

The Parsons Advocate

SERVING THE PEOPLE OF TUCKER COUNTY SINCE 1896

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Dishler Convicted on All Counts in Capital Kidnapping Case; Jury Denies Mercy

By: Lydia Crawley
The Parsons Advocate

After a two day trial, the Jury reached a verdict in the Capital Kidnapping and Malicious Assault case of 27 year old Keith Gene Dishler. Dishler, a resident of Ohio, was convicted in Tucker County Court on both counts. In a separate deliberation, the seven man, five woman Jury returned a verdict of no mercy on the kidnapping charge. Mercy in the case would have allowed Dishler to be eligible for parole in 15 years on the mandatory life sentence on the kidnapping charge. Without mercy by the Jury, Dishler faces a mandatory sentence of Life without the Possibility of Parole.

Dishler was initially charged in Mt. Pleasant Township, Pennsylvania with five counts including: Aggregated Assault, Simple Assault, Prohibited Acts (Marijuana), Harassment and Disorderly Con-

duct before the case was transferred to Tucker County for prosecution. Dishler was indicted in Tucker County on two counts. Count One was a Malicious Assault charge that comes with a prison term of two to 10 years and Count Two was a Kidnapping charge. The Kidnapping charge is a capital crime with a mandatory life in prison sentence.

The trial was heard before newly appointed Judge Robert E. Ryan. Dishler appeared along with his attorney, Brent Easton. Tucker County Prosecuting Attorney Savannah Wilkins represented the State in the matter and was accompanied by Sgt. Schmicle of the West Virginia State Police.

The two counts in the indictment stemmed from a weekend getaway, Dishler had engaged in with his then girlfriend. The couple had spent a weekend in Tucker County at an Airbnb in Davis, according to the victim, 43 year old Tiffany DeHaven

of Ohio. Testimony in the case outlined the events of the afternoon and evening of August 8, 2021.

According to testimony by DeHaven and Dishler, the couple had initially met when DeHaven worked as a counselor who made in home visits to Dishler's home when he was 15. Both said that DeHaven worked with Dishler's mother in a program targeted to help keep at risk youth in the home. According to testimony from both Dishler and DeHaven, the pair reunited 10 years later when Dishler found DeHaven on Facebook and messaged her using the name "Keith Gene." It was during these messages, that DeHaven said she realized who he was.

Further testimony by DeHaven and Dishler stated that the relationship quickly developed and soon became romantic. According to the pair, the relationship lasted from the end of May 2021 to the incident in August of the same year.



Keith Gene Dishler

DeHaven testified that the trip went well until the couple went to what initially was described in court as Douglas Falls, but later identified by DeHaven as Albert

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Tucker County Sheriff Jake Kopek addressed the Tucker County Commission. The Sheriff's update included information on a grant application to fund a School Resource Officer position.

Commission Hears 911 Center Updates

By: Lydia Crawley
The Parsons Advocate

The Tucker County Commission was updated on the progress of the 911 Center as a part of the Commission's meeting. The report was one of several reports heard by the Commission from several department heads. 911 Center Director Michael Simmons updated the Commission on the latest developments at the Center.

Among the updates, Simmons said the Center had hosted an event where the public could "Meet Santa." Simmons said that they had Mr. and Mrs. Claus in attendance and 86 children attended the event and left with a gift bag filled with toys and snacks. According to Simmons, the event also features cocoa and homemade cookies. "It's something nice," Simmons said. "We want to be involved in the community, not

See 911 CENTER page 3

Sheriff Applies for Grant to Fund School Resource Officer; Theft Increases in Tucker County

By: Lydia Crawley
The Parsons Advocate

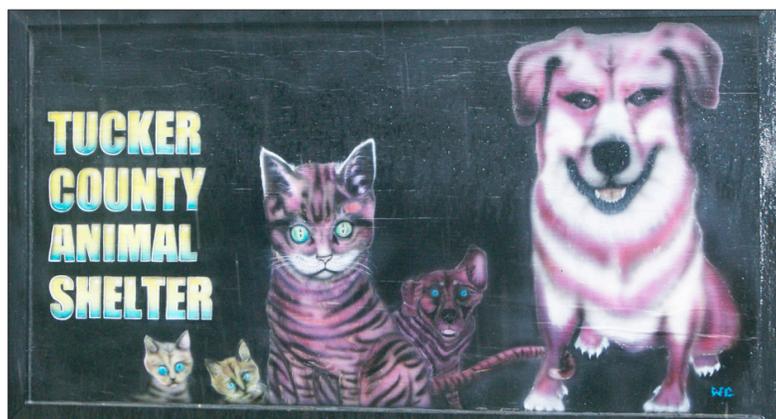
Tucker County Sheriff Jake Kopek updated the Tucker County Commission on the recent grant application his department is working on to fund an additional School Resource Officer.

According to Kopek, the department is working on acquiring a second grant funded School Resource Officer. "The Sheriff's Office is currently working on

a second grant funded School Resource position for the purpose of supplying security to our children in our school system," Kopek said.

The effort is assisted by the Tucker County Commission and Community Corrections, according to Kopek. Kopek said. "The folks at the County Commission and Community Corrections are helping us with what we need to get that together."

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County Commission Hears Animal Shelter Updates; Straw for Outdoor Pets Program

By: Lydia Crawley
The Parsons Advocate

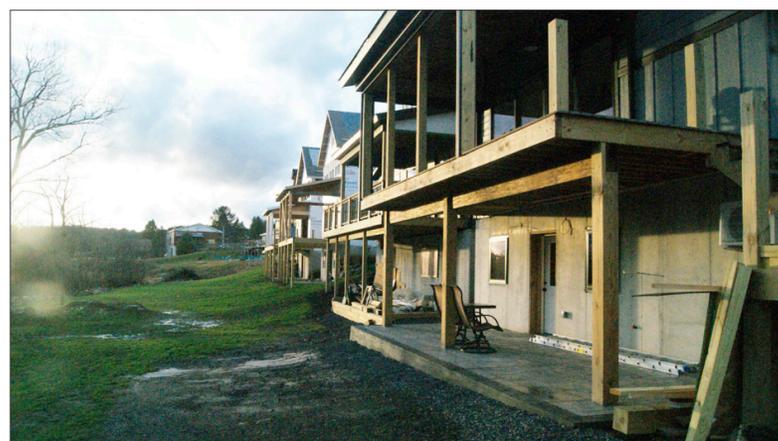
The Tucker County Commission heard updates on the latest developments at the Animal Shelter. Tucker County Animal Shelter Director Stacey Canfield updated the Commissioners at the Commission's meeting. Included in the update was the Friends of the Tucker County Animal Shelter's preorder of bales of straw available for residents with outdoor pets or feral animals.

Canfield informed the Commission that the shelter has preordered straw for out-

door pets. Canfield said the straw is available to residents to pick up at no cost from Southern States and more will be ordered as needed. Canfield said, "A lot of people have outside dogs in the area, hunting dogs, feral cats. So we went ahead and preordered 20 bales through the Friends down at Southern States. Anybody is welcome to go down there and get as much straw as they need on us. As they get low, Southern States will let us know and we can preorder more."

Canfield said the shelter's intake numbers are down and a late kitten season has

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The houses under construction in the Riverwalk project were not included in the filing to condemn by the City of Davis. 12 lots constituting the project's Phase Two and the roadway for the development were included in the City of Davis' filing at the Tucker County Courthouse.

City of Davis Condemns Riverwalk Project

By: Lydia Crawley
The Parsons Advocate

The City of Davis has condemned most of the Riverwalk project. The measure by the City has halted further construction in the area, as well as the sale of any lots not currently being constructed. The area condemned contains the main road for the neighborhood as well as the lots awaiting financing or the beginning of construction. Any houses currently being constructed have not been included in the measure.

According to Developer Pete Johnson, he began the Riverwalk project 22 years

ago to bring additional housing to Davis. Johnson, who currently resides in Montgomery County, MD, has begun construction on his retirement home on lot one of the Riverwalk project. Johnson's home is one of five currently under construction that are not affected by the City's eminent domain filing. "We've been doing this for 22 years, this project," Johnson said.

According to Johnson, Phase One of the project which includes the houses currently under construction has not been affected. Only Phase Two which consist empty lots with utilities ran to them have been con-

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Home Ownership Center Addresses County Commission

By: Lydia Crawley
The Parsons Advocate

Elkins based Home Ownership Center appeared before the Tucker County Commission during the Commission's regular meeting. Loan Originator Chris Vance represented the nonprofit at the meeting to discuss the programs offered to Tucker County residents through her organization. Vance said she had been in communication with Tucker County Commissioner Fred Davis prior to appearing formally before the three Commissioners.

According to Vance, the nonprofit has been in business for 25 years. Vance said even though the organization has been established for more than two decades, many still do not know they are there to help. "We're like a well kept secret," Vance said. "Nobody seems to know about us."

Vance said she was addressing the board to let the people of Tucker County know what is available and that they are there to help new home owners. According to Vance, the Center offers a wide variety of services to new and prospective home buyers. "We are a nonprofit organiza-



tion," Vance said. "We offer credit counseling, credit advising, budgeting services and we do a lot of lending for low income families."

Vance outlined one of the programs the Center offers. According to Vance, the no down payment program is designed to assist low income families. "We have programs that have no down payment," Vance said. "We have programs that are for very low income people. The program right now has about a 4.5% interest rate and that program is for families that make about 50,000 a year. So we can get them into houses that accommodate them well for a price that they

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Falls, to watch the sunset. DeHaven said she and Dishler took his guitar and guitar case along with other items to the falls. As part of the State's evidence, a video taken by DeHaven was played for the court showing Dishler performing with his guitar at the falls just before DeHaven's assault. "It seemed like we were having a good time," DeHaven said. "He was playing guitar."

Testimony also revealed that a week prior to the trip to Tucker County, DeHaven had been struck by Dishler, resulting in a black eye. Again, photographic evidence was published to the court showing the injury received in the incident. When asked by Wilkins why she didn't break up with Dishler following the black eye, DeHaven said she was fearful of Dishler and pitied him because of his rough childhood and abuse he told her that he endured while an inmate in an Ohio prison. According to DeHaven there were a lot of signs that alluded to Dishler's character. "There's a lot of red flags here," DeHaven said. "I should have listened."

While in the area, DeHaven said that a large purple folding knife was purchased at Mountain Top. The knife, according to DeHaven's testimony, was used by Dishler to threaten his own life before threatening DeHaven. That was the moment, DeHaven testified, that the situation changed. DeHaven testified that she was "treated like prey," terrorized, had multiple threats to her life and was in constant fear that she would be killed. According to DeHaven she was told that he would kill her with his bare hands or a rock before burying her in the woods at the falls before changing his mind and deciding to take her to a hotel in order to torture, kill and have sex with her dead body. "He said I deserved to die and that he was going to kill me with his bare hands."

In the resulting assault, DeHaven said she received multiple contusions, cuts to her eye that required stitches and resulted in a permanent scar and most seriously, a broken jaw that required reconstructive surgery and resulted in permanent nerve damage to her face. Photos documenting the extent of the beating were presented before the court that showed DeHaven's face swollen beyond recognition with extensive black bruising throughout her face, right arm and upper chest, as well as two black eyes that were swollen shut. As a result of the assault, DeHaven said she was out of work for two months and on a liquid diet that resulted in a 30 pound weight loss. DeHaven testified that the injury to her jaw required three and a half hours of surgery to repair. A surgery that included the placing of a plate, pins and screws. According to DeHaven, she has continued physical and emotional effects from the incident, as well as enduring two extensive rounds of physical therapy. "I really thought I was going to die there," DeHaven said.

Following the violent assault at Albert Falls, Dishler forced DeHaven into her car, DeHaven said. By this time, DeHaven said, Dishler had beat her from the falls and up the trail. It was while heading to the car that DeHaven said he hit her so hard that she blacked out and came to on the ground with him yelling at her to get up. This was the point, according to DeHaven, that her jaw was broken by Dishler.

Dishler had her keys and her phone did not work after falling in the water earlier that evening, according to DeHaven. In her testimony, DeHaven said Dishler was the one to start the ignition from the passenger seat. DeHaven and Dishler both testified that it was well after dark by the time the couple left in DeHaven's car. It was also revealed during testimony by both the defendant and victim that the couple took alcohol and marijuana to the falls with them. DeHaven said it was also on a bridge along the trail to the car that she last saw the purple knife.

DeHaven said they briefly stopped at the parking lot of a motel in Morgantown before she was able to convince Dishler to let her continue home. She described Dishler as "a clean freak" and the motel as "a little scuzzy" which aided in her attempts to avoid going to a motel with him. While in the car between the falls and Morgantown, Dishler beat her about the arm and chest so that she could still continue driving, DeHaven said. DeHaven also said Dishler taped gauze to the cut above her eye so the blood would not continue to run into her eyes.

It was after DeHaven drove into Pennsylvania that she found help, according to DeHaven. DeHaven said she was driving on a detour down a country highway in Pennsylvania when she was forced to stop in the middle of the road by what she described as a bright light. To her left, she said she saw a police cruiser. In a deliberate effort to look suspicious, she had her left turn signal on and avoided two other turns before turning into a Dollar General parking lot at about one in the morning, according to testimony from DeHaven and Mt. Pleasant Township Police Officer

Maria Cuccaro who conducted a traffic stop that evening. Cuccaro said she was a 10-year veteran of the force that had conducted over 100 arrests.

Cuccaro was called to the stand on day two and testified that she observed blood on the steering wheel and quickly suspected from the state of DeHaven that she may have encountered a domestic violence situation. Cuccaro said she radioed for EMS and back up to assist in separating DeHaven and Dishler. Officer Cuccaro also stated that when initially questioned, DeHaven was slow to answer and Dishler spoke for her and did not allow DeHaven to speak. It was not until the couple were separated that DeHaven confided in Cuccaro what had transpired, according to Cuccaro.

It was while DeHaven was in the ambulance and Dishler was speaking with male officers by the closed store, that DeHaven would tell Cuccaro what had happened, Cuccaro said. Once informed of the situation, Cuccaro said she placed Dishler under arrest. When the car was searched by police, open alcohol, two burnt marijuana roaches and a small pocket knife were found in the vehicle. Cuccaro said the marijuana was located on the passenger floorboard inside a small empty mason-style alcohol jar. Cuccaro testified she did not believe DeHaven to have been inpaired during the stop. "She did not appear to be intoxicated," Cuccaro said.

Attorney Easton asserted that the true location of the assault could not be really determined due to the ongoing nature of the incident that occurred over at least two states and countless counties. Dishler's account insisted that DeHaven instigated the incident by throwing rocks at Dishler and yelling. Dishler said it was after being hit in the head with a rock, that he struck DeHaven. "She hit me more than once," Dishler said. "I hit her more than once. It was an ongoing thing."

Cuccaro testified that Dishler was shirtless and in shorts when he was apprehended. The officer also testified that no injuries were observed on Dishler. "99% of my injuries occurred in Tucker County," DeHaven said.

Easton also brought up that at one point during the incident at the falls, Dishler had lost his glasses. During the incident, Dishler had demanded DeHaven retrieve them, according to DeHaven. It was also during this portion of the incident that DeHaven said Dishler urinated down her front while continuing to make threats. Easton questioned DeHaven on whether Dishler could see well enough without his glasses to carry out the attack. "I'm pretty sure he could see well enough to see a body in front of him," DeHaven said.

Dishler claimed on the stand that he blacked out and had no idea he had hit her as hard as he did. "When I saw the injuries she had, I didn't realize I did that," Dishler said.

Easton made motions twice, once after the prosecution rested and after Dishler testified for the defense as their only witness, to have the case dismissed. Both motions were denied by Judge Ryan who stated that the evidence more than warranted the continuation of proceedings.

At several points in the trial, Dishler displayed outbursts. One of Dishler's outbursts were directed at the victim while she was on the stand. This outburst resulted in a warning from Judge Ryan. Judge Ryan informed Dishler that if he could not act appropriately, he would be removed from court. Following the verdict return of guilty on the counts, Dishler yelled at the Jury with the comment, "Thanks for the life sentence." Dishler was immediately detained by several Tucker County Sheriff Deputies and handcuffed for the remainder of the day's proceedings. This was followed by Dishler turning around in his seat before he began yelling at the victim who visibly shook in her seat in the audience.

The Jury deliberated for 20 minutes at the end of the second day of trial before returning a unanimous verdict of guilty to all charges. While lesser included charges were included in Jury instruction, a verdict on the original charges stood. The defense requested the Jury be polled to verify the verdict. One by one, the jurors were called with each affirming the decision as correct. The Jury was then instructed to return the following morning to determine the Mercy Phase of the trial.

The Defense called Dishler to the stand in the Mercy Phase. During his testimony, Dishler claimed to be the victim of a broken home and abuse as a child by both his parents and an aunt and uncle. He also claimed to have been the victim of abuse inside the Ohio penal system as an inmate within the state and stated that he was forced to drink from a toilet by correctional officers while he was in isolation within the Ohio prison. Dishler denied making many of the threats that DeHaven had testified to as well as denying that he urinated on her or ever said he would engage in sex with her dead body. "I'm not a bad person,"

Dishler said. "I get put into bad situations. I wish Miss DeHaven was here so that I could say I'm sorry again."

Dishler broke down several times while speaking in the stand. While testifying, he claimed to be a musician, tattoo artist and poet. When instructed by Easton if there was anything else he wanted the Jury to know about him, he recited a poem, "How Does it Feel to be Misconceived?" he said he composed the evening previous after the verdict was returned.

Dishler said he hoped that his time in prison would give him time to address his anger issues. He cited this as a reason for the Jury to consider leniency and declare Mercy in his case. "Maybe in that time, I can learn to control my anger," Dishler said.

Easton said he hoped Dishler would take advantage of the various programs and rehabilitation opportunities afforded during Dishler's time in prison as part of his address to the Jury. "There is a lot of things he can take advantage of and hopefully he does," Easton said.

Easton also said that if Dishler was granted Mercy, it would only mean he would be afforded the opportunity to appear before a parole board, not guaranteed parole. It was also said by Easton that in the event Dishler would become paroled, he would never be in society without supervision because he would always have the life sentence hanging over his head. Easton also equated the granting of Mercy to an opportunity to change for Dishler.

The Mercy Phase also included testimony by Sgt. Schmidle on behalf of the prosecution regarding Dishler's extensive felony criminal history that included: Domestic Violence and Abduction, Complicity to Robbery and Felonious Assault, and Intimidation of an Attorney, Victim or Witness in a Criminal Case. All of the offenses were recorded from Columbiana County, Ohio between 2015 and 2020.

By West Virginia law, in a capital case such as with the Kidnapping charge, the only way in which an inmate has an opportunity for parole, is if the Jury declares mercy in the case. In the case of Dishler, had mercy been granted, he would have been eligible for parole after 15 years of incarceration. However, the jury took only 20 to 25 minutes to return with a NO MERCY verdict in the case which will result in a mandatory sentence of Life in Prison without the possibility of parole.

Judge Ryan thanked the Jury for their service and advised that they do not worry about what anyone else thinks of the verdict. He also thanked the jurors for acting according to their conscience. "You sacrificed your time," Judge Ryan said. "You performed your duties well. Your service means a lot to the people of Tucker County and to myself."

Dishler was escorted from court in handcuffs by three Tucker County Sheriff Deputies and is scheduled to be sentenced March 7. Dishler has been remanded to the Tygart Valley Regional Jail until his sentencing.



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OR YOUR SECOND HOME**

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The New Year Brings Lower Gas Prices to West Virginia

The average price for gasoline across Northern West Virginia is six cents lower this week at \$2.859 per gallon, according to AAA East Central's Gas Price Report.

This week's average prices: Northern WV Average \$2.859
Average price during the week of December 26, 2023 \$2.911
Average price during the week of January 3, 2023 \$2.984

The following is a list of the average prices in several West Virginia locations:

\$2.974	Bridgeport
\$2.964	Clarksburg
\$2.870	Huntington
\$3.032	Martinsburg
\$2.721	Morgantown
\$2.935	Parkersburg
\$2.712	Weirton
\$2.667	Wheeling

Trend Analysis:

The national average for a gallon of gas has fallen two cents over the past week \$3.10. Today's national average is 14 cents less than a month ago and 11 cents less than a year ago.

As formal trading resumes after the holiday, West Texas Intermediate opened at \$71.00. Oil futures have been nearly unchanged to kick off the new year, giving up sharp gains seen last week after an Iranian warship entered the Red Sea. That action heightened tensions and fears of crude-supply disruptions sparked by attacks on shipping by Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen.

Motorists can find current gas prices nationwide, statewide, and countywide at gasprices.aaa.com.

PARSONS ADVOCATE LETTERS TO EDITOR POLICY

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Submissions must include a daytime telephone number, name and address. This is for verification purposes.

Letters can be submitted only once each 30 days and can not exceed 500 words.

Submitting a letter does not guarantee it will be published. All letters become property of The Parsons Advocate. The Parsons Advocate reserves the right to edit and/or reject letters. Personal attacks, lies, and etc. will not be published.

The views expressed in letters are not necessarily the views of the Parsons Advocate.

Thank you notes and advertising are not considered as letters to the editor. When submitting letters do not use all caps, italics or bold. Use punctuation, upper and lower case letters and indent for paragraphs.

If you have any questions, please call us at 304-478-3533.

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Sheriff

Cont. From Front Page 1

Currently, the County has only one School Resource Officer to serve three schools, Kopec said. “We currently have one School Resource Officer and he floats between all three schools,” Kopec said.

According to Kopec, his department's goal is to have one full time officer for the High School and a second officer for the two Elementary Middle Schools in the County. “What our targeted ideal would be to have one full time at the High School and then one that went to both of our middle school and elementary schools,” Kopec said.

Tucker County Commission President Mike Rosenau commended Kopec and his officers on their increased presence at sporting events. “Just wanted to comment on your department, Jake,” Rosenau said. “I've noticed the presence at the ball games, too. Emotions get high at ball games sometimes and just the presence of an officer there, I want to thank you for that and your staff.”

According to Kopec, he is always looking for ways to improve and increase his department's presence in the community. “We've increased that,” Kopec said. “We always take a look at things where we could improve and that was one thing that I saw that we could improve in so we've been having some more police presence at the ball games.”

Kopec said the effort is helping. According to Kopec, the governing body for High School football has updated their regulations and requested police escorts to and from locker rooms for the referees. “It seems to help,” Kopec said. “We had an event, a pretty good-sized event, the school did a wonderful job getting it together for the play-off games for the football. The WVSSAC, they have changed some of their rules. They want a police presence to escort the referees to and from the locker room.”

Kopec said the WVSSAC requirement has added time to officer presence. Kopec also said that he has volunteered his time towards the time that presence entails. “That requires an officer to show up not at the game, but two hours before the game even starts,” Kopec said. “So, then you got two hours before the game starts and then the game and then after the game. I took that on myself on my time off to go and do that. There were times I was sitting in the parking lot until even the game

was over watching for the refs to get them to their vehicles.”

Kopec said the officials have been pleased with the effort he and his department put into the play-off games. According to Kopec, he received gratitude for his effort and the hospitality the referees received in Tucker County. “It worked out wonderfully,” Kopec said. “The refs said every play-off game, ‘This is just wonderful. There's so much hospitality within Tucker County. Thank you.’ They were really impressed.”

Kopec also informed the Commission that there has been an increase in theft in the County. Kopec attributed the increase to the economic downturn and the effects the economy is having on the residents of Tucker County. Kopec also said that several of the cases have had suspects developed and arrests have been made, as well. “We've seen an uptick in not just house break-ins, but vehicles getting broken into,” Kopec said. “We've noticed we've had an increase in shoplifting. We've had an increase in theft from family individuals.”

Kopec said the new camera system installed at the Courthouse has assisted in apprehending the suspect in a series of car break ins in the Parsons area. According to Kopec the suspect was captured on camera breaking into vehicles, but the images were blurry. Kopec went on the say that since the suspect was seen walking by the Courthouse, the footage from the Courthouse cameras led to identification and arrest of the suspect in the case. “Something that helped tremendously and it was a grant that was done by the Commission here within the last six months for upgrading camera systems within this building,” Kopec said. “And those camera systems actually helped us to locate the suspect.”

Kopec went on to say that the car break ins have stopped in Parsons as a result. “The vehicle thefts have stopped in Parsons,” Kopec said. “So, that's wonderful.”

Kopec said his department has been working with State and local law enforcement on the thefts in Tucker County. “Our officers are doing a wonderful job,” Kopec said. “The State Police also handled several of them and the City Police. We all took different cases and was able to work together with that suspect and get some warrants done and get that resolved.”

OBITUARIES

Roberta Vale Cosner Wolf Dye



Roberta Vale Cosner Wolf Dye, a resident of Elkins, WV, died December 28, 2023 in Morgantown, WV at the age of 88.

Roberta was born in Porterwood, WV, on January 24, 1935 of the late Simon E. and Grace V. Smith Cosner. Roberta was married to Capt. Philip G. Wolf from July 2, 1955 to February 18, 1965 when he was killed in a helicopter accident. On September 15, 1967 she was married to Richard W. Dye who also preceded her in death on October 18, 2018.

She is survived by her three children and their spouses: Elizabeth G. Wolf Mahoney and husband Greg; James R. Wolf and wife Dr. Molly Bliss; Damon L. Dye and wife, Jennifer. She is also survived by five grandchildren: Brendan Coleman, Brittany Coleman LaRue, Austin Dye, Ethan Dye, and Josselyn Wolf; one great-grandchild, Adeline LaRue; one brother, David D. Cosner and eighteen nieces and nephews.

Preceding Roberta in death are five sisters: Helen A. Nickeson, Sicely M. Coffelt, Vallie V. Goff, Margaret C. Willson and Wanda W. Luzier and four brothers: Clintons Cosner, Durward E. Cosner, Chester C. Cosner, and Daris T. Cosner.

Roberta attended schools in Porterwood and Parsons,

WV. She graduated from Kearny High School, San Diego, California class of 1952. She worked as a cab dispatcher at Parsons Cab Service in Parsons, WV; as a salesperson and shipping clerk at Dorman Mills in Parson, WV; as a Statistics Clerk in the Agriculture Department at WV University; an office manager at Cupps Furniture in Elkins, WV and retired from the USDA Forest Service in 1997 where she served as Staff Secretary.

Roberta was a long-time member of the Davis Memorial Presbyterian Church where she served as a Sunday School Teacher, President of Adult Bible Class, member of Circle 6, President and Life Member of the Presbyterian Women, a Deacon and Elder and a member of the choir. She also worked with Literacy Volunteers and Friends of the Library.

In 2022 Roberta became

a resident at Mountain Memories Assisted Living and Retirement Center where she became an important fixture as she had in every other community she belonged to in her life. Whether it was Porterwood, WV, San Diego, California, US Army Bases in Europe and the United States or Elkins, WV Roberta always found her “people” and thrived. It was because she genuinely cared about other people more than herself. She lived a life of service for others for which she will be fondly remembered.

A Celebration of Life Service is planned for the spring of 2024. Details will be made available on the Lohr and Barb Funeral Home website in due course.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Davis Memorial Presbyterian Church, 450 Randolph Avenue, Elkins, WV 26241; The Randolph County Senior Center, Fifth Street, Elkins, WV 26241; the Elkins Public Library, 416 Davis Avenue, Elkins, WV 26241 or plant a tree in Roberta Dye's name via the Lohr & Barb Funeral Home website. The Lohr & Barb Funeral Home is in charge of the arrangements for Roberta Vale Cosner Wolf Dye. Condolences may be expressed to the family at www.lohrbarbfuneralhome.com

Obituaries for 2023: A look back on the loved ones we have lost in the past year

January

Betty Rae McDonald Wamsley, 92; Tammy Lynn Wratchford, 48; Emma Jean Bonner Holler, 89; Darrell Lynn Heckler, 78; Thelma Moore Dillon, 93; Dr. Roy A. Moss, 87; James W. “Butchie” Long, Jr., 66; Carolyn Sue Phillips Roy, 66; Ruth Ann Smith, 59; David J. Orr, 79; Bessie Jane Sell, 91; Rev. Dr. Donna Andes, 92; Rosetta Gertrude Frymyer Phillips, 80; James M. Morvay, 81; Sandra Sue Graville, 74; Ellen Frances Arnold, 101; Brenda Sue Isner Shaffer, 72; Philip Craig Steyer, 84.

February

Clyde Franklin “Hank” Nestor, 88; James :Jim: Berton Bava, 72; Earl Richard Vest, 90; Denzil Roy Keller, Sr., 85; Olivia Lucille Kisamore Stone, 76; Jeffrey Mark Hebb, 53; Amy Louise Harman Teter, 73; Alain Kieny, 75; Brother Robert Wheeler, 74; Bernettie Jean Nestor, 68; Charles “Chuck” R. Paugh, Jr., 64; Iris “Jean” Simmons Loughry, 81.

March

Paul R. Mateer, Jr., 90; David Andrew Bonner, 74; Mary Elizabeth Knotts Watring, 95; Roger Lee Collett, 78; Vincent Geroski, 78; Dirk Leon Pritt, 60; Keith W. Jones, Sr., 77; Jack Don Swearingen, Sr., 93; Ruby Virginia (Adams) Froman, 85; Terry Lynn Cummings, Sr., 80.

April

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(304) 478-2620

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Jim's All Star Foods
Parsons, Wv 304-478-3248

WV Paving Company
“Builders of Highways & Byways”
Parsons, WV • 304-478-2400



Martha Ann Freet Frymyer, 70; Anthony “Tony” Salvatore DiBacco, 100; Pamela Charlene Kerr Eye, 74; Vonda Wyona Bohon Phillips, 85; Olive “Marie” Shaffer Poling, 90; Barbara Ann Lipscomb Johnson, 64; Edward “Ed” Lee Tennett, Jr., 65; Chester F. Stanley, 72; Sarah Ruth Hedrick Bonner, 98; Patricia Lucille Ball Worles, 70; Janet Lee Simmons Summerfield, 72; Mary Virginia “Gin” Winters, 93; Lewis Ray “Louie” Fortney, 73; Gary Ray Poling, 63; Marsha Lee Smith Mick, 79; Robert Francis Rollenhagen, 77.

May

Mabel Pauline William Hovatter, 86; Robert Martin Barnes, 82; Harold Fike, 83; Sylvia May Moyers, 74; Clarence Russel “Beanie” Bolinger, Jr., 77; Linda J. Shupp, 77; Thomas Ray “Tom” Wratchford, 75; Linda M. Humphrey Scott, 72; Theodore “Ted” Meredith Wolfe, Sr., 97; Sarah Thompson Fletcher, 80; Carl Eugene Lipscomb, 71; Gary Means, 68; Tina Louise Lansberry Heckler, 55; Carroll Silas Roy, 87.

June

Ruth Louise Bonner, 87; Norman Wade Bonner, 87; William Robert McCoy, Sr., 85; William Edward Simmons, Sr., 85; Raymond Joseph Foster, 76; Eva Marie Rudy, 86; John Jeffery Rhoades, Sr., 62; Ruth Collins Hinkle, 96; Kimberly “Kimmie” Marie Clements, 43.

July

Wilson R. Jones, 83; Betty Lee Snyder Bonner, 88; Joyce Lee Rosier Hovatter, 62; James June Carr, 92; Jerry Brant Flanagan, 77; Bernard “Pete” Allen Tompkins, 63.

August

911 Center

just employed in it.”

Simmons said the event was a success with people coming from around the area to attend. According to Simmons, some participants said that the event afforded them the only opportunity they had to get a picture with Santa. “There were several people that come from parts unknown that stated that, ‘If you hadn't of done this, we wouldn't have been able to get a picture with Santa,’ and there were several that were so grateful for that,” Simmons said.

According to Simmons, the 911 Center will likely make the event annual due to the success they had this year. The Commissioners thanked Simmons for the event. Simmons said the Center has been reaching out the community and being involved. Rosenau said he appreciated the Center becoming involved with the children of the community and hoped that effort will make children more aware of the Center and less



Sharon Lee Smallwood Wimer, 75; Thelma Flanagan, 81; Janice Marie Harr, 79; Sharon Ellen Teter Simmons, 82.

September

Hugh Carson Bright, 75; Joseph Michael “Joe” Nelson, 45; Gary Lee Kisner, 73; Jacqueline “Jackie” Margaret Evick Stevens, 85; Jack William “Bill” Miller, 84; Samuel Bruce Owens, 88; Randy Ray Cale, 58; Kendra Raney Kalar, 17; Hallie M. Oxley, Sr., 79; Joseph Allen Parsons, 62; Lewis Keith Smith, 84.

October

Karen Sentra Schurman Peterson, 76; John Charles DePollo, 92; William Dean “Bill” Day, 85; Betty Lou Lowther Humphrey, ?; Ronald “Ace” Allen Moore, 83; Marcella Jean Gilbert Seaman, 71; William B. Good, 68; Ira S. Miller, 106.

November

Leota Annis Plum Knotts Parsons, 96; Edward Joseph Bropst, Jr., 74; Fred Dale Jones, I, 79; Jerry Edwin Hauser, 81; Harry Truman Reed, 78; Eric Glenn Poling, 54; Katya Elizabeth Pase Moreno, 29; Virginia Mae Hovatter Nestor, 94.

December

Edna Arbutice “Beauty” Harper Myers, 82; David Michael Wilfong, 74; Beardean Jane Moats Evans, 88; Joseph Daniel Henry, Jr., 82; Laura Jean Howell Hunt, 60; Harold Otto Gooden, Sr., 77; Allen “Power Wagon” Crossland, 79; Paul William “Coon” Sponaugle, 86; Sandra “Sandy” Jean Helmick Mason, 78; Rhonda Lea Kidwell Clem, 64.

Cont. From Front Page 1

afraid to call in the case of an emergency.

Simmons also said that just prior to the Meet Santa event, the Center had replaced ceiling tiles in the downstairs where the event was held. The tiles were found in storage at the Center and replaced ceiling tiles damaged by the failure of an old hot water heater that has since been replaced. According to Simmons, the replacement of the tiles was completed in time for the event. “We took a day and just replaced all the ceiling tile downstairs,” Simmons said. “It's all brand new. We were able to get that done before Meet Santa so it was looking good.”

Other upgrades to the Center, according to Simmons, included the mounting of a television to a wall downstairs. The television will be used to assist in the training of 911 Center personnel, according to Simmons. The television was purchased at a substantial discount on Black Friday, according to Simmons. Tucker County Commission President Mike Rosenau thanked Simmons for saving the County money on the purchase. “We are really going to move forward with our training,” Simmons said. “A lot of it is done online and this gives us the ability other than everyone looking at a little laptop, we have a tv on the wall, we hook the laptop to it. It just makes it a lot more functional.”

Simmons said the Center has also applied for a grant to fund Cyber Security Infrastructure and maintenance. Rosenau thanked Simmons for seeking out grants to help fund the Center, as well as the maintenance and upgrades. “I want to thank you for going after grants,” Rosenau said. “We survive in a County that is so small, we have to rely on grants or getting the grants, in order for us to maintain or if we want to improve anything.”

According to Simmons, the Center has a new interactive website. The new site can be reached at www.tuckercounty911.com. According to Simmons, the site will contain information, links to weather alerts, as well as to all emergency agencies, contact information, Facebook links, all the forms, among other informative items. “We included an interactive map that also shows like Five Rivers Campground and how to get to their website, what it offers, The State Parks, just some local things,” Simmons said. “It will have the ability to put out instant alert messages, say for if someone would inform us there is boil water advisory.”



Property Developer Pete Davis, right, discusses the issues surrounding the future of the Riverwalk project with Colt Holbert, left. Holbert's property at Lot 17 is one of 12 lots condemned by the city.



The 12 lots that constitute the second phase of the Riverwalk project have been condemned by the City of Davis in an eminent domain filing by the town. The filing has left the future of the site in limbo for the purchasers of the lots with many unable to finalize the deeds to the property.

demned. The housing project contains 18 lots, according to Johnson, with 12 being included in the condemnation filing. "It is a petition for condemnation of all twelve lots and the private roadway that leads to them," Johnson said.

According to Johnson, Phase One also should have been included in the filing by the City as an "affected property" due to the City condemning the roadway in front of the Phase One properties. The roadway runs the length of the development to the Phase Two condemned lands. "They didn't include this (Phase One houses) in the suit," Johnson said. "But they are supposed to by law because it is what is called an affected property. So when you condemn the roadway coming in, this road is a private roadway."

Johnson said he has invested \$400,000 into upgrading the site for housing construction through infrastructure. "We had just finished putting \$400,000 worth of infrastructure defined as design and then engineering, electric and gas and water and sewer and telecom and so forth," Johnson said.

Johnson said he has worked with the City throughout the duration of the project and has complied with all requests the City has made. "They (The City) worked with us the whole way," Johnson said. "Approving the designs, the infrastructure, providing the town engineer. We just signed a transfer agreement for Phase One and Two sewer and water. Its called a Line Extension Agreement with them within four weeks of them serving us."

While the filing came as a surprise to Johnson, he said that he had been approached four times by Tomson with offers to purchase the property. According to Johnson, he only became aware of the filing when a lot went through a title search as part of the sale. "They slapped that paperwork on it and surprised us," Johnson said. "They (the City) had been talking about buying, talking to me about buying those, the mayor has. Like four different times he's approached me with super unrealistic terms."

Johnson referred to the City's offers as "unrealistic" and said that at one point he had been sent a \$10,000 check via FedEx as a "down payment" pending the City's application for grant funding. Johnson said he rejected the offer. "He gave me a check," Johnson said. "They FedExed me a check for \$10,000 and said please accept this as a down payment and stop your project while we go find grant money. I'll keep the door open, but come talk to me when you have a check book."

Johnson called the measure by the City "a land grab." Johnson claims the subdivision is popular among the locals, but that as a whole the idea isn't popular among a small minority in the community. "Its just a small handful," Johnson said. "Its a very popular subdivision,

but its not a popular idea and I don't think most people even know about it."

Johnson said that the measure was taken in secret with there being no City Council vote or minutes able to be found on the issue. "They did it without holding a council vote," Johnson said. "No one can find any minutes about it."

Johnson further stated that two of the Building Commission members have recently resigned. Johnson also claimed that the President and Vice President who resigned had no knowledge of the plan to condemn the properties. "The President of the Building Commission resigned," Johnson said. "And the Vice President of the Building Commission resigned and all that is left is the Secretary of the Building Commission. My understanding is that they never saw the petition to condemn and did not know that the town was condemning."

Johnson further went on to state that the Building Commission should have been involved as an independent entity that make recommendations in such matters. "As you know, the Building Commission is supposed to be an independent entity that makes its own conclusions and then recommends them to the town council and then the council votes to adopt their recommendation. None of that happened. That's my understanding."

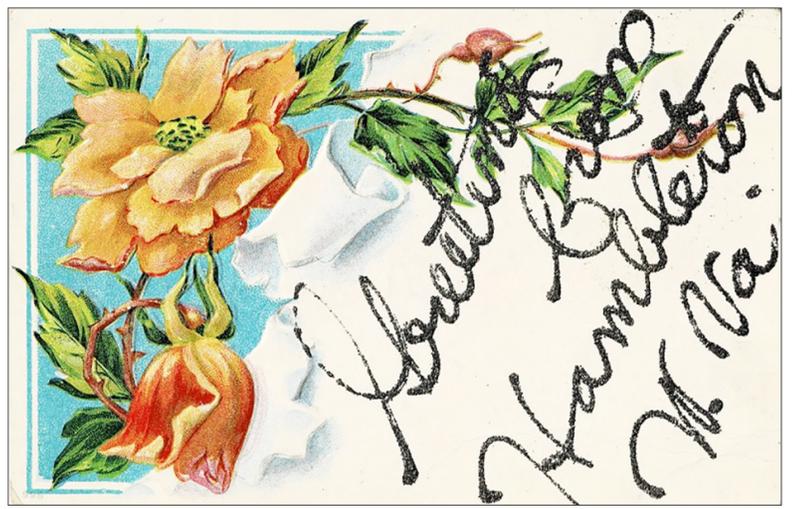
According to Johnson, the filing included on it the City of Davis, the Building Commission and the Parks and Recreation Commission. "They had three parties on their end: the town, the Building Commission and Parks and Rec Commission."

Johnson said the condemnation was filed inappropriately by the City. According to Johnson, when the motion was filed, the City of Davis was supposed to file with money backing the measure. Johnson said there was no money filed by the City. "When they condemn it, they have to petition at the courthouse with the money," Johnson said. "They can't just file a document. In this case, (they) posted the petition without posting any money and its damaging my – I have multiple buyers who are under sale contracts waiting...for their financing to come through and now everything is suspended and there's a cloud on the title. They can't go forward."

The filing by the City has caused the completion of the sale of lots to be held up with several buyers in limbo with financing unable to be completed. Several of the lots in Phase Two are currently under contract, according to Johnson, with buyers unable to complete their financing or begin construction on the site. One such buyer is Colt Holbert is a native of Parkersburg who has family ties to Davis.

Johnson said the timing of the measure was suspect. "They did this at a very odd time," Johnson said. "They did this right at the end

TURNER'S TIDBITS



Greetings to all and a late Happy New Year. I must apologize to all the folks that called and left messages about how they missed the article for two weeks in a row. I appreciate such a large following of the article. This is a greeting from Hambleton. A series of cards left a space for the customer or local shopkeeper to personalize for the area they were selling them. The writing was generally written with glitter. Ideas, comments, suggestions, or items to share contact Tim Turner (304) 478-3389.

We Get Letters

Dear Editor,

From time to time, a shining star and leader blesses a community with her presence.

I wish to recognize and express appreciation to one such person whose life has had a significant and lasting impact upon the folks who call Tucker County their home. She passed away in recent days. Jane Barb was a prominent member of the West Virginia judicial community for many years. She was an early member of the West Virginia Magistrates' Association. I had the privilege of practicing law in her magistrate court through all but 4 years of her 31 year tenure.

Jane studied nursing in college. Although she did not have a law degree, she had the intellect, common sense, and wisdom to serve as an outstanding elected magistrate for 24 years. She was gifted with the ideal temperament to serve in a judicial capacity. She was stern, but compassionate. Litigants in her courtroom felt comfortable and able to present their cases – with or without counsel. Perhaps, one of her greatest attributes was the ability to lessen the tensions and stresses which exist between the parties. I recall a number of occasions when she used her keen sense of humor and obvious empathy for the parties' respective positions to diminish the hostilities which so often arise between the litigants. When she stepped aside as an elected official in

2001, the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals would not let her retire. It then utilized Jane as a senior status magistrate for another 7 years, not only in Tucker County, but also in numerous other counties when the assigned magistrate was unable to serve.

Jane contributed to this community in a number of other capacities as well. Prior to being elected to public office, Jane served as President of Barb's Drug Store, and as co-owner of the Old Town Shoppe in Parsons. Although her son, daughter-in-law, and grandson managed Barb's Funeral Home (now Lohr - Barb), the community generally associated her with that business, as well. Jane also was frequently asked to serve as master of ceremonies at public gatherings. Her wit and charm always made the experience enjoyable.

I did not know Jane's husband, as he passed away 3 months before I opened my law office. But I did know her as a parent and grandparent. She provided her progeny with guidance and high ideals. Although Riley, Jeff, and Sidnee are left to grieve along with Jane's grandchildren, they must have great pride in all that she accomplished in her lifetime. Tucker County residents have a fond memory of this outstanding community leader. I feel privileged to have known her and witnessed many of her accomplishments.

Sincerely,
John W. Cooper

of the development. I'd already finished everything and sold all the lots and people are finalizing their closings and BAM, here they come in."

Johnson said he has created value to the property and that the lots in the Riverwalk development are the highest valued lots in the City. "I've created evaluations," Johnson said. "We created an HOA for this, its on the river front, its got views and the lots are selling between 75 and 110 and they aren't seeing anything in terms of evaluations so their response is, 'Let's borrow money and buy the most expensive land in Davis.'"

Johnson said the development was designed to get its residents to all the area has to offer as opposed to alone on acreages. According to Johnson, his development would eliminate the need for people to drive distances to take advantage of the local shops, restaurants and amenities because they would already be there. "Until recently, people didn't think in terms of how to enjoy it from a small town or village versus vacation homes that are pretending to be by themselves on five acre lots in the valley and that was like getting away from it all," Johnson said. "Whereas what we've designed here is, getting to it all."

Johnson said his project also includes a parkland donation along the riverfront. The tract that is being donated to the DNR, will tie into a newly proposed trail and bridge in cooperation with Friends of the Blackwater, according to Johnson. "This park land donation, I've been planning and talking about a whole document on the types of species, a trail location and the town's response is (this)," Johnson said. "Its not what they care about. They care about stop-

ping these houses for some reason."

Johnson does attribute that reason to the City's desire to place a parking lot where the housing project is. "They throw out things like green space," Johnson said. "Its included in the (Riverwalk) plans, but they want green space, but we mean green space specifically where you want to build a house.' They want a parking lot and we are not wanting parking through there."

Johnson said that through his attorney, a motion to dismiss has been filed in the court over the condemnation filing. A court date has been set for January on the motion with Judge Ryan in District Court.

Eminent Domain is defined by the Legal Information Institute (LII) as, "Eminent domain refers to the power of the government to take private property and convert it into public use, referred to as a taking. The Fifth Amendment provides that the government may only exercise this power if they provide just compensation to the property owners. A taking may be the actual seizure of property by the government, or the taking may be in the form of a regulatory taking, which occurs when the government restricts a person's use of their property to the point of it constituting a taking." The LII further clarifies that, "Courts broadly interpret the Fifth Amendment to allow the government to seize property if doing so will increase the general public welfare."

For more on the Riverwalk controversy, please read the companion articles on Mayor Tomson's response and the homeowners response to the Condemnation fight. The Parsons Advocate will provide updates on the story as it progresses.

HOC

can afford."

Vance said the Center offers several programs that offer no down payment as well as some that can include closing costs on the purchase of a home. "With our programs, we have several that have no down payment requirement," Vance said. "We have the USDA Rural Development Program and it does not have a down payment at all and closing costs can be financed in with that program."

Vance said that her organization also offers services to higher income residents as well. "For those with higher incomes, a family of one to four qualifies if they make less than \$110, 650," Vance said. "So that is pretty substantial for our area. So it covers most people."

According to Vance, the Center also works with local banks to assist with down payment loans. Vance said the loans are at about a 5% interest rate and have a 7 to 10 year length. Vance also said the program can usually assist most anyone who does not qualify for one of the Center's other no down payment programs. "We partner with local banks as well with down payment assistance," Vance said. "So for example, we partner with Citizens Bank of West Virginia and we work a lot with the loan agents here to get down payments for their customers. They are loans, not grants."

Vance said the Center also works with local schools to provide financial education to local high school seniors. According

to Vance, they inform the students on the impact of credit scores on more than just loan worthiness, but also how a person's credit score can impact job prospects, insurance premiums, rentals, utility deposits, cell phones and other parts of their lives. Vance said the students were also informed on budgeting, purchasing a first car and how student student loans affects the students' futures and that the students' chosen careers would supply a sufficient income to not only pay their loans without the loan becoming a lifetime debt, but also provide them with enough to sustain themselves. "We also do a lot of education," Vance said. "This past week before last, we were at Tucker County High School. We presented financial education to high school seniors...to educate them on what the real world is like financially when you go out into it."

Vance said the Center as part of their high school education program, have banking partners instruct students on such banking matters as writing a check, managing a bank account, how not to rely on cellphone apps exclusively. According to Vance, the Center have several customers who come in that do not even have checks anymore because of modern technology and the use of debit cards. "We have local banking partners who presents the banking aspect of financial education," Vance said.

In response to Commission President Mike Rosenau's suggestion that adult education in finance and banking would be of assistance to many residents, Vance outlined that when someone

initially enters a program at the Center they are given a one hour class where a credit report is pulled and a housing advisor goes through the credit report in its entirety to ensure accuracy and if it isn't inform the client of how to dispute inaccurate information and make the report accurate. Vance said the class also informs clients how to budget to reduce debt and ideas on how to raise low scores in order to qualify for a loan and purchase a home.

Vance also outlined the Center's credit counseling services. The services, according to Vance assist potential home owners with not only finding their credit scores, but working to make them better in order to get them into a home. "We also do credit counseling," Vance said. "So we have services to be able to help people find out what their credit scores are and then move towards getting credit improved if it needs to be or move towards home ownership if they are in that credit range where they can move towards that."

According to Vance, not only people wishing to buy their first home utilize their programs. Vance said that some clients just want assistance with establishing a budget to keep them on a financially responsible track.

Vance said anyone interested in utilizing the Center's programs can contact them via phone at 304-636-9115, the Center's website www.hocwv.org or at the Center located at 2276 Randolph Avenue in Elkins.

finally begun to slow down. According to Canfield, it is not just feline intake numbers that are down, with the shelter seeing a drop in the number of dog intakes, as well. “We were seeing about a minimum of 15 cats coming in and out like every couple of weeks and that number has significantly dropped,” Canfield said. “Towards the end of kitten season, finally, which is usually up in August, but we were still seeing litters of very young kittens come up until just the beginning of this month.”

Canfield also informed the Commission that the number of adoptions and fosters are growing. According to Canfield, the shelter is promoting a holiday foster program for the animals at the facility. Home for the Howlids is geared at temporary fostering of shelter pets to households in the area to help give the shelter staff a bit of a respite for the holidays. Canfield said she hoped to allow her staff a break for the holiday and acknowledged it isn't fun to have to go into a shelter on Christmas morning to clean kennels and enclosures. “Right now we have a program called 'Home for the Howlids,' instead of the holidays, we're trying to implement just to gain more fosters,” Canfield said. “And just try to get them out of there for ideally longer, the longer the better, but at least for the night

of Christmas Eve and Christmas we would like to clear the shelter for the staff and for the animals.”

Canfield said she is focused on at least clearing out the dog kennels for the week of Christmas. According to Canfield foster homes in Thomas and Davis areas are growing with increasing support for the shelter coming from those areas.

Canfield also informed the Commission that trap and release has been a battle lately. According to Canfield the shelter is currently trying to relocate a colony of 27 and another colony of 15 feral cats. Canfield said she was grateful for a homeowner in Canaan with a lot of land that recently housed six of the ferals and would be returning for an additional six. “Usually per county ordinance, we'll trap them, we'll neuter them and then release them,” Canfield said. “These homeowners are not ok with that process at this point. So we have actually had to set feral cats up in dog kennels because we do not have space at all to house them. We've had to set up six extra dog kennels just to be able to have space to house all the ferals that we have right now.”

Canfield said the shelter is still in need of volunteers to help with such activities as dog walking and assisting the staff. “Volunteer involvement is definitely something that we are

pushing for,” Canfield said.

Behavior modification and enrichment staff training has also been completed, according to Canfield. Other training opportunities the shelter staff has engaged in or will be engaged in include a two hour canine handling training and an upcoming animal cruelties investigation training. “Just making sure that me and specifically Elena are bettering ourselves and being the best full time employees for you guys that we can be and making sure that everything runs great,” Canfield said.

Canfield said that the shelter had finished the voucher program that the County had agreed to match 50%. Despite only a fraction of the vouchers that were sent out being used, Canfield said she considered the program a success because it prevented animals from being left at the shelter. Of the vouchers used, 52 were for cats and 30 for dogs, according to Canfield. Canfield said a lot of local residents used the vouchers to take the responsibility of trap, neuter and release of animals on themselves. “We were able to serve 82 owned animals in the County,” Canfield said. “We sent out like 300 vouchers, but unfortunately only 82 were used. But that's 82 that didn't get dropped off at the shelter.”

Fraternal Order of Police Provide Christmas Baskets



The Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 104 Seneca Trail Lodge handed out holiday food baskets to 10 Tucker County families on December 22nd. Each basket contained either a turkey or ham, green beans, potatoes, gravy, butter, rolls, butter and other items for a holiday meal. The Lodge handed out the baskets at the Parsons City Hall parking lot. Families were selected based on need. The Lodge works with counselors at Tucker County Schools in their selections. The Lodge also provides a Christmas Party to children in need in the area every year. The Tucker County Commission has donated money to the annual Christmas Party. Lodge member Brian Tompson said this year was the most successful year yet with the Lodge able to help the most children they ever have.

2023 WEST VIRGINIA CHILD ABUSE STATISTICS RELEASED

Randolph and Tucker County, WV — Today, the West Virginia Child Advocacy Network (WVCAN) released its Statewide Data for the 2023 fiscal year (July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023). The data in the report reflects service from West Virginia's 21 Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) which provided official service to 46 of 55 counties in the state. A CAC provides a safe, child-friendly facility where child protection, criminal justice, and child treatment professionals work together to investigate abuse, hold offenders accountable, and help children heal.

During the year, CACs served 4,879 children – nearly a 10% increase in new children served in the last five years. Locally, the Randolph Tucker Children's Advocacy Center saw 156 new children, which is 26% higher than last year.

Some of the highlights from the Randolph Tucker CAC's report includes:

- 56% of the children served were there because of allegations of sexual abuse
- 7% of the children served were there because of allegations of drug endangerment, 2.3 times higher than the national average
- 42% of the children served by CACs were between the ages of 7-12 years
- 96% of alleged offenders were someone the child knew
- 58% of children are reported to have one or more disabilities

Randolph Tucker CAC works with community partners to support healing and justice for children and families who have been victimized. This year we are working to improve how we collect data regarding the impact of addiction so we can expand our support and response to this epidemic.

The report includes data on victim demographics, alleged offender demographics, reported vs. disclosed abuse, ser-

vices performed, criminal justice response, and CAC income budget breakdown. The full statewide data report can be found at <https://wvcn.org/about/media/>.

Randolph Tucker Children's Advocacy Center. Empowering children. Restoring hope. Ending abuse.

West Virginia Child Advocacy Network (WVCAN) provides statewide leadership in the fight against child abuse while working side-by-side with the 21 Child Advocacy Centers throughout the state. WVCAN provides training, technical assistance, leadership, legislative and policy advocacy, and overall coordination to Child Advocacy Centers around the state. A CAC is a child-friendly facility in which child protection, criminal justice, and child treatment professionals work together to investigate abuse, hold offenders accountable, and help children heal. Rather than having a child taken from

agency to agency to endure multiple interviews, the CAC model coordinated the response around the child for an effective, child-centered, healing process. As the statewide authority on multidisciplinary approaches to supporting child victims of abuse, WVCAN's purpose is to empower local communities to provide comprehensive, coordinated, and compassionate services to victims of child abuse.

This document was prepared under a grant from the West Virginia Division of Administrative Services, Justice & Community Services Section. Points of view or opinions expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the State of West Virginia Division of Administrative Services, Justice & Community Services Section or any entity of the Department of Justice.

State Foresters battled over 32,000 acres of wildfire this fall fire season

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – A very active 2023 fall fire season came to a close on Dec. 31, the West Virginia Division of Forestry (WVDOF) announced today, with 323 wildfires across the state.

This fall, the top three causes of wildfires were debris burning, arson, and equipment and vehicle use.

"Debris-burning fires accounted for 34% of the total fires, consuming over 4,400 acres due to windy conditions, inadequate precautions, and being left unattended," Jeremy Jones, Director/State Forester said. "The reasons for our precautions and rules become evident in these incidents. West Virginia maintains strict forest fire laws to protect our invaluable forests, which are among the world's most cherished resources."

One thing to remember to keep a fire from escaping is to keep brush piles small and manageable. A 10-foot safety strip of non-flammable materials is an

essential line of defense when conducting a controlled burn to give a buffer that allows control of the fire. Fires should always be supervised.

Arson fires are fires that have been intentionally set by an individual or group. This fall, arson fires accounted for 23% of the total fires (73 total) and consumed over 11,300+ acres.

"The problem with incendiary fires is that they are dangerous and destructive. They are set intentionally for many reasons, putting our firefighters in harm's way," said Jones. "Our goal is always to make sure our firefighters are safe."

Fires caused by equipment use can include machinery that sparks a fire while doing something unrelated. This was responsible for 12% (37 total) of all fires, torching 567 acres. Many of these fires happen in conditions where little rain has happened over a long period of time, the ground and leaf litter are dry

and the relative humidity is low.

Besides these top three causes, other common causes of fires include downed power lines, electric fences, structures that were on fire that spread to the forest, campfires, mining (underground coal fires), fires set by minors and fireworks. The public is always encouraged to be vigilant when burning at all times.

Fall fire season concluded on Dec. 31, but the Division of Forestry continues to ask the public to be aware of burning as the winter season weather is still unpredictable.

To ensure the safety of our state forests, we ask the public to be aware of the general guidelines when burning.

General Burning Guidelines include:

- All fires must have a ring or safety strip that is 10 feet wide and made of

non-flammable materials.

- The safety strip must be cleared of burnable material and be at least 10 feet wide, fully encompassing the debris pile.

- Fire must be attended until completely extinguished.

- Only vegetative materials such as leaves, brush and yard clippings can be burnt.

- Fines for forest fires due to negligence range from \$100 to \$1,000, with an additional civil penalty of \$200.

The Division of Forestry protects nearly 12 million acres of forestland across West Virginia. For more information on fire safety and programs like forest legacy, logging and landowner assistance, visit wvforestry.com.



BINGO

at Parsons Volunteer Fire Department

SATURDAY, JAN. 13

**First 30 Players
in the door a
chance at
\$50 Cash**

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Jackpot
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**Progressive
Co. 10
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Tip games will be available when the doors open at 6:00

*Tip Board on a 243 Ruger American.
Only 100 pulls sold. You must purchase a bingo
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TUCKER COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER

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SPORTS

TUCKER COUNTY BOYS PICK UP WINS AT MOOREFIELD, EAST HARDY

By Dave Helmick
TuckerCountySports.Com

MOOREFIELD – The Mt. Lions Boys’ Basketball team traveled to Moorefield on Tuesday January 2nd. Tucker County rallied in the fourth quarter to take home the victory by the final score of 59-47.

The Mt. Lions controlled the first quarter as they led Moorefield after one quarter 14-10. The second quarter was even as Tucker County edged the Yellowjackets 14-12 to give the visiting Mt. Lions the lead at halftime 28-22.

Moorefield then fought back in the third quarter as they outscored Tucker County 15-8 to take a slim lead over the Mt. Lions at the end of the third quarter 37-36. In the fourth quarter Tucker County responded as they regained the lead and raced past the Yellowjackets for a 23-10 advantage in the final quarter. This would give the Mt. Lions the comeback victory with the final score of 59-47.

Ethan Rosenau led the Mt. Lions with 26 points and Owen Knotts added 12 points for Tucker County. Maddox Anderson chipped in with 10 points, 4 assists. Ashton Lycliter pulled down a team high 14 rebounds for the Mt. Lions. The Tucker County JV team got the win over Moorefield 58-25.

BAKER – Tucker County took to the road for a key Sectional matchup at East Hardy on Friday January 5th. The Mt. Lions surged ahead in the second quarter and never looked back as they cruised to a 70-49 road victory.

Tucker County started the game well as they led after one quarter 17-9. The second quarter belonged to the visiting Mt. Lions as they outscored the Cougars 17-9 to take a 34-18 halftime lead.

Tucker County also controlled the third quarter as they outpaced East Hardy 19-17 to give the Mt. Lions a 53-35 advantage at the end of the third quarter. In the fourth quarter Tucker County edged the Cougars 17-14 to give the Mt. Lions the road win over East Hardy 70-49.

Tucker County was led in scoring by Ethan Rosenau with 18 points, 7 rebounds and Trevan Bonner had 17 points for the Mt. Lions. Owen Knotts added 12 points for Tucker County and Maddox Anderson dished out 11 assists in the win for the Mt. Lions. The Tucker County JV team also won 71-35.

Tucker County(6-2) will return to action on Friday and Saturday January 12th and 13th at the Tyler Consolidated Tournament. For more info go to TuckerCountySports.Com.



Tucker County's Ethan Rosenau takes a shot in a recent game. Photo by Brittany Channell.

LADY MT. LIONS RUN BY MOOREFIELD AT HOME FOR A 67-43 WIN

By Chris George
TuckerCountySports.Com

HAMBLETON – The Tucker County Girls’ Basketball team hosted Moorefield on Friday January 5th. The Lady Mt. Lions jumped out to a quick start and never looked back as they got the win by a final score of 67-43.

In the first quarter Tucker County exploded for 20 points and held the Lady Yellowjackets to 6 points as the score was 20-6 Lady Mt. Lions after one. The second quarter would belong to Tucker County as well as the Lady Mt. Lions outscored Moorefield 15-12 in the second to make the halftime score 35-18 Tucker County.

The Lady Mt. Lions defense stepped up again in the third quarter as they held the visiting Lady Yellowjackets to 7 points. Tucker County's offense also scored 16 points in the third to build

the Lady Mt. Lions lead to 51-25. In the final quarter Moorefield outscored Tucker County slightly 18-16. This would put the final score to 67-43 Lady Mt. Lions.

Tucker County was led in scoring by Macy Helmick with 15 points, 5 rebounds, 6 assists and Brylee Wetzel finished with 14 points. Raven Matthews added 13 points, 13 rebounds for the Lady Mt. Lions in the win. The JV team got the win also 51-33.

Tucker County(6-2) will return to action tonight, Wednesday January 10th at Tygarts Valley. The Lady Mt. Lions will then travel to Charleston Catholic for a varsity only game on Friday January 12th. Tucker County will then play another varsity only game against Tug Valley at Charleston Catholic on Saturday January 13th at 3pm. For more info go to TuckerCountySports.Com.



Tucker County's Macy Helmick takes a shot against Moorefield on Jan. 5th. The Lady Mt. Lions got the win over Moorefield 67-43. Photo by Becky Moore.



Brylee Wetzel of the Lady Mt. Lions attempts to shoot the ball against the Moorefield defenders on Jan. 5th. Tucker County won the game against the Lady Yellowjackets 67-43. Photo by Becky Moore.

AREA SCHEDULE:

Wednesday January 10th
Tucker County Girls’ Basketball @ Tygarts Valley 5:45pm
Tucker Valley Girls’ & Boys’ Basketball @ East Preston 5:45pm
Thursday January 11th
Davis-Thomas Girls’ & Boys’ Basketball vs Moorefield@ Home 5pm
Friday January 12th
Tucker County Girls’ Basketball @ Charleston Catholic(Varsity only) 7pm
Tucker County Boys’ Basketball @ Tyler Consol. Tournament - TBA
Saturday January 13th
Tucker County Girls’ Basketball vs

Tug Valley(Varsity only) @ Ch Catholic 3pm
Tucker County Boys’ Basketball @ Tyler Consol. Tournament - TBA
Tucker Valley Girls’ & Boys’ Basketball vs Davis-Thomas @ TCHS 1pm
Davis-Thomas Girls’ & Boys’ Basketball vs Tucker Valley @ TCHS 1pm
Monday January 15th
Tucker Valley Boys’ Basketball vs Tygarts Valley @ Home 5:45pm
Tuesday January 16th
Tucker County Girls’ Basketball vs Pendleton County @ Home 5:45pm
Davis-Thomas Girls’ & Boys’ Basketball @ Belington 5pm

THANK YOU FOR READING

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Good Luck!

Tucker County High Mt. Lions
Tucker Valley Wildcats
Davis Thomas Bears



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Five Rivers Public Library Newsletter

301 Walnut St. Parsons WV 26287
 Nancy L. Moore, Director
 Kathy Phillips, Assistant
 Angela Johnson & Lynnette Adams, Staff
 Phone/Fax 304-478-3880
<https://fiverivers.wvlibrary.info> ~ help@fiverivers.wvlibrary.info
 Fall & Winter Hours, Sept. - May
 Monday 8:30 a - 6:30 p
 Tuesday – Friday...8:30 a - 5:00 p
 Saturday9:00 a - Noon

January Happenings
 15 – Closed - Martin Luther King Jr. Day
 16 & 17 (possibly the 18)– Closed – Replace Carpet
 16 – Book Club Discussion @ 1:30 p.m.
 23 – Library Board Meeting @ 5:00 p.m. (Open meeting)
Book Donors
 Debbie Gutshall; Sherry Burns; Becky Arbogast; & Sarah Bowley.
 Book Club Discussion Group Meets monthly at the library, the third Tuesday, at 1:30 p.m. Book for January 16th is We Bought a Zoo by Benjamin Mee.
 There will be no Toddler Time classes in

the month of January. They will start again February 7th on Wednesday mornings at 10:00 a.m.
 February, March and April, Wednesday mornings at 10:00 a.m.
 No county school, no Toddler Time.
 Movie Day Monday - February 12th – The Old Way - Two showings 1:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. Rated R. Snack & Drinks Provided Free Community Event
 Five Rivers Public Library is a member of WV Library Network covering 37 counties and 110 Library Locations.
 Need assistance downloading your e-book? Check with Library staff for assistance. Do you have an E-Book reader or other device? Check out WV READS for Free E-Books, Audio Books and e-magazines. Library web site <https://fiverivers.wvlibrary.info> Link <https://wvreads.overdrive.com/>
 Got a Cell Phone? Never Lose your Library Card! Now available by using a mobile app on your phone. (Search loyalty on your app store, gives you a few options). Download App and scan your library card. *Please present your library card on your phone.

Treasurer Moore Announces 17th Annual SMART529 ‘When I Grow Up’ Statewide Essay Contest

Entries must be submitted by Friday, Feb. 23, 2024, to qualify.
 MORGANTOWN, W.Va. – State Treasurer Riley Moore yesterday kicked off the statewide 2024 SMART529 “When I Grow Up” student and teacher essay contest at Mountainview Elementary School in Morgantown.
 The annual essay contest gives students the chance to win up to \$5,000 in SMART529 savings for higher education. Teachers have an opportunity to win a \$2,500 cash prize.
 “The goal of our contest is to inspire children to begin thinking about potential career opportunities and explore how they can achieve their dreams by attending college or a trade school,” Treasurer Moore said. “Last year, more than 3,000 students from across the state participated in the contest, working with their families and educators to discover job pathways that spark their interests and can lead them to a fulfilling future career.”
 In its 17th year, the SMART529 When I Grow Up essay contest gives kindergarten through fifth-grade students a chance to win both SMART529 savings for higher education and cash prizes for their schools. Essay entries will be judged among five regions in three age groups (K-1, 2-3, 4-5), making for a total of 15 regional winners.
 The regional breakdown is as follows:
 • Region I – Beckley/Bluefield area
 • Region II – Charleston/Huntington area
 • Region III – Clarksburg/Weston area
 • Region IV – Martinsburg area
 • Region V – Wheeling area
 The 15 winners will be awarded \$500 invested into SMART529 college savings accounts. Out of the regional winners, one grand prize winner will be randomly selected to receive a total of \$5,000 toward a SMART529 account during an awards ceremony this fall at the state Culture Center in Charleston. Each winner’s school will also receive a \$500 cash award.
 Teachers of grades kindergarten through fifth also have the opportunity to compete in the teacher portion of the essay contest. This year’s winning teacher will receive a \$2,500 cash prize.
 The SMART529 When I Grow Up essay contest allows students to submit, in 200 words or less, an essay that explains what they want to be when they grow up. Entries will be judged on originality, creativity and the importance of post-secondary education.
 Entry forms for both students and teachers are available at www.SMART529.com. In addition, entry forms will be available at elementary schools throughout the state. The deadline for entry forms and essay submissions is Friday, February 23, 2024.
 SMART529 is a qualified tuition program 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.

Drive to Survive this Winter Season

Tips and suggestions to help motorists stay safe on slippery roads
 According to research by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, about 46 percent of all crashes involving bad weather take place during the winter. Winter storms, bad weather, and sloppy road conditions are a factor in nearly half a million crashes and more than 2,000 road deaths every year. And December through March can be an especially busy time for dead batteries, flat tires, and vehicle extractions. With inclement weather in the forecast, AAA East Central advises motorists to take precautions to avoid deadly crashes and reach their destination safely.
 “Preventative steps today can go a long way tomorrow,” says Terri Rae Anthony, safety advisor, AAA East Central. “Weather conditions that lead to black ice, heavy snow, and other rough driving conditions are particularly dangerous this time of year.”
 AAA East Central offers the following tips for driving in winter weather:
 • Stay Home. If the weather forecast is precarious and you don’t have to be anywhere, this is the number one way to avoid a crash in the winter.
 • Leave Early. Running late to work leads to anxiety which can cloud judgment and possibly lead to risky driving behaviors.
 • Slow down. Accelerate, turn, and brake as gradually and smoothly as possible. This will help maintain control in rough conditions.
 • Don’t tailgate. Normal following distances of three to four seconds on dry pavement should be extended to a minimum of five to six seconds when driving on slippery surfaces. The extra time will provide additional braking room should a sudden stop become necessary.
 • Never use cruise control on slippery roads. If a vehicle hydroplanes or skids, motorists will lose the ability to regain some traction simply by lifting off the accelerator. It will be harder to recover from the

loss of traction if cruise control is active.
 • If a car begins to skid, continue to steer in the direction you want the car to go.
 To prepare a vehicle for the winter ahead, AAA recommends the following tips:
 • Have the vehicle’s battery tested. This is the number one call that AAA receives in the wintertime. If a battery is more than two years old, it should be tested.
 • Replace worn windshield-wiper blades. The blades should completely clear the glass with each swipe and should be replaced if they leave streaks or miss spots. Consider installing winter wiper blades that wrap the blade frame in a rubber boot to reduce ice and snow buildup.
 • Use the right washer fluid. Fill the windshield washer fluid reservoir with a winter clean-

ing solution that has antifreeze components to prevent it from freezing.
 • Inspect tires. Make sure tires have adequate tread depth – at least 4/32” – as worn tires can affect a motorist’s ability to stop in slick conditions. An easy way to check for wear is by inserting a quarter into the tread groove. If the top of Washington’s head is exposed, the tread depth is less than 4/32” and it’s time to replace tires. Also, check that the vehicle has a spare tire and keep it properly inflated. In harsh winter climates, a set of snow tires may be a wise investment.
 • Carry an emergency kit equipped for winter weather. The kit should include sand or cat litter, a small shovel, flashlight, an ice scraper or snow brush, booster cables, a blanket, gloves or mittens and flares or reflective triangles.

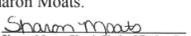
LEGAL

I have before me the accounts of the Executor or Administrator of the estates of the following deceased persons:

Deceased	Personal Representative(s)
Eric Glenn Poling	Ashleigh Sweeney
1st publication 1/10/24	9294 Rixeyville Rd.
2nd publication 1/17/24	Culpepper, VA 22701
Bearldean J. Evans	Richard Evans
1st publication 1/10/24	163 Jobs Run Rd.
2nd publication 1/17/24	Kerens, WV 26276

 Claims against any estate must be filed within sixty days of the date of first publication. Any person seeking to impeach or establish a will must make a complaint to the Tucker County Commission, Tucker County Clerk, 211 First St., Suite 205, Parsons, WV. Any person objecting to the qualifications of the personal representative or the venue or jurisdiction of the court must be filed with County Commission within sixty days after the date of first publication or thirty days of service of the notice, whichever is later.
 ATTEST: SHERRY SIMMONS, TUCKER COUNTY CLERK

LEGAL

IN THE FAMILY COURT OF TUCKER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA
IN RE:
The Marriage of:
Roberta Alderman and Christopher Alderman
Petitioner Respondent
Civil Action No. 24-D-1
ORDER OF PUBLICATION
THE OBJECT OF THIS SUIT IS TO OBTAIN A DIVORCE. THIS IS A PUBLICATION BY CLASS II LEGAL ADVERTISEMENT. To the Above-Named Respondent:
 It appearing by affidavit filed in this action that Christopher Alderman is a non-resident of the State of West Virginia or has an unknown address. It is hereby ordered that Christopher Alderman serve upon the Circuit Clerk’s Office, whose address is 211 First Street, Suite 403, Parsons, WV 26287, an Answer, including any related counterclaim or defense you may have to the Petition For Divorce filed in this action on or before February 3, 2024. If you fail to Answer the Petition for Divorce, a judgment may be taken against you for the relief demanded in the Petition.
 A copy of said Petition can be obtained from the undersigned Clerk’s Office.
 Entered by the Clerk of said Court Sharon Moats.

 Sharon Moats, Circuit Clerk of Tucker Co.



Tygart Valley Orthopedics and Sports Medicine of Davis Medical Center celebrated achievement of the Joint Commission Gold Seal of Approval for Hip and Knee Joint Replacement. A multi-disciplinary team contributed to the intensive application and survey process. This national, voluntary distinction is earned by only a select set of healthcare providers.

Orthopedic Program achieves Gold Seal of Approval

Elkins, WV – Tygart Valley Orthopedics and Sports Medicine of Davis Medical Center has achieved the Gold Seal of Approval® from the Joint Commission. The Certificates of Distinction for Joint Replacement Hip and Knee demonstrates commitment to the highest-level care and safety for patients.
 “The patient is at the center of what we do,” said Orthopedic Surgeon Richard “Rhett” Topping, M.D. “We evaluate and treat each patient as an individual while adhering to strict national standards to ensure the best outcomes.”
 To achieve the distinction, the program underwent rigorous on-site review processes and evaluated compliance with disease-specific care standards for total hip and knee replacement.
 “Performance measures are used to assess and compare our quality and safety in areas like early mobilization, return to surgery and postoperative infections,” Topping added. “We have long reported among the highest quality and safety rankings in the state. The Certificates of Distinction validate that our patients receive the highest level of quality care and orthopedic expertise when undergoing total hip or knee replacement.”
 A multi-disciplinary team coordinated the application for certification.
 “Successful certification requires intense data collection and analysis of processes related to all aspects of joint replacement care,” said Julie Fleming, P.T.
 Fleming, who lead the certification process, said the team was comprised of individuals from nursing, orthopedic surgeons, administration, quality and risk management, clinical directors, inpatient and surgical services directors, case management, preadmissions, nursing education, dietitians, physical therapy, infection prevention, and anesthesiology.
 “A multi-disciplinary approach to joint replacement ensures better outcomes for our patients,” Fleming added. “Fewer complications, better pain management, and a comprehensive discharge and therapy plan aids in patient recovery and their return to an active lifestyle.”
 “We are extremely proud of this achievement,” Julie Phillips, Davis Health System Director of Quality and Risk Management said. “This is a nationally recognized distinction that shows our commitment to holding ourselves to a high bar for our patients.”

WVDEP accepting applications for 2024 teacher awards

Agency to honor top environmental educators
 CHARLESTON, WV – The West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection’s (WVDEP) Rehabilitation Environmental Action Plan (REAP) is accepting applications for the 2024 Make It Shine Environmental Teacher of the Year awards. The deadline to submit an application is February 14, 2024.
 Winners will be chosen on the elementary, middle and high school levels, with each winner receiving a \$500 personal award, plus a \$1,000 award to be used in promoting STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and math) programs at their school.
 Educators eligible for nomination must teach either full-time or part-time, or volunteer in a classroom setting in a West Virginia public, private or charter school and have had their program established for at least one year. Teachers can be nominated by themselves, colleagues, principals, students, or anyone familiar with their environmental program.
 Awards will be presented to educators who have demonstrated exemplary environmental leadership through the creation of lesson plans, implementation of school programs, or participation in activities that promote environmental stewardship.
 The 2023 Environmental Teachers of the Year were:
 • Tiffany Pace, Cross Lanes Elementary, Kanawha County
 • Amelia Mullens, Barrackville Middle School, Marion County
 • Renee Haines, Martinsburg High School, Berkeley County
 To nominate yourself or a fellow educator for the 2024 awards, applications are available at: <https://dep.wv.gov>. Type in “Make It Shine” in the search bar.
 For more information, contact Annette Hoskins at: Annette.L.Hoskins@wv.gov or call 304-926-0499 ext. 49759.
 REAP’s motto is “Keeping West Virginia Clean and Green.” It was created in 2005 and strives to clean up West Virginia and rid the state of litter. The program empowers citizens to take ownership of their communities by providing technical, financial and resource assistance in cleanup and recycling efforts. Make It Shine is a program under REAP that focuses on volunteer cleanup efforts and rewards towns and cities for proactive approaches to keeping their communities clean.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF WEST VIRGINIA CHARLESTON

CASE NO. 23-0843-G-PC
 HOPE GAS, INC., STANDARD GAS COMPANY and BAZZLE GAS COMPANY, INC.
 Joint petition for consent and approval for Hope Gas, Inc. to acquire Standard Gas Company and Bazzle Gas Company, Inc.
NOTICE OF FILING
 On October 27, 2023, Hope Gas, Inc. (Hope), Standard Gas Company (Standard), and Bazzle Gas Company (Bazzle) (jointly, petitioners) filed with the Public Service Commission of West Virginia (Commission) a joint petition (Joint Petition) for Commission consent and approval of an acquisition transaction pursuant to which Hope would acquire certain assets of Standard and Bazzle used to provide gas utility service. Standard and Bazzle currently provide natural gas sales service to approximately 460 customers in Lewis and Braxton Counties, West Virginia.
 In the Joint Petition, Hope, Standard, and Bazzle assert that the acquisition transaction will have no adverse effect on their customers, other public utilities, or the public in general. Following the transaction, the assets acquired will be owned and operated by Hope, subject to the Commission’s continuing jurisdiction and regulation. From and after the closing of the acquisition, the Customers will become customers of Hope.
 Upon the closing of the Transaction, the Standard customers will continue to pay Standard’s existing base rates, purchased gas adjustment (PGA) rate, and a Legacy Surcharge rate increment, which surcharge equates to Hope’s pipeline replacement and expansion (PREP) rate increment, as they change from time to time. Consequently, at close, based on the current base, PGA and surcharge rates proposed, the average monthly bill impact for the Standard customers as a result of the Transaction will be as follows:

Type of Customer	(\$) Increase/(Decrease)	(%) Increase/(Decrease)
Residential	\$13.35	21.37%
Commercial	\$25.87	17.23%

 The Bazzle customers will pay Hope’s existing rates, PGA rate and the Legacy Surcharge, as they change from time to time. Consequently, at close, based on the current base, PGA and surcharge rates proposed, the average monthly bill impact for the Bazzle customers as a result of the Transaction will be as follows:

Type of Customer	(\$) Increase/(Decrease)	(%) Increase/(Decrease)
Residential	\$60.60	170.56%

 Hope proposes that the Standard customers will eventually pay the Hope base rates plus PGA rates and Legacy Surcharge as those rates change from time to time. If the Standard customers were immediately charged the Hope base rates, the current Hope PGA rate, and the current Legacy Surcharge rate, the average monthly bill impact for the Standard customers as a result of the transaction would be as follows:

Type of Customer	(\$) Increase/(Decrease)	(%) Increase/(Decrease)
Residential	\$28.79	46.08%
Commercial	\$64.85	43.19%

 The Commission schedules this matter for evidentiary hearing to be held on February 21, 2024, at 9:30 a.m. and continuing to February 22, 2024, if necessary, in the Howard M. Cunningham Hearing Room, Public Service Commission Building, 201 Brooks Street, Charleston, West Virginia. Interested persons should be able to view the evidentiary hearing via an internet livestream. In lieu of an in-person public comment hearing, the Commission will receive public comments online and by mail or hand delivery to the Executive Secretary’s Office. All written comments should state the case name and number and be addressed to Karen Buckley, Executive Secretary, P.O. Box 812, Charleston, West Virginia 25323. The Commission website, www.psc.state.wv.us, contains links to “Case Information,” “Submit a Comment,” and “Commission Webcast.”
 The Joint Petition is on file with and available for public inspection at the Commission, 201 Brooks Street, Charleston, West Virginia, and is available online at the Commission website (www.psc.state.wv.us). Anyone desiring to intervene or protest should file a written request to intervene or protest no later than thirty (30) days following the date of this notice, unless such period is otherwise modified by Commission Order. Failure to timely intervene or protest can affect your right to participate in or protest aspects of this proceeding. All requests to intervene or protest should briefly state the reason for the request to intervene or protest and comply with the rules set forth in the Commission’s Rules of Practice and Procedure. All requests to intervene and protests should state the case name and number and be addressed to the Executive Secretary at the address listed above.
 In the absence of substantial protest received within thirty (30) days of the issuance of this notice, the Commission may waive formal hearing and grant the Joint Petition based on the Commission’s review of the evidence submitted with the Joint Petition.
 HOPE GAS, INC.
 STANDARD GAS COMPANY, and
 BAZZLE GAS COMPANY, INC.

WV Governor's Cup Race History: The Legendary Skiing of Canaan Valley

Over the years, the WV Governor's Cup Ski Race has played an important role in the ski history of Tucker County, WV. Considered the longest-running race throughout the southeast, for the past 3 years, it has also expanded to include snowboarding in addition to alpine and telemark skiing. Alpine Festival, Inc. a local non-profit that has been in charge of organizing the race over the years, will be presenting its 64th race in 2024. Hosted at Timberline Mountain from March 9th-10th, 2024, racers will have a chance to win some amazing prizes and only a select few will get their names placed on the infamous WV Governor's Cup Trophy. Presented at the awards ceremony, this trophy displays 1st place overall winners dating back to 1960 and can be viewed year-round at the Tucker County Visitor's Center.

To learn more about the local ski history, one may visit the WV Snow Sports Museum in Canaan Valley at its new location adjacent to the BFS gas station. At the museum, you have an opportunity to review artifacts of local ski history, including old ski gear, photos, and video; and discuss the history with local historians. Cary Reed, a local historian at the WV Snow Sports Museum won the Bob and Anita Barton Award in 1999. Reed, who has lived and skied in the valley for over 40 years, proudly displayed his award outside of the WV Snow Sports Museum at its new location in Canaan Valley.

According to John Lutz, a well known ski instructor and avid skier of the valley for over 50 years, "the Governor's Cup started with the Ski Club of Washington D.C. It had its first year of skiing in the 1953-1954 season. The first race was on Cabin Mountain, which was the Ski Club of Washington D.C ski area. This historic area is currently located at Canaan Resort. According to Lutz, "If you turn onto the access road to the Canaan Valley Ski area and look to your right, there is a ridge there. Cabin Mountain, It was there. That area was all cleared. There were no trees and the wind drifted snow into there. It got 15-30 ft. deep in there at times. It's directly across from the state park maintenance garage." Even to this day, there are ski runs at Canaan State Park named in its honor.

In addition to being a member of the Ski Club of Washington D.C, Bob Barton is also known for starting 2 commercial ski areas. Weiss Knob was first

opened in 1955 until 1958 and then he opened Weiss 2 in 1959. These ski areas have now become the Canaan State Park ski area and White Grass Ski area, respectively.

During the following season in 1954-1955 was the 1st annual Winter Carnival. It is said to have been a costumed event, following European custom.

In the 1955-1956 season, it is estimated that over 3000 people showed up for the Winter Carnival. "A lot of it was in Davis. Some of it was in Thomas and of course, the skiing in the Valley. They had polka dances and a crowned queen of the carnival. The crowning of a Winter Carnival queen was a practice that went into the early 80s. They had ice skating races, skiing events. I mean it was a true winter carnival. In 1956, that same year, Governor Marlin was here to present an award. So that's that I've known of a Governor being here for the races. But 3000 is a lot of people in Davis! A Lot of local people came just to watch, but the real core came from Washington, D.C. through the Ski Club of Washington D.C. In 1958, WV Governor Cecil Underwood proclaimed Ski Week in WV and he was the governor who was here to give the awards during the Winter Carnival. In Winter of 1961-1962, it was the last year that the Ski Club of Washington D.C. held races and they ceased to operate at Cabin Mountain. The reason that went under was because they had two rope tows there. During that 10 year time span when skiing started to grow, there were areas starting up closer to D.C. that had lifts and people wanted skiing in places like that rather than ski areas with a rope tow. So it had to do with progress pretty much," says Lutz.

Impressively, there have been several ski areas in Canaan Valley over the years:

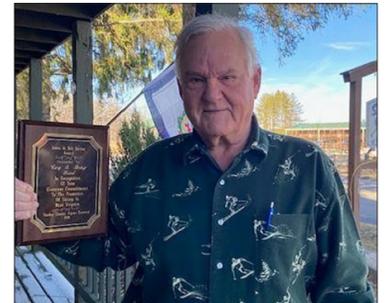
1. Cabin Mountain:(1951-1962) Started by the Ski Club of Washington, D.C. in an area that is currently in the Canaan Valley Resort area.
2. Weiss Knob: (1955-1959) Established by Bob Barton and located where the meadows are (currently known as the Canaan Valley Ski area)
3. Weiss 2: in 1959-?, established by Bob Barton after moving his previous location to where White Grass is located now.
4. Canaan State Park Ski Area (1971-present): the location of the old Cabin Mountain (near the Canaan



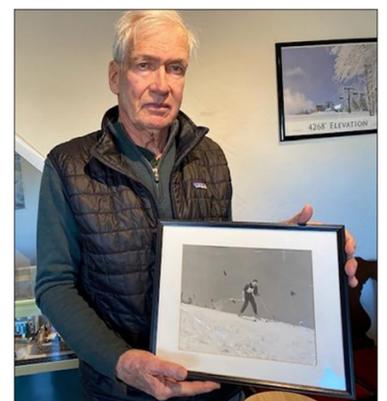
Parachuters at Weiss Knob 2, in the early 1960s.



During the WV Governor's Cup awards ceremony, the Bob and Anita Barton Award is also presented. Bob and his wife, Anita were leaders in the local ski industry in Canaan Valley during the early 1950s. Since the late 1980s, the Bob and Anita Barton Award has been presented in their honor at the end of the Governor's Cup award ceremony. "We try to recognize someone in the ski industry who has been influential. The winner is always a surprise and they can be from any WV ski resort, not just from Tucker County," says Jessica Waldo, board member of the Alpine Festival.



Long-time resident and ski historian Cary Reed displaying his Bob and Anita Barton Award received in 1999.



Local ski historian John Lutz holding a photo of Bob Barton skiing. At 6'8", Bob was impressive in height as well as in his impact with the development of the Canaan Valley's ski area.

Resort) and Weiss Knob ski area (Canaan State Park Ski Area)

5. White Grass (1979-present): the location of the old Weiss Knob
6. Timberline Ski Area (1982-present): developed by David Downs in 1982, then purchased by Dr. Reichle and family in 1985, and most recently purchased by the Perfect Family of Perfect North in 2019

A unique part of this area's history is the involvement of paratroopers in the U.S. Military. During 1963-1964, in conjunction with the Governor's Cup Event, U.S. paratroopers from the U.S. military raced on Weiss Knob 2. They were timed from the moment they jumped from the plane until they finished their ski race.

The history of skiing in West Virginia is certainly as vast as it is deep. Thanks to years of leadership in the ski industry-leaders such as Bob and Anita Barton, ski races, such as the WV Governor's Cup were able to develop into what they are today. For further information about skiing history in West Virginia, visit the WV Snowsport Museum at its current location in Canaan Valley next to the BFS gas station during its business hours or check out its website: (add link: snowsportsmuseumwv.org)

Thank you to John Lutz and Cary Reed from the WV Snow Sports Museum for sharing your ski knowledge!

To learn more information and to register for the 64th WV Governor's Cup Ski Race on March 9-10, 2024, visit (enter website link: <https://www.skisignup.com/Race/WV/Davis/GovernorsCupSkiRace>).



Cary Reed, (left) and John Lutz, (right) sharing memorabilia at the WV Snow Sports Museum.

Please note that this event will be online registration only! Online registration will open from February 1st, 2024 until March 8, 2024, at 9:00 pm. Registration will close at 250 participants so register early!

Note: This article was written by WV AmeriCorps AFNHA Member, Kristin Winebrenner (Serving with Alpine Festival and ArtSpring, 2022-2024). For more information about AFNHA AmeriCorps and its affiliated service sites, visit, (insert Link: <https://www.appalachian-foresthna.org/>).

SILENT AUCTION ART SHOW SAT JAN 13 & SUN JAN 14, 2024 1:00PM-4:00PM

RUDOLPH'S
300 EAST AVE
THOMAS, WV 26292

(FIRST STOREFRONT ON THOMAS MAIN STREET)

ARTWORKS BY LOCAL ARTISTS
INSPIRED BY THE SPECIAL PLACE
OF THE HIGH ALLEGHENIES!

(PAINTINGS, CERAMICS, BLOWN GLASS,
PHOTOGRAPHY, COLLAGES, METAL ART,
& FIBER ART)



GO-NORTH-CORRIDORH.ORG/EVENTS



STAINED PAPER COLLAGE BY CAROLYN CAVENDISH

RAISING FUNDS FOR THE CORRIDOR H
GO NORTH CAMPAIGN!

(TO DEFRAY COSTS OF RESEARCH/REPORTS FROM FIELD EXPERTS)

LIVE MUSIC & REFRESHMENTS!

TUCKER COUNTY LANDFILL 2024 FREE DAY SCHEDULE

The Tucker County Solid Waste Authority has established the first Thursday of each month as "Free Day" at the Tucker County Landfill. Disposal of up to one pick-up truck load (maximum weight of 516 pounds) of household residential waste is free of all charges to WV residents at the Tucker County Landfill on the first Thursday of each month during the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

If the first Thursday falls on a holiday, the following Thursday is designated as "Free Day". Any persons who is not a resident of West Virginia may only participate in the monthly free day upon proof that his or her state of residence would likewise allow West Virginia residents to dispose of residential solid waste in the same or substantially similar manner.

The schedule for 2024 is as follows:

January 4	April 4	July 11	October 3
February 1	May 2	August 1	November 7
March 7	June 6	September 5	December 5

For a complete copy of the "Free Day" policies, contact the Tucker County Landfill at (304) 259-4867.

This Week's Submitted Photos



The photo of the week is a utility, in Thomas, submitted by Beverly Ellison