



Clay County Free Press

Home of the Clay County Golden Delicious Apple



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Clay County Commission approves funds for Christmas Tree

By Gary Lee Stuber

The first summer meeting of the Clay County Commission was short and sweet. It was also the first time that only one member of the commission was present in person. Commissioner President Joyce Johnson was the only one physically present. Commissioners Connie Kinder and David Schoolcraft attended via phone. The commission went down a small list of routine business of bills, purchase orders, and last wills and testaments, and finished in 30 minutes so they could adjourn for an executive hearing for an estate hearing on Correna Ann Schoonover. Commissioner Johnson also read a note from Terry Martin that relayed he had applied for \$975,000 for the Nebo Water project that had been greenlit. But in the middle of the routine business there was a small gem.

Cassie Boggs came before the commission for a \$5,000 request for a 16-foot commercial Christmas Tree for the Courthouse outside property for the Christmas season. Christmas for some years now have been without the Christmas Trees that used to stand on the water fountain base. Cassie and her local Girl Scout troop imagined a yearly Christmas Tree lighting of this attractive 16-foot commercial tree that could be stored locally between the holidays. It comes with a wide sandbag stand that keeps it upright. She imagines a tree-lighting ceremony that would give local children cookies and hot chocolate.

"I have always loved Christmas," she says, "but the Christmas Tree here at the Courthouse has been somewhat disappointing the last few years. The local Girl Scouts have tried to help over the last few years without success." Her name has been on the agenda several times this year for this proposal. "I was determined to get something done this year for the Girl Scouts." The event would even invite carolers and choruses to sing Christmas music. It would add a sorely needed event to the holiday season. It would also provide an inspiring seasonal attraction to the town of Clay."

The town of Clay often has its own



Cassie Boggs

children's Christmas event somewhere around the second week of December. This would only add an attraction.

After some discussion about where the off-season tree would be stored, the Commission gave her troop the money to purchase the tree for the county. Funding would come from the ARP Funds and stored by the county, either at Two-Run or at the Maysel County Park. It would be able to be disassembled and reassembled upon demand. This also gives the local scouts a sorely needed seasonal project. The local Boy Scout troops always do the Veterans Day Dinner and now the Girl Scouts have a seasonal event as well.

Cassie was hoping that she could get local businesses and vendors to help purchase the decorations to cover such a massive tree. Cassie is hoping to have the tree lighting ceremony the last Saturday in November, giving a full month of joy for Clay County children to enjoy the sight.

"The town always waits until halfway through the month for their Christmas event. I think it only robs the town of a half-month of Christmas celebration."

Board of Education holds June meeting



Board Members attending this meeting (seated left to right) were David Pierson, member; Susan Bodkins, member; Philip Dobbins, Superintendent; Phoebe Nichols, President; Brook Jones, Vice President and Lolita Nutter, member.

By Gary Lee Stuber

Personnel changes were the largest part of the first June Clay County Board of Education meeting, but before any of the meat of the meeting could be served, Kelly Duffield and her three partners, Amanda Jackson, Jackie James, and Andrea Helmick gave the board a presentation and summary of their first year of their three-year grant for "Stronger Connections Family Engagement" Program. All four women gave stirring accounts of the effectiveness of the program that is designed to get families engaged with their Clay County students.

In addition to the seasonal family events, some of the activities were personal, involving mentorship and personal involvement to inspire students. Several of the stories related were for students who were skipping a lot of school, or had personal problems engaging with school. Individual attention given to these students helped turn their lives around. Clay County already has a low drop-out rate, this program enhances attendance among enrolled students in the Clay County School System.

Superintendent Philip Dobbins, before explaining why they added new personnel for next year, also reported on the first successful day of transferring equipment from the H.E. White School to the Clay County Elementary. That

first day was concentrating on moving big items, like kitchen equipment, tables, desks and more. They got unexpected but welcomed help from CMI2 who sent eight men, two trucks, and a trailer at no expense to the school. He relayed that the teachers had done a great job of packing up books and support materials and that they were labeled and ready to be moved. They are on a tight deadline as the property will revert to the original owner in another 30 days.

Superintendent Dobbins also explained that personnel changes were required after last month's changes because of seniority, some jobs were bumped. But in many cases, the people bumped, bid, and received better jobs in the system after getting notice. This left those bumped positions open again and needed refilling, so many of the personnel changes are as the result of that change.

New policies voted on during the meeting included a number change for Drivers Education from 4150 to 4170 (simply a number change). They also approved policy 5010 with the projected employment of two full time School Security Officers. They would be employed directly by the school and not by the Clay County Sheriff's office. Because of the passage of the levy they have the funds to pay a base salary of

BOARD cont. on page 3



Shelia Stone (left) and Joyce Johnson (right).

Remembering D-Day and those who fought there



Homer Legg, a hero, hasn't been forgotten. Suzie Legg photo

See story on Page 8

Summerfest in Clendenin

The Town of Clendenin presents Clendenin Summerfest on Saturday, Jun. 22 from 11 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Activities for the kids include a mobile gaming center, a petting zoo, and face painting. All day there will be craft and food vendors. For vendor booths, call 304-548-4192.

The schedule of events starts with

opening ceremonies at 11 a.m., followed by a 12 noon fashion show, Mason Adkins live at 1 p.m., Mother Nature Band Acoustic at 2 p.m., Criminal Supply Company at 3:30 p.m., Independent State at 5:30 p.m., and Rewind the Walkman from 7:30 to 9 p.m. The day ends with a fireworks display at 9:30 p.m.

CMI2 presents the Town of Clay Independence Day Celebration

For the second year, the Civil-Military Innovation Institute (CMI2) is teaming up with the Town of Clay for an Independence Day Celebration.

The 2024 celebration will begin at 4:00 p.m. (EDT) on Saturday, July 6, in downtown Clay and will include live entertainment, food vendors, and fireworks after dark.

"We are grateful to CMI2 for their partnership," said Mayor Jason Hubbard. "We look forward to this Independence Day Event as a testament to our shared commitment to celebrating our nation's freedom."

In 2022, CMI2 first invested in Clay County. Since then, the company has announced an expansion and moved to a larger area in Lizemores to establish a one-of-a-kind experimentation facility.

The facility benefits Soldiers and individuals developing defense and military technologies and offers hands-on, real-world training experiences for first responders.

"We are committed to Clay County and excited to partner with the Town of Clay on an Independence Day celebration again this year," said Dr. Zenovy Wozczuk, founder of CMI2. "The work we do throughout the country and the State of West Virginia, especially at our Adaptive Experimentation Facility at Fort Andrew in Lizemores, is a commitment to our warfighters to keep America the land of the free. It is fitting that we should all gather to celebrate America together."

The Town of Clay Independence Day Celebration presented by CMI2 is free to the public.

BOOKED



REGIONAL JAIL MUGSHOTS

BRAXTON COUNTY



Stephanie Cheyanne
Dunbar-Maze
Booked 6/13/24
Possession of meth



Aaron Joseph Fraley
Booked 6/13/24
Fraud access device, breaking and entering vehicle



Noah Keith Kushak
Booked 6/12/24
Home confinement violation



Everette Kurtis Meadows
Booked 6/11/24
Driving suspended, fleeing in vehicle, no insurance



Clyde Ellis Mollohan
Booked 6/15/24
Trespassing asked to leave



Michael Wayne White Jr.
Booked 6/16/24
DUI first offense, no operators, no proof of insurance, no proof of registration, defective equipment, failure to maintain control of vehicle

NICHOLAS COUNTY



Brett Wayne Altizer
Booked 6/14/24
Capias, stalking (harass/follow)



Raymond Glen Neil
Booked 6/12/24
Violation of bond

CLAY COUNTY



Frank Young
Booked 6/10/24
DOR/DUI



Tiffanie Danielle Stricker
Booked 6/15/24
Battery, burglary

Courthouse News

Friday, June 28th, 2024 Docket Schedule for Magistrate: Rider, Charles "Jeff"

09:00 AM, State v. Dustin Paul Hancock, Pre-Trial Hearing, Interference with officers or members and false information, Trespass on property other than structure or conveyance - after notice or exposing property

09:30 AM, State v. Patrick Craddock, Pre-Trial Hearing, Operators license - Driving while suspended or revoked for DUI, No proof of insurance, Operate motor vehicle exempted from registration requirements during prohibited hours

10:00 AM, State v. Eric Dale Smith, Pre-Trial Hearing, Driving while license revoked - DUI, Improper use of evidences of registration (misdemeanor), Unsafe and improperly equipped vehicles; applicability of article to farm and road equipment, Operation of vehicles with safety belts, Registration card to be signed, carried and exhibited on demand.(Regist. Unsigned), License to be carried and exhibited on demand

10:30 AM, State v. Richard Lee Bishop, Bench Trial, Improper use of evidences of registration, Improper MVI

10:30 AM, State v. Richard Lee Bishop, Bench Trial, Operators license - Driving while license suspended or revoked, Failure to maintain motor vehicle insurance

10:30 AM, State v. Richard Lee Bishop, Bench Trial, Operators license - Driving while license suspended or revoked, Failure to maintain motor vehicle insurance

11:00 AM, State v. Gary Buren Dodrill, Pre-Trial Hearing, Operators license - Driving while suspended or revoked for DUI, Operation without certificate of inspection or failure to produce certificate, No proof of insurance

11:15 AM, State v. Brittany Nicole Hannah, Status Hearing, Unsafe and improperly equipped vehicles; applicability of article to farm and road equipment (x3), No vehicle insurance, Consumption of alcoholic beverage in passenger area of motor vehicle on public highway, License to be carried and exhibited on demand, Driving a vehicle while in an impaired state, less than .15

01:00 PM, State v. James Keith Erskine, Pre-Trial Hearing, False report to officer

01:30 PM, State v. Adam A Jarrett, Bench Trial, Simple assault

02:00 PM, State v. Daniel Eugene Vaughan, Pre-Trial Hearing, Operators license - Driving while suspended or revoked for DUI, Unsafe and improperly equipped vehicles, Seat belt violation

PUBLIC NOTICES

Clay Roane Public Service District: Per motion passed on Feb. 15, 2024, the Board Meeting dates and times have changed to the following: Regular Board meetings shall be held each third Monday of every month at 6 p.m. via the online Zoom website. Except for the months of June, September, and December which will be held in person at the office of Clay Roane PSD, same date and time.

The Clay County Middle School afterschool program is still seeking donated sewing machines. If you have a working portable sewing machine that you no longer need and would like to donate to a beginning sewist, please drop it off at the Clay County Library earmarked for the CCMS sewing class. The manual would be great to have with the machine. Please, include your contact information. In the case that the class is too small for the number of machines that may be donated, leave a note saying what you want done with it. Thank you in advance for your support!

The Clay County WIC office located at 452 Main Street in Clay is open to serve the public every Monday and Wednesday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

OBITUARY

Charles William Sizemore, 89, formerly of Clay County, West Virginia went home to be with the Lord on November 19, 2023. He passed peacefully at his daughter Pam Naylor's home in Gold Canyon, Arizona. Born on, March 20, 1934, he was preceded in death by his beloved wife of 65 years, Elinor "Ilene" Moore Sizemore; granddaughter, Tracie Jan Naylor; parents Mark Sizemore and Ruth Edwards Sizemore; brother, Gordan Sizemore, sister, Geneva Sizemore; foster parents, William "Bill" Sizemore and Molly "Opal" Morton Sizemore; foster brothers and sisters; William "Billy" Sizemore, Olive "Rose" Sizemore Jones, Hayden "Skip" Sizemore, Margaret Opal Sizemore Belaire, Jerry Ryan Sizemore.

He is survived by his children; Pamela Sizemore Naylor (Kevin), Priscilla Sizemore Steele (David), Gregory Sizemore (Cheryl); grandchildren, Sara Naylor, Ryan Steele, Michelle Steele Lorts (Joseph), Kathy Sizemore, Nicole Sizemore Carson (Kevin), Scott Sizemore; great granddaughters Emilia Christine "Emi" Carson and Zeldia Isabelle "Izzie"; sister, Mildred Sizemore Maynard; foster brothers; Austin Sizemore (Joyce); Henry Sizemore (Sandy), Mitchel Sizemore (Kathy), Ray Sizemore (Ellen); brother in law, John Moore (Brenda) and many nieces and nephews.

Charles was a veteran of the US Army and served during the Korean Conflict in Germany on the Russian border as a tank commander. He was a member of the United Mine Workers Local 8843. After 44 years of service, he retired from the Cannelton Coal Company in 1980. He was a devoted member and previous Trustee of the Ida Missionary Baptist Church. He was a devoted and loving husband, father, grandfather, brother, uncle, and neighbor. His kind heart, gentleness and sense of humor will truly be missed.

A memorial service for both Charles and Ilene planned for June 22, 2024, at 11:00 am at Ida Missionary Baptist Church Bentree, West Virginia. Their ashes will be buried at the Ida Missionary Baptist Church Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, donations in Charles' memory may be made to the Ida Missionary Baptist Church, P.O. Box 8, Lizemores, WV 25125.

Online condolences may be sent to the family at www.carlwilsonfuneralhome.com Pennington Smith Funeral Home is honored to be serving the Sizemore Family.

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Puzzle Answers

Weekly SUDOKU

Answer

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

Super Crossword

Answers

A	N	A	N	I	A	S	A	M	A	A	S	P	A	B	H	O	R
V	A	L	E	R	I	E	L	O	B	I	C	E	N	E	A	L	E
I	F	T	H	E	R	E	W	E	R	E	M	A	R	C	L	U	E
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R	E	B	I	D	B	A	S	E	F	E	E	E	A	S	E	S	I
A	C	E	P	R	I	O	R	A	N	I	L						
W	H	A	T	C	O	U	L	D	T	H	E	Y	N	A	M	E	H
D	E	M	O	L	I	S	H	A	I	D	A	N	A	T	O	P	
A	L	I	N	E	H	U	M	T	I	L	E	X	L	U	T	H	O
T	O	N	G	A	O	B	I	T	T	E	A	R	H	O	L	E	
A	N	G	S	T	N	S	A	T	S	A	S	O	N	A	T	A	S

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A Peek Of Sunshine

By Joseph J. Mazzella

It was the last in a line of long, dreary, rainy days. I hadn't seen the sun come out for more than a few moments for the better part of the week. Being a light lover this had left me feeling tired, rundown, and a bit grumpy. Even though I don't usually pray about such things I asked God for just a peek of sunshine to brighten my day, warm my heart, and uplift my spirits.

I stopped by a local store to grab a bottle of vitamins. The line at the check out counter was four deep but I didn't mind. At least it was bright and dry inside the store. I chatted for a few minutes with a middle aged lady in front of me with a cart full of diapers. I didn't ask if she had a new baby at her age or was helping out a daughter or son with theirs, but her tired face looked like it had seen a few sleepless nights recently. When it was her turn she slowly pulled out some wadded, worn bills to pay for the diapers. She counted carefully and emptied out her wallet but was still about seventy cents short. I quickly grabbed my own wallet and threw a one dollar bill on top of hers. She turned her head and blessed me with a bright, beautiful, shining smile. She thanked me over and over again and I just smiled back and said: "You're welcome."

After she had left and I'd paid for my vitamins I walked outside. It had started to rain again but I didn't mind. I knew that God in His infinite Love had answered my prayer. I had wanted a peek of sunshine and that is what I'd gotten in her smile. I felt energized, full of love, and ready to enjoy the day. I realized too that the sunshine in a soul is even brighter than the sunshine in the sky.

Some days in this life we are the only peek of sunshine that a person might get. Don't keep yours hidden then. Let your love burn bright. Let God's light shine through you. Let the goodness of your soul glow through every smile you share and everything you do.

I'll Tell You When I've Had Enough

Dr. James L. Snyder

It was evening, and the day was just about over. The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and I were chilling in the living room, watching TV.

It is always lovely when the day ends, and you can relax. Doing nothing can become a habit.

I'm not sure what we were watching on TV; it really doesn't matter. What matters is that we were relaxing and enjoying the evening together. No appointments, no plans, just an evening of doing nothing. It's that kind of relaxing that I can't get enough of. It's too late to do anything, and it's too early to go to bed. What a wonderful scenario.

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage went out into the kitchen and then called me and said, "Do you think you've had enough ice cream for the day?"

I didn't know if it was a rhetorical question or she was setting me up for a trap. I've been set up before, and I'll never know when the next one will be. Anything with ice cream is worth the chance.

I cheerfully responded, "I'll tell you when I've had enough ice cream and I haven't had enough for today."

A soft voice from the kitchen area said, "Would you like me to bring you another bowl of ice cream?"

I responded, "That would be wonderful, and I sure would appreciate that."

I can never think of a time when I had too much ice cream. My mother often told me I had too much ice cream. But you know how mothers are? They don't always tell the truth.

When it comes to vegetables, I can have too much of that. I can have too much when it comes to other things as well. But who in their right mind could ever say they've had too much ice cream?

My mother once told me, "You should be eating more fruits instead of ice cream."

I responded, "Well then, get me some peach ice cream."

As I was growing up, all my mother wanted to do was feed me vegetables. It's not that I don't like vegetables, but there comes a time when I've had enough.

When I was young, my favorite Saturday morning cartoon was, Popeye the Sailor Man. As you know, Popeye is famous for eating spinach, which gave him all the energy and strength he needed.

One Saturday, as I was watching Popeye, my mother came in and said, "Oh, I see your watching Popeye the Sailor Man. Do you know he loves spinach? I think maybe you should start eating spinach like Popeye."

I looked at my mother seriously and said, "You do know that Popeye smoked a pipe. So if I eat his spinach do I also smoke his pipe?"

That was the last time my mother ever brought that subject up.

As a youngster, I mowed the grass for our neighbor next door, who had a tiny grocery shop. When I mowed the grass, I went into her little shop, and she gave me soda pop and my favorite ice cream cone.

She could've paid me money to mow the grass, but what value can you put on your favorite ice cream cone?

So when The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage asked me if I'd had enough ice cream, I cheerfully told her, "absolutely not". There is no way under the sun that I could ever have enough ice cream in one day.

If there ever comes a time when I answer my wife's question by saying, "Yes, my dear, I think I've had enough ice cream for today," you know I've lost my mind.

I've often wondered who invented ice cream. They sure have my approval. I think they did a wonderful thing to the human race by creating something as delicious as ice cream. Even to this day, I can't name all of the different flavors of ice cream.

My goal in life is to find all the different flavors of ice cream and sample each one for the world's record.

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage brought me a very nice bowl of ice cream. "Here you are, I hope this is enough ice cream for tonight."

I just smiled at her because I never think beyond the ice cream I'm eating at the time. I refuse to compromise that marvelous experience of eating ice cream by thinking of other things.

Then my wife said something rather strange. "Do you know," she said rather seriously, "that there is no ice cream in heaven?"

I chuckled as I ate another spoonful of ice cream. I looked at her and said, "That's why I'm trying to eat as much ice cream as I can now. I want to get my share of ice cream while I still have the opportunity."

While eating that ice cream I remembered a verse in the Bible. It caused me to think about some of my habits.

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Galatians 6:7-8).

Sometimes I want what I want when I want it. Usually, I don't give much thought to consequences.

I need to sharpen my focus on my spiritual life and trust God to lead me everyday.

Dr. James L. Snyder lives in Ocala, FL with the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. Telephone 1-352-216-3025, e-mail jamessnyder51@gmail.com, website www.jamessnyderministries.com

Senate passes Manchin bipartisan resolution to designate June 2024 as Great Outdoors Month

U.S. Senator Joe Manchin (I-WV), Chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, celebrated the Senate passage of his bipartisan resolution to designate June 2024 as Great Outdoors Month and recognize the economic growth, positive health outcomes and better quality of life provided by outdoor recreation. This bipartisan resolution also highlights the importance of ensuring access to outdoor recreation for all West Virginians and Americans for generations to come.

"Like so many of my fellow West Virginians, I enjoy fishing, hunting and exploring all that makes our great state Wild and Wonderful. I'm proud the Senate passed our bipartisan resolution to celebrate the great outdoors and all the ways it enhances our lives and communities," said Chairman Manchin. "As Chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, I will continue working with my colleagues on both sides of

the aisle to bolster outdoor recreation opportunities and ensure our public lands are protected for generations to come."

Senator Manchin has been a leader on legislation to increase outdoor recreational opportunities nationwide and to steward our public lands and National Parks. This includes shepherding the Great American Outdoors Act and the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act through the Senate. In this Congress, Senator Manchin introduced the bipartisan American's Outdoor Recreation Act of 2023 to improve outdoor recreation and spur economic growth in rural communities.

Senator Manchin was joined by Senators Steve Daines (R-MT), Gary Peters (D-MI), Angus King (I-ME), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Jon Tester (D-MT), John Hickenlooper (D-CO), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) and Roger Marshall (R-KS).

BOARD

Continued from Page 1



From left to right are Amanda Jackson, Jackie James, and Andrea Helmick.



Kelly Duffield gives her presentation.

\$46,000 plus benefits. The bidding will go out soon and any former or retired officer in good standing is eligible for employment. The Board also passed policy 5070 regarding Maintenance of Personnel Records and Access. These policies were a first read-first vote and are on a public comment period. You can find them at the BOE website.

The BOE also extended contracts for three people for the Summer Season, June 13 through July 25. These include Eric Legg as the WV Guideposts to Graduation (GtG) Work Exploration and Transition Coach. Following this Summer School job, Eric moves on to the Roane County School system. Kathleen Linkinogger will be the Speech Pathologist for ESY and Sandra Potasnik as Autism Mentor Personal Care Aid - Extended Year Services.

The BOE approved the professional probationary contract for Christina Belt for the 2024-2025 school year and two probationary service contracts for Joseph Fitzwater and Ethan Hacker for the 2024-2025 school year.

And the following were employed, pending meeting successful drug test, background check, testing and training: Sharina Ratliff as Itinerant Elementary Guidance Counselor at Big Otter and Clay Elementary school; Tina Burnette as Director, Elementary Education/Special Education; Justin Holcomb as Head Boys Basketball Coach for Clay High School; Danielle Champ as Head Volleyball Coach at Clay High

School; Caitlyn Holcomb as Kindergarten Teacher, Clay Elementary School; Hannah Hannah as First Grade Teacher, Clay Elementary School; Samantha Holcomb as Third Grade Teacher, Clay Elementary School; Stephanie Gauding as Fourth Grade Teacher, Clay Elementary School; Corey Stricker as Fifth Grade Teacher, Clay Elementary School; Elizabeth Rhodes as Resource Teacher, Clay Elementary School; Isaac Casto (Fourth Grade) and Lori Ray (Fifth Grade) Multi-categorical/Autism/Resource teachers at Clay Elementary School; Amy Nichols as Title I Interventionist, Clay Elementary School; Linda Kay Miller as Kindergarten ECCAT Aide, Clay Elementary School; Amber Wilmoth as First Grade ECCAT Aide, Clay Elementary School; Edna Belt and Sandra Potasnik as Second Grade ECCAT Aides, Clay Elementary School; Tasha McDonough, Cynthia Karen Varney, Michelle Ramsey, Elise Peters and Sonya Williams as Autism Mentor Aides, Clay Elementary School; Loretta Triplett as Second Grade ECCAT Aide, Big Otter Elementary School; Anthony Helms as Substitute Custodian; Michael Mullins as Volunteer Assistant Football Coach, Clay High School; Jerry (J.C.) Osborne, Barry Payton, Tyler Dorsey, Riley Perkins, Bobby Brown, and Donald (Trey) Corwell all as Volunteer Assistant Football Coaches, Clay High School; Aaron Williams and Michael Minger as Volunteer Coaches and Trainers, Clay High School.

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Executive Director

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Provide strategic leadership and support staff development
- Oversee and participate in programs and operations
- Manage finances and fundraising
- Advocate for disability rights

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Bachelor's degree in Humanities or relevant field, preferred. Relevant professional background substitution allowed.
- Minimum of 8 years of leadership experience, required. Previous work in the field of disabilities, required.
- Understanding of disability issues and commitment to inclusion.
- Excellent communication skills

ABOUT Us:

Clay County Services Unlimited, Incorporated (CCSUI) is a non-profit organization dedicated to empowering individuals with disabilities to live full and independent lives. Through innovative programs and services, we strive to promote inclusion, accessibility, and opportunity for people of all abilities.

Location:

Clay, West Virginia

Deadline:

June 28, 2024

Application Process: Submit resume and cover letter to Katelin Hall at kmhall430@gmail.com or Mike Keener at claycoservicesunlimited@frontiernet.net

Clay County Services Unlimited, Incorporated CCSUI is an equal-opportunity employer.

THIS WEEK IN West Virginia History

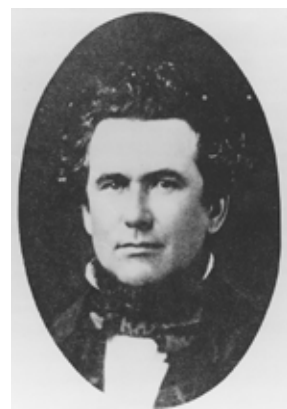
The following events happened on these dates in West Virginia history. To read more, go to *e-WV: The West Virginia Encyclopedia* at www.wvencyclopedia.org.

June 19, 1905: Senator Rush Dew Holt was born in Weston. At 29, Holt was the youngest person ever elected to the U.S. Senate, earning him the nickname "Boy Senator." Since the Constitution sets 30 as the minimum age for senators, Holt had to wait until his birthday in June 1935 to take his seat, nearly six months into the 74th Congress.



June 19, 1909: Oak Park, an amusement park in Preston County, opened. The

park was an easy ride from Morgantown and helped fill up trains on weekends and holidays. On one summer day in 1909, 14 trains brought more than 4,000 people to the park.



June 20, 1861: Francis Pierpont was unanimously elected governor of the pro-Union Reorganized Government of Virginia, which sat at Wheeling until West Virginia entered the Union two years later.

June 20, 1863: West Virginia became the 35th state. Arthur Boreman was the state's first governor.



June 20, 1932: The West Virginia capitol was officially dedicated. Construction had begun in 1924.



June 20, 1963: On the 100th birthday of West Virginia, President John F. Kennedy made his last ap-

pearance in West Virginia. Speaking in Charleston in a pouring rain, he said, "The sun does not always shine in West Virginia, but the people always do."

June 20, 1970: The play *Hatfields and McCoy's* opened at Grandview State Park amphitheater. Written by Billy Edd Wheeler with music by Ewel Cornett, the show joined *Honey in the Rock* as a regular summer offering.

June 21, 1920: Wheeling Steel Corporation was organized when La Belle Iron Works, Whitaker-Glessner Company, and Wheeling Steel & Iron Works combined. In the 1920s, Wheeling Steel employed more than 17,000 workers and ranked as the nation's third-largest steelmaker.

June 21, 1959: Musician Kathy Mattea was born in South Charleston but grew

up in nearby Cross Lanes. She rose to country music stardom in the 1980s. Since 2021, she has hosted the *Mountain Stage* radio program.

June 22, 1926: Earl O'Gebyay died in Cleveland. He was one of West Virginia's most successful industrialists and a generous benefactor.

June 23, 1944: A tornado struck Shinnston and the surrounding area, killing 103 people and injuring hundreds more.



June 23, 2016: Eight inches of rain fell in a 12-hour period. The Meadow, Cherry and Elk rivers, as well as Howard Creek,

flooded downtowns and The Greenbrier resort, killing 23 people.

June 24, 1842: Author Ambrose Bierce was born. Bierce found the setting for some of his famous short stories in the mountains of Civil War-era West Virginia.



June 25, 1811: Bridge builder Lemuel Chenoweth was born near Beverly, Randolph County. His many bridges included the earliest covered bridge at Beverly and the famous Philippi covered bridge.

HOCUS-FOCUS BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Door is larger. 2. Tattoo is larger. 3. Middle rope is missing. 4. What is larger. 5. Man is taller. 6. Middle rope is smaller. 7. Man is taller. 8. Middle rope is missing.

Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

	7	4			1	3		
5				4				2
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		7	2	1				6
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Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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Super Crossword

- ACROSS**
- 1 Biblical figure slain for being a 69-Across
 - 8 G.P.'s gp.
 - 11 Dangerous snake
 - 14 Detest
 - 19 Actress Bertinelli
 - 20 Throw slowly in a high arc
 - 21 Cola-cooling cubes
 - 22 Novelist Zora — Hurston
 - 23 Start of a riddle
 - 25 Blemish
 - 26 Gave hints to
 - 27 With 15-Down, no higher than
 - 28 Skating feats
 - 30 "Jolly old" saint
 - 32 Riddle, part 2
 - 37 "Hello, sailor!"
 - 38 58, to Nero
 - 39 Viral gene material
 - 40 Silvery metallic element
 - 44 Moseying
 - 47 TV "dog whisperer" Millan
 - 49 Riddle, part 3
 - 51 Sneaky
 - 52 Knitters' supplies
 - 53 Greek herald of the gods
 - 54 Perilous thing to live on
 - 58 Big antelope
 - 59 Position while batting
 - 61 Bristly swine
 - 62 Always, to bards
 - 63 Riddle, part 4
 - 68 Academic URL ender
 - 69 PERSON not telling the truth
 - 70 Liam of "Schindler's List"
 - 71 Above, to bards
 - 72 Dangerous snakes
 - 74 Met, as the challenge
 - 76 Jargon
 - 78 Pro vote
 - 79 Riddle, part 5
 - 82 Up one's auction offer
 - 85 Starting charge, as on a utility bill
 - 86 Enters warily
 - 87 Master pilot
 - 88 Former
 - 89 Dark blue dye
 - 90 End of the riddle
 - 99 Completely destroy
 - 100 "Reckless" actor Quinn
 - 101 Above
 - 103 Flaring dress
 - 104 Noise from a beehive
 - 106 Riddle's answer
 - 110 Country east of Fiji
 - 111 Geisha's sash
 - 112 Old sitcom cousin
 - 113 Opening in some helmets
 - 114 Unsettled feeling
 - 115 Hush-hush intel org.
 - 116 Baggage inspection org.
 - 117 32 Beethoven piano pieces
 - 7 Catch a glimpse of
 - 8 Soccer Hall of Famer Lalas
 - 9 Prized mushroom
 - 10 Clear as —
 - 11 Intention
 - 12 Reading digitally
 - 13 18th-century powdered hairpiece
 - 14 — chili (pepper variety)
 - 15 See 27-Across
 - 16 Transporting trucks
 - 17 David Mamet play or film
 - 18 Antares or Arcturus
 - 24 Like some permed hair
 - 29 — Mae (loan provider)
 - 31 The Windy City, for short
 - 33 Tylene for targets
 - 34 Barak of Israel
 - 35 CD- (PC inserts)
 - 36 Political columnist Molly
 - 40 "Wahoo!"
 - 41 Awful event
 - 42 Detached roughly
 - 43 Accumulate, as debts
 - 44 "Well, — you special!"
 - 45 Take part in a parade
 - 46 Via
 - 47 Deaf school co-founder Laurent
 - 48 Body blinker
 - 50 "Why Can't I?" singer Liz
 - 51 "Hey Deanie" singer Cassidy
 - 54 Hurry-scurry
 - 55 Protects
 - 56 18th-century English king
 - 57 Have it wrong
 - 59 French river
 - 60 "— not to be"
 - 61 Particle in quantum mechanics
 - 63 Lively spirit
 - 64 Sir Andrew — Webber
 - 65 Irk
 - 66 Knot anew
 - 67 Linen fabric
 - 73 "Bali —" (show tune)
 - 74 Put new turf on
 - 75 Mafia's code of silence
 - 76 Glove thread
 - 77 Have
 - 79 Major train terminals
 - 80 Rowlands of "Hope Floats"
 - 81 Hurt badly
 - 82 Initial input to be processed
 - 83 Level of command
 - 84 Having a big smile
 - 85 Apply with a bristly tool
 - 88 Luau paste
 - 89 Singer Murray
 - 91 Salad bar utensil
 - 92 Gripper on a shoe bottom
 - 93 "Start playing the song!"
 - 94 Revises
 - 95 Crimean resort port
 - 96 Kind of yoga
 - 97 "Some Like —"
 - 98 Cash, informally
 - 102 Corp. honcho
 - 105 Soccer Hall of Famer Hamm
 - 107 Marks, as a ballot box
 - 108 Philosopher — tzu
 - 109 Big vase

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Puzzle Answers Page 2



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Mountain State Spotlight: What you need to know about West Virginia's child welfare crisis

Numerous child abuse and neglect incidents have made headlines in recent months. But West Virginia's child welfare systems have struggled with adequate staffing, inaction and lack of transparency for years.



Chief of Staff Brian Abraham speaks at a press conference last week. Photo courtesy Gov. Jim Justice's office.

by Erica Peterson and La Shawn Pagán

This story was originally published by Mountain State Spotlight. Get stories like this delivered to your email inbox once a week; sign up for the free newsletter at <https://mountainstatespotlight.org/newsletter>.

In a rare move last week, top aides to Gov. Jim Justice faced the press to respond to growing concerns over the death of a 14-year-old Boone County girl.

But while the press conference to talk about Kyneddi Miller's death was unusual for the governor's office, the tragic event is only the latest in a long string of red flags around West Virginia's child welfare system.

It was only last October when two Black teens were found locked in a Sissonville barn and another child — five years old — with visible signs of neglect — was found in the loft in that same home. The three children and another who wasn't home at the time were removed, and their adoptive parents were charged with felony child neglect, human trafficking and civil rights violations based on race. And a class action lawsuit filed on behalf of West Virginia foster kids that alleges severe problems in the state system is nearing its five-year anniversary in large part because state officials continue to drag their feet.

These reports of mistreatment of West Virginia's most vulnerable kids have stretched through the last eight years of Justice's tenure and under multiple iterations of a Legislature run by both Democrats and Republicans, but little has moved the needle.

How are foster care and Child Protective Services (CPS) connected?

Several of the most shocking recent cases don't involve foster kids: Kyneddi was being cared for by her mother and two grandparents, and the children removed from the Sissonville home after alleged abuse were adopted, but not from West Virginia's foster care system.

These two systems are intertwined and share many of the same challenges and staff members, which is why they're often mentioned in the same breath.

Under the current Bureau for Social Services — part of the West Virginia Department of Human Services (DOHS) — there are a number of workers who could potentially both work to investigate allegations of child abuse and, if a child is removed from their home as a result, become the child's foster care case manager.

But for decades, West Virginia has had a shortage of

these key social workers. At the end of 2022, a third of these positions were empty. In early 2023, the Justice administration announced pay raises for CPS workers, as well as the department's youth services workers and adult protective services workers — with additional incentives for workers in the Eastern Panhandle to compete with neighboring states.

While the state has made progress in filling some vacancies, Berkeley County Circuit Judge R. Steven Redding told lawmakers in October that the problems persist, and have led to a backlog of 400 referrals that CPS workers haven't been able to investigate. And in a recent deposition as part of a class action lawsuit filed on behalf of West Virginia foster kids, a former state official testified about known deficiencies in the system, including the large number of child abuse referrals that fall through the cracks.

"Cases where referrals were screened out at the point of centralized intake with questions around whether or not that was or was not appropriate," said Jeremiah Samples, a former deputy secretary of the Department of Health and Human Resources who now advises top lawmakers. "Situations where workers had a responsibility to — maybe it was an active case — a worker would have a responsibility to go out and check on a child, failed to do so, a tragedy occurs."

What happened to Kyneddi Miller?

In April, deputies found the body of 14-year-old Kyneddi Miller in a skeletal state in her Boone County home. The teenager lived with her mother and two grandparents and was homeschooled; investigators said she hadn't eaten in months.

Since her tragic death, Kyneddi's mother and grandparents have been criminally charged with child neglect resulting in death, a felony. In the weeks following the discovery of Kyneddi's body, there have been competing narratives about whether the teen's situation had previously been formally reported to CPS.

"The CPS folks, from what I understand, had no idea about this child," Justice told reporters in a briefing on April 23. "No idea whatsoever."

But two weeks later, Justice walked that back.

"Will I stand behind what was said two weeks ago now that I know the information that I know today?" he asked on May 8. "No way."

The month following Kyneddi's death, there were competing accounts of who may have known about her situation. TV station WSAZ has reported anonymous tips alleging CPS had been contacted twice about the family — in 2009 and 2017. WSAZ also reported that Kyneddi's plight was known to state troopers; a call log documented a trooper saying he was planning to make the referral to CPS in person. But while the TV station says the West Virginia State Police stands by that call log, DoHS released a statement saying "a comprehensive search of DoHS records suggest no referral was ever made."

In last week's press conference, Justice's Chief of Staff Brian Abraham said the administration's investigation into the incident concluded that the two previous referrals didn't have anything to do with Kyneddi, and were unfounded. He said it seemed that state troopers had gone to the CPS office in person in 2023, but it was "informal contact" and they didn't make an official referral: the troopers hadn't found any signs of abuse or neglect, but found it odd that Kyneddi was so scared about COVID-19 that she wouldn't leave the house.

"When the West Virginia State Police made contact with this girl at her residence ... she was in good health, she was unharmed," Abraham said.

Abraham further noted that although GPS data showed state troopers were physically present at a Boone County-area DoHS office, CPS agents did not remember speaking to them. Thus, moving forward, to avoid any confusion, law enforcement has been instructed to call the toll-free Centralized Intake for Abuse and Neglect number.

This isn't the only really awful child abuse case to come to light in West Virginia over the past year.

No, it's not. Back in October 2023, social workers removed several children from a home in Sissonville, after neighbors reported they were doing manual labor and being forced to sleep in the barn. Prosecutors initially charged the kids' adoptive parents with felony child neglect, but in May, a grand jury indictment included additional charges of human trafficking, using a minor child in forced labor and civil rights violations based on race.

One of the similarities between the Boone County case involving Kyneddi and these children in Sissonville is a lack of clarity around when CPS was alerted to the situation, and whether or not they acted.

While in Kyneddi's case DoHS officials maintain they did not have any formal child abuse referrals, records in the Sissonville case indicate that neighbors called CPS at least once about the children in August. But DoHS hasn't provided any documentation showing whether they followed up on the referral, before Kanawha County Sheriff's deputies removed the children more than a month later.

Has the state agency in charge of foster care and CPS been transparent?

No. Journalists and the public have struggled for years to get more information about the treatment of kids

in state custody and the outcome of child abuse complaints. State agency lawyers argue that most of the information isn't subject to the state's open records law because West Virginia code has a provision for records involving juveniles to remain confidential except in a few narrow exceptions. State agency lawyers typically argue that law applies to any child welfare records, even when the identities of kids are redacted.

Besides the specific examples in the Kyneddi Miller and Sissonville cases where state officials haven't provided records detailing child abuse referrals or the agency's response, there have been multiple filings in a massive class action lawsuit against the state that show other ways in which the agency has kept crucial information from the public and lawmakers.

The lawsuit was filed in 2019 on behalf of current and former West Virginia foster kids. It argues the state has repeatedly failed to care for the kids its charged with protecting — including failing to make sure they end up in the most appropriate placement settings with the services they need. But after years of litigation, the lawyers representing these kids have struggled to get all of the information they've requested from state officials.

In April, U.S. Magistrate Judge Cheryl Eifert sanctioned state lawyers and child welfare officials for withholding key documents from the plaintiffs' attorneys and then destroying them, though she said there was no evidence the destruction was intentional.

And just two weeks ago, former DHHR official Samples said in a sworn deposition that agency leaders had repeatedly pushed empty talking points rather than prioritizing concrete actions and transparency. He also said that he was aware that then-Secretary Bill Crouch had applied pressure on the foster care ombudsman to withhold some information and documents from lawmakers about problems in the system.

"The tone of the conversation was that it was a threat, to be very careful about conversations that she had with the Legislature and documents that she would release," Samples said in the deposition.

That ombudsman, Pamela Woodman-Kaehler, resigned shortly after the deposition became public.

At last week's press conference, the Governor's office asked state police and top officials with the Department of Human Services to gather information that could be shared publicly. Abraham repeatedly insisted that information was limited due to federal and state rules restricting what can be shared from a criminal investigation.

What kinds of action to improve child welfare are leaders promising at this point?

This past legislative session came and went without meaningful action to address the very specific deficiencies brought to light by the foster care class action lawsuit.

Lawmakers considered and advanced a handful of child welfare bills, including one to bar anyone with a pending child abuse or neglect investigation from homeschooling their kids — a measure known as Raylee's Law — but of those, only a bill creating a foster parent information dashboard was signed into law. Lawmakers also indicated they want to add more transparency and oversight to the system; two measures that ultimately didn't make it into law would have allowed the foster care ombudsman to view confidential CPS records and have let a legislative oversight commission hear reports of child injuries, deaths or other problems. But both bills also would have created additional secrecy, doing nothing to give the public more information about how the agency works.

After the press conference discussing the Kyneddi Miller case, some legislative leaders again promised actions to improve the state's child welfare system.

West Virginia MetroNews described the comments from House Health Committee Chairwoman Amy Summers, R-Taylor, this way: "It is awful and I know we all want to blame someone and try to figure out what could have been done to save her, so I understand all of that" before finding herself at a loss for words and trailing off.

If you suspect you or someone you know is experiencing abuse or neglect, report your concerns to the Centralized Intake for Abuse and Neglect at 1-800-352-6513.



West Virginia Department of Human Services Secretary Dr. Cynthia Persily speaks at a press conference last week. Photo courtesy Gov. Jim Justice's office.

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Calhoun, Clay, Nicholas and Roane Counties (TMU-306 Goff Run-Linden Road 138kV Line, Linden Road-Powell Mountain 138kV Line)

Beginning at the Goff Run Substation off of US Rt's 33 and 119 east of Spencer West Virginia in Roane County. The line runs in a southeasterly direction crossing near CR 5/14 Daniels Run, CR 40 Slate Rd, CR 36/1, CR 48/3 Kaufman Rd, CR 48 Otto Rd, CR 48/2 Chambers Fork, CR 50/5 Clover Rd, CR 50 Keffer Hill, and CR 2/5 Linden Rd where the line taps into the Linden Road Substation. The line continues in a southeast direction crossing CR 27 Linden Bright Rd, and continues into Calhoun County near CR 20/8 Sang Run Rd, crossing CR 20/9 Big Run Rd, CR 1/5, Beech Fork, White Oak Rd, CR 17/2, and CR 28 Mud Fork Rd. The line then enters into Clay County crossing CR 38/1 W Fork Rd, CR 38 Clinic Dr, SR 16, Interstate 79 and Big Otter Creek, CR 19 Ossia Rd, Deadfall Run Rd, CR 16/2 Otterlick Rd, James Dunfield Rd, SR 4 Duck Rd, the Elk River, CR 11 Widen Ridge Rd, CR 11/4 Lantz Rd, Rock Camp Rd, CR 15/2 Swandale Rd, CR 52 Rush Camp, Buffalo Creek, and CR 15/4 Taylor Fork Rd. The line then enters Nicholas County and runs along Turkey Creek, crossing CR 19/26 Spruce Run Rd and US Rt 19, terminating at the Powell Mountain Substation off CR 19/41 Hookersville Rd north of Muddlety West Virginia.

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June is Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month

Alzheimer's Association Offers Tips for Brain Health and Building Healthy Habits

Today, there are nearly 7 million people aged 65 and older in the U.S. living with Alzheimer's dementia, including 38,100 in West Virginia. The Alzheimer's Association is encouraging West Virginians to think about their brain health and the benefits of building healthy brain habits during Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month in June.

The lifetime risk for the disease at age 45 is 1 in 5 for women and 1 in 10 for men. The brain changes that cause Alzheimer's are thought to begin 20 years or more before symptoms start, which suggests that there may be a substantial window of time in which we can intervene in the progression of the disease.

Experts believe there isn't a single cause of Alzheimer's, and it's likely the disease develops as a result of multiple factors. The greatest known risk factor is advancing age. Although some risk factors, like age, cannot be changed, others may be modified to reduce risk - it is estimated that addressing modifiable risk factors might prevent or delay up to 40% of dementia cases.

The Alzheimer's Association offers these suggestions for taking charge of your brain health:

1. Incorporate healthy habits that may reduce the risk of cognitive decline. The Alzheimer's Association encourages individuals to incorporate 10 Healthy Habits to reduce the risk of cognitive decline. It's never too early to take charge of your brain.

2. Recognize the early warning signs. Many people equate Alzheimer's with memory loss, and while that is one of the most common signs, there are other signs of cognitive decline, including altered judgment, mood changes, challenges in decision-making, and carrying out projects. Some memory changes can be a normal part of aging, but when changes start to interfere with daily living or stray drastically from a person's normal behavior, it's best to get it checked. Find the 10 signs at alz.org/10signs.

3. Proactively address memory and thinking problems. Many individuals experiencing memory and thinking problems often put off discussing them with a doctor. A 2022 Alzheimer's Association report found that 60% of U.S. adults say they would not see a doctor right away if they were experiencing symptoms of mild cognitive impairment. Rather, they would wait until symptoms worsened or until family and friends expressed concern.

Early detection and diagnosis of Alzheimer's and de-

mentia offer the best opportunity for care, management and treatment. It also provides individuals more time to plan for the future, participate in clinical trials and live a higher quality of life. There are now treatments that may slow disease progression in early stages, making a timely diagnosis critically important.

4. Help accelerate disease-related research. Clinical trials hold the key to treatment. Individuals living with the disease, caregivers and healthy volunteers are needed for clinical trials that help advance research. Today, 55,000 volunteers are needed for 180 clinical trials. TrialMatch® is a free, easy-to-use service that connects individuals with appropriate trials.

5. Volunteer. According to research presented at the 2023 Alzheimer's Association International Conference, volunteering is associated with improved cognitive function. Volunteers make an impact on the lives of people facing Alzheimer's, and are passionate people who work to fight this devastating disease, honor loved ones, and bring care and support to those who need it. To learn more about volunteer opportunities in your community, email wvinfo@alz.org or call the Alzheimer's Association Charleston office at 304.343.2717.

"Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month offers a reminder for everyone to take charge of their brain health," said Sharon M. Covert, executive director of the Alzheimer's Association West Virginia Chapter. "There are steps everyone can take to reduce their risk of cognitive decline, and we want to encourage anyone experiencing memory or thinking problems to talk to their doctor. There are many possible causes, and if it is Alzheimer's, there are numerous benefits to getting an early diagnosis."

An estimated 6.9 million Americans aged 65 and older have Alzheimer's dementia, including 38,100 in West Virginia. One in three seniors dies with the disease - more than breast and prostate cancer combined. West Virginia's mortality rate of 47.7% from Alzheimer's is significantly higher than the national mortality rate of 36%.

Those concerned about themselves or a loved one can contact the Alzheimer's Association West Virginia Chapter at 304.343.2717 to schedule a care consultation and be connected to local resources. The Alzheimer's Association's Helpline can be reached 24/7 at 800.272.3900. For more information, visit alz.org/abam.



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Remembering D-Day and those who fought there

Clay boys compete in 2024 savage race



Memorial at Indore Bridge. Suzie Legg photo

By Allen Hamrick

June 6, 1944, is a date which most has forgotten - outdated news, a flicker of the past that means nothing in today's world. People would be no more wrong than if they said the moon could never rise. World War II had been razing the world to the ground and was in its fifth year. Hitler became the sole leader of a nation in dire need of a reconstruction after World War I. Germany's economy had tanked, and something had to be done. Hitler let his intentions be known early that Germany would be the powerhouse and leader of the world. Freedom was way down on Hitler's to do list. Germany had initiated a systematic destruction of anyone who stood in their way of controlling the world and its population. Hitler named a few groups to a list that had to be eradicated from the earth... mainly the Jews. There were millions of soldiers in his well trained army, and their weapons were second to none. To defeat them would take a miracle, but they had to be stopped so that those that were free nations would stay that way. Germany dropped thousands of bombs on their enemies and followed that with a heavy tank push... they called it blitzkrieg, or blitz for short.

Germany was defeating everyone, including England and France, and the world was shocked. Japan signed an agreement with Germany, as well as Italy, and together they formed the Axis powers. British troops were all that was standing in the way of Germany until Pearl Harbor when America was attacked. This plunged America into the war to end all wars - World War II. When the word was given, the ranks in the American forces were near twelve million and rising. Many men from Clay, as well as across the nation, answered the call of duty all the while those at home did their part. Americans began building an army to defeat both the Axis armies on the eastern front and the western front. Suddenly, both Germany and Japan both began to feel the sting of Americans getting into the fray. However, the war was not only costing money but also the lives of many soldiers. That's when, behind closed doors, the Allied powers got together to figure out how to stop the invasion of the world all at once, an event that would be called D-Day.

Hitler knew something was up and began to build his defenses in the only place that the Allied powers could land - Normandy. Along a 2,400 mile shoreline Hitler called the Atlantic wall, 250,000 workers built the wall, six million mines were planted, and nets of barbed wire were stretched for miles in all directions. Steel spikes and huge logs were placed in low tide to tear the bottoms out of ships. Concrete bunkers, forts, and trenches were built using nearly a million tons of concrete.

On the other side of the battle, troops were training to get through all that would block their path. It was well planned, but as in war, it takes a small nothing to change the end result. There were a great many details to figure out, but it had to be on a day that the full moon was out so there would be light enough to land the gliders and drop the bombs. Everything had to be planned perfectly. By D-Day, there were 1.7 million Americans training in Europe for the battle to end WWII along with about a million troops from England and Canada. The training was tough, but the job was done.

Troops began to load up on ships on June 3, 1944, as a terrible storm put a halt

on any mission. The storm was supposed to last for days, and the only possible break was to be on June 6, 1944. General Eisenhower, along with his advisers, had to make the decision whether to attack or not. Waiting was not an option. Paratroopers went in first concealed by the cover of night. One paratrooper was reported to say he saluted General Eisenhower, "Look out Hitler, here we come." Eight hundred planes lifted in the air with 20,000 troopers, and they reached Normandy at 1:30 AM. The planes started taking so much fire that the paratroopers had to jump before their actual landing zone. Tracer bullets lit up the night sky as soldiers were being hit. The plan was already unfolding as they were being forced to jump way before they were supposed to. The Germans flooded the fields, and many paratroopers drowned with their heavy packs weighing 200 pounds each. A new plan was made on the fly as they fought the Germans as best they could. These paratroopers secured bridges and key roads for the coming assault.

In the early morning hours of June 6, 155,000 soldiers with an average age of 22 were heading toward the beaches, and floating mines were there to greet them. All of them were prepared professionally - there was no greater army, but mentally it was tough. As soon as they boarded the wooden boats, the heavy seas turned many of the boats into coffins due to the storm. The bomber planes that were supposed to take out the heavy guns of the Germans had to fly by radar and not sight, and their bombs completely missed their targets leaving all the Germans intact. Our soldiers would have to cross a beach with no cover while the Germans were spraying them with bullets and fire. American troops faced the worst fire of the battle on Omaha Beach. More than a thousand Germans opened up their machine guns on the Americans. As soon as their doors were open on the landing craft, many of the units were annihilated before they ever hit the water. Men landed in water over their heads and drowned as others had to cross 500 yards of water then 1000 yards of beach sand with little to no cover. The plan was failing; if they didn't win here, Germany could possibly take over the world. The dead and wounded lay everywhere, and the beach surf was red with blood.

The tide began to turn as individual men took control and led men to the cliffs they had to climb to take out the machine guns. The American forces finally reached the Germans who then had to defend themselves. There are many, many stories of D-Day and the heroism it took to defeat such an army as the Germans. There is no way any article could contain all the details or any common person with all the ability to live free could ever fully comprehend D-Day and the heroism men who served there portrayed.

Recently, a bridge at Indore was designated as a memorial bridge dedicated to the five Legg brothers who served in WWII. Charles Legg, US Army, Walter Legg, US Army, Russell Legg, US Navy, Homer Legg, US Army, and William Legg, US Navy, all brothers, served in the military from 1942 to 1946. Homer Legg, who served in communications, was part of the landing of American forces in Normandy that liberated France, kept Jewish people from annihilation and allowed the world to be a free place by defeating the Germans and their desire to conquer. Homer earned five bronze stars during his enlistment, and let me remind you, one doesn't earn bronze stars for general service, they are awarded for heroic achievement in battle, heroic service, or meritorious service...and he earned five. Charles Legg also earned three bronze stars. All the brothers did their part, as did many other servicemen from Clay.

The Legg brothers chose to serve others and were committed to do it regardless of the cost. The brothers enlisted to help their country and to rid the world of the tyranny that was taking place at the time. Homer Legg landed on Normandy during D-Day June 6, 1944 in one of the most horrific times the world has ever seen and played an integral part in that battle. He was a tough person, but his compassion for this country and family was beyond words. Nothing or no one was going to take that away as long as he had breath to fight for it. His life was neither meek nor mild, and his independence was a code of honor. He was full of integrity, strength and confidence, and his heart was indeed in tune with what a human was supposed to endure for his fellow man. We owe a debt that is impossible to pay to those that fought on that day - June 6, 1944, the beginning of the end of WWII.



Leaving the landing craft on June 6, 1944. Photo taken from national archives.



The savage team is ready to take on the course.

By Allen Hamrick

The daily grind of playing house, raising a clan, and keeping the lights on is nearly a 24 hour a day job that leaves little time for fun and adventure. The weekly ritual of scanning the bank book for a little extra to put away allows little time to remember that there is life beyond the 8 to 5 grind. The adventurous life is narrowed down to a couple weeks a year when vacation days arrive, and we become new people until the budget runs low. People do all sorts of activities in that window of opportunity and cleave to being out of our comfort zone for just a little while. The weekend adventurers who hike, bike, 4-wheel, garden, build, run or walk are also a breed that feels the need to separate themselves from society for the sake of sanity. We seek adventure beyond a path well travelled, a path that is rough and full of mud, dirt and water. The need for obstacles that challenge the mind and body is the very primal instinct that makes us animals.

We dream of a path where a beast rages, we pull our swords and slay the dragons in the shadows now covered with cobwebs. The gas that drives us doesn't cost four dollars a gallon, but needs filled, none the less. Those who become the viking, smear on war paint, and crank up the

war cries are not of the status quo. Savage Race 2024 was an event where normal, everyday people climb, pull, crawl through barbed wire, swing over and ford brackish water, go from human to beast mode and survive like starving animals.

Some adventure seekers from Clay County, along with others from across the country, participated in the 2024 Savage Race held in Charlotte, North Carolina this past weekend. This race was a brutal six miles and 27 obstacles that took an individual to the brink of collapse and often required team efforts to survive it. People might call it crazy, but those individuals would never know what it's like to go beyond what they are capable of. Some former Clay County men, along with friends, came together and gutted out the event. All finished a little worse for wear but survived to race again another day.

With the new rail to trail and other venues opening in Clay, an event such as this could give opportunity to people of all ages to try their hand at beating the odds. Maybe this type of course and event could be added in the near future to attract another group of adventure seekers to our majestic corner of the state. The bottom line is that it doesn't matter what everybody else does, it's what you're doing that matters.



Lucas Hamrick swings through the Voulez Vous Lache obstacle.



Geoff Hamrick gets through the kiss my walls obstacle.



Mason Hamrick muscles across the Chutes and Ladders obstacle.