blvd East Building 1, Room W-114 Charleston, West Virginia 25305 Questions please call 1-888-509-6568

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PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
OF WEST VIRGINIA
CHARLESTON

Case No. 26-0544-G-390P
HOPE GAS, INC.
Annual Pipeline Replacement and Expansion Program
(PREP) Application, pursuant to W. Va. Code § 24-2-1 k.

NOTICE OF FILING AND HEARING

On May 29, 2026, Hope Gas, Inc. (Hope) filed its Annual Pipeline Replacement and Expansion Program (PREP) Filing with revised PREP Rates, pursuant to W.Va. Code § 24-2-1k, which authorizes the Public Service Commission of West Virginia (Commission) to approve cost recovery of projects to replace, upgrade, and expand natural gas utility infrastructure that are deemed to be just and reasonable and in the public interest.

In its PREP Filing, Hope projects PREP capital investment for calendar year 2027 of \$115.0 million, as part of its General Program (core distribution system) and Field/Gathering Facilities Program (field lines and gathering facilities), under its multi-year plans. The PREP Filing also contains a true-up for actual versus projected 2025 calendar year PREP capital investment activity for both the General Program and the Field/Gathering Facilities Program. The PREP covers several categories of plant asset replacements and improvements, including mains, service lines, regulator stations, and other plant equipment. These plant investments are proposed to be made in Hope service territories throughout the State. These projects are identified in the PREP Filing, which is on file and available for public inspection at the Commission's offices at 201 Brooks Street, Charleston, West Virginia.

Hope proposes to recover costs associated with these investments through an increment within the fixed or volumetric, base rate component of its rates depending on the applicable rate schedule under which service is rendered, to be effective on November 1, 2026. Hope projects that the average monthly bill for the various classes of customers will be changed on November 1, 2026, as follows:

HOPE GAS, INC. - PROPOSED		
TYPE OF CUSTOMER	\$ INCREASE	% INCREASE
Residential Sales (Rate Class RS)	\$4.37	4.07%
Small Commercial Sales (Rate Class SGS)	\$11.47	3.33%
Small Commercial Transport (Rate Class SGS)	\$98.35	4.69%
Large Commercial Sales (Rate Class LGS)	\$412.91	2.97%
Large Commercial Transport (Rate Class LGS)	\$395.21	2.66%
Large Commercial-Industrial - Distribution Sales (Rate Class LCI-D)	\$1,247.34	2.08%
Large Commercial-Industrial - Distribution Transport (Rate Class LCI-D)	\$1,193.86	2.64%
Large Commercial-Industrial - Direct Service Transport (Rate Class LCI-DS)	\$161.12	4.60%
Resale Sales (Rate Class WS)	\$498.50	1.75%
DGP Gathering (Rate Class PGAS)	\$12,980.75	13.45%
Equitrans Gathering (Rate Class PGAS)	\$3,420.21	11.38%

The increases shown are based on averages of all customers in the indicated classes. Each class may receive an increase greater or less than stated here. Individual customers may receive increases that are greater or less than average. Furthermore, the requested rates and charges are only a proposal and are subject to change (increase or decrease) by the Commission in its review of this filing. Any increase in rates and charges will not become effective until authorized and approved by the Commission.

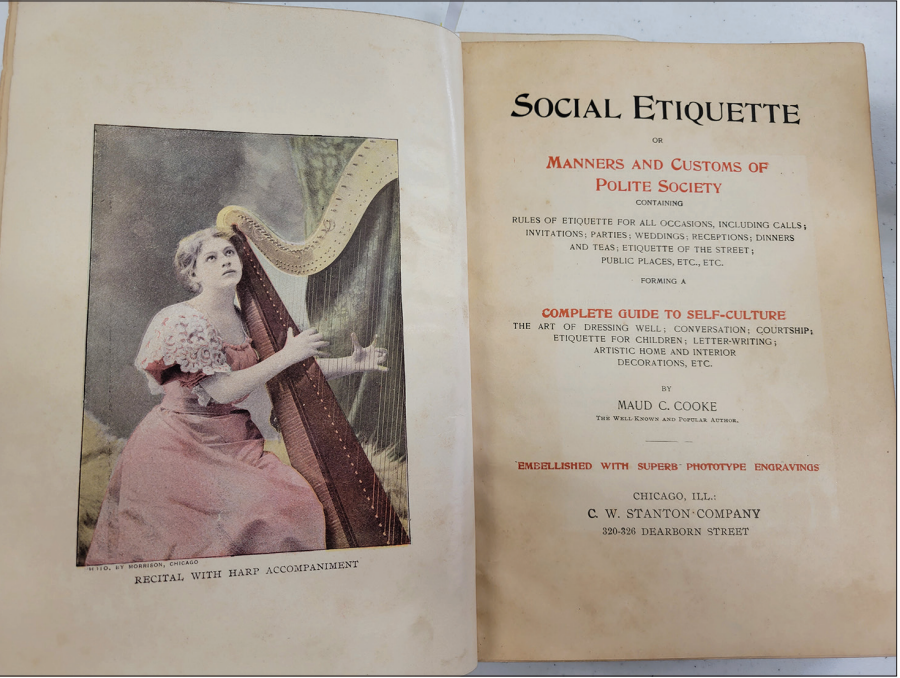
The Commission will hold a hearing on this matter at 9:30 a.m. on September 23, 2026, at the Commission headquarters, 201 Brooks Street, Charleston, West Virginia.

If the Commission receives no opposition to the PREP Filing within one week of the hearing date, the hearing may be waived, and the Commission may issue a final Order within 150 days of the filing date.

Anyone desiring to intervene should file a written petition to intervene within twenty (20) days following the date of this publication unless otherwise modified by Commission Order. All requests to intervene should briefly state the reason for the request to intervene and comply with the rules on intervention set forth in the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure. The Commission will receive public comments until the beginning of the hearing. All written comments and requests to intervene should state the case name and number and be addressed to Karen Buckley, Executive Secretary, P.O. Box 812, Charleston, West Virginia 25323. Public Comments may also be filed online at <http://www.psc.state.wv.us/scripts/onlinecomments/default.cfm> by clicking the "Formal Case" link.

HOPE GAS, INC.

Books Donated to the Museum Also Bring History to Life



Books can take anyone back in time to show how people lived, worked, and enjoyed time with others.

communities. The 1880 “A History of Marion County” by George A. Dunnington has stories of the settlement and hardships endured by those who chose to come to Marion County in the early days.

“The Barnes Family in West Virginia” (1920) by Rev. I.A. Barnes is a small book which represents a painstaking amount of research before the age of instant gratification computer genealogy.

“Monongah Coal Mine Disaster 1907-2007” by nationally published photographer Ron Rittenhouse contains amazing historical photographs relating to the worst coal mine disaster in U.S. history.

Not necessarily of local interest, but of cultural interest is the 1911 “Social Etiquette” book that features some period photo type engraving and other interesting illustration. If you think young people have forgotten their manners, this book will prove you have, too!

These books and others join the Museum’s research collection. The Museum has comfortable and quiet areas where patrons can come and use these resources. The Museum is open Thursday through Saturday from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. Appointments for other times can be made by texting or calling Museum Director Debra Hurst Herndon at 304-677-6650.

Easy Apple Crumble without Oats

INGREDIENTS

Apple Filling

- 7 cups peeled & chopped apples, 6-7 large or 8-10 small apples, I recommend Granny Smith, Jonagold, Honeycrisp, or Pink Lady, cut the apples into 1 inch by 1/2 inch pieces
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- ¼ cup cornstarch
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- ½ tsp. nutmeg
- ¼ tsp. salt

Crumble Topping

- 1 ½ cups all-purpose flour
- ¾ cup brown sugar, packed
- 1½ tsp. cinnamon
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ½ cup unsalted butter, melted

INSTRUCTIONS

Apple Filling

- Preheat the oven to 350°F. No need to spray the pan. In your baking dish (you can use a 8×8 inch pan, 8 inch round pan, 9×9 inch pan, 9 inch round pan, 7×11 inch pan, basically you can use any dish that is 2 to 2.5 quarts) combine the apples, granulated sugar, cornstarch, cinnamon, nutmeg, and salt. Toss with a spoon or spatula to combine.

Crumble Topping

- In a mixing bowl combine the flour, brown sugar, cinnamon, salt and

melted butter. Use a spatula to mix the crumb. The mixture will be thick and you must stir well (elbow grease!) to combine all the dry ingredients. Continue to combine until the mixture looks wet. It's okay if the mixture is "sandy" in texture. Use your hands to squeeze clumps together, forcing the mixture together.

- Use your fingers to break the topping into clumps, evenly distributing over the apples.
- Bake for 35-45 minutes. Check to see if the crisp is bubbling and if the topping is golden. If those two things have not occurred, bake for 10-20 additional minutes. The bake time will depend on what size of pan you used. I baked my crisp for 60 minutes in an oval 7×11 inch pan. Allow the crumble to cool for 10-15 minutes. This allows the juices to thicken then serve.
- Serve warm or at room temperature with vanilla ice cream.



Public Mural To Applaud WV Music Heritage



Pictured above is Michelle Miller, standing beside the Born & Bred logo she painted on the studio's exterior. It can be viewed by walking up Robinson Court. The mural will be added close to it in the next couple of months.

By Leigh C. Merrifield

Brendan Gallagher, founder and co-owner of Born & Bred in Shinnston, has just announced that a new public mural will soon be featured on the alley side of his studio (Robinson Court & Pike Street) that will reflect West Virginia's diverse musical heritage.

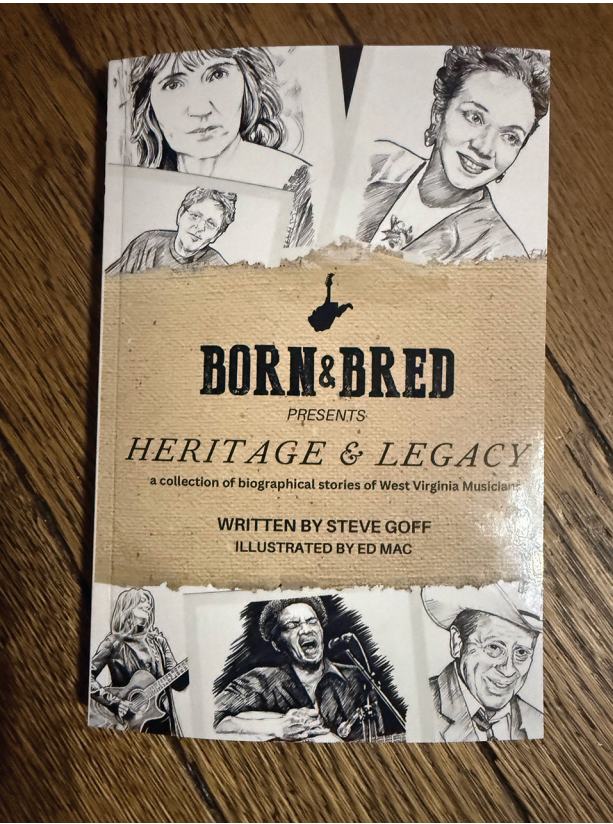
Expected to be completed the first part of October, Gallagher says it will honor the past, present and future of West Virginia music, highlighting the artists who shaped the state's cultural identity and those who will continue to define its evolving sound.

Gallagher stated, "This project will add a significant new landmark to Shinnston's growing arts corridor and reinforce Born & Bred's mission to elevate Appalachian creativity through public art, storytelling and community engagement."

Renowned regional artist Ed McMillan has been commissioned for the project and has created the mural. Also known as "Ed Mac", McMillan is a multifaceted artist based in Shinnston and perhaps best known for his tattoo work at Pike Street Tattoo in Bridgeport. He is also an accomplished painter, illustrator, and muralist whose work appears throughout north central West Virginia.

His connection to Born & Bred runs deep. He also illustrated the artwork featured in a recently published book - "Born & Bred: Heritage & Legacy". In addition, some of McMillan's original art pieces adorn the walls inside the Born & Bred Studio.

Gallagher noted, "His ability to blend regional identity, expressive imagery, and music culture made him uniquely suited to bring this project to life. In addition to his visual art, McMillan is an active musician who performs as a drummer and songwriter with the Orlando-based ska band 'Fat Timmy' and Shinnston's own 'A.M.



A copy of Born & Bred's newly published book, written by Steve Goff and illustrated by Ed Mac, is shown here. It is a collection of biographical stories of West Virginia musicians.

Benson & The Stations'. His dual identity as both artist and musician adds meaningful depth to this mural that centers on West Virginia's musical lineage."

The mural will feature musicians representing multiple eras of WV music, creating a visual narrative that honors musicians and artists from the past, celebrates contemporary artists, and hopefully inspires and encourages emerging talent as well.

Gallagher added that West Virginia has produced a rich legacy of artists through the years – offering everything from soul and country to bluegrass, rock and jazz – many of whom have met with great success! Some of the notables include Bill Withers, Little Jimmy Dickens, Brad Paisley, Kathy Mattea, and Johnnie Johnson, to name just a few.

The Born & Bred logo, created by graphic designer Jonathan Ady, was recently hand-painted by local artist Michelle Miller on the rear exterior (alley-side) of the studio building and serves as the first phase of the overall alleyway renewal effort, offering viewers an early glimpse of the creative transformation that will fill that alleyway when the mural is completed.

"The mural was made

possible through a private grant established by Debbie Cantrell, whose commitment to investing in Shinnston's growth continues to support meaningful improvements throughout the city, and I extend my sincere gratitude for her vision and generosity," Gallagher continued. "The project's funding was graciously managed by The Cultural Foundation of Harrison County, whose stewardship ensures that public art remains accessible and impactful within the community. To them as well, I offer my genuine appreciation."

Because Gallagher has made Shinnston his 'home' during the past 16 years, he located the Born & Bred Studio in this community, and dedicates his time and energy to supporting Appalachian artists, musicians and storytellers through community projects, publications, events, and collaborative initiatives. It also satisfies another of his passions and that is to see communities grow and prosper.

He concluded, "This mural is not just a painted wall but a tribute to WV musicians PLUS it is an opportunity to bring art to downtown Shinnston.

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