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DECEMBER 2021A MONTHLY MAGAZINE BY



On the cover: The Village at Heritage Point, located in Morgantown. Submitted photo.



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Senior centers and facilities

Monongalia County BOPARC Senior Recreation Center

287 Eureka Drive, Morgantown • 304-296-7002

Clay Battelle Senior Center

5977 Mason Dixon Hwy., Blacksville • 304-432-8177

Core Senior Center

98 Pedler Run Road. Core • 304-879-5452

Senior Monongalians

5000 Green Bag Road, Morgantown • 304-296-9812

Westside Senior Center

500 Dupont Road, Westover • 304-296-6583

Preston County Newburg Senior Center

100 Wolfe St., Newburg • 304-892-4662

North Preston Senior Center

WV Rt. 26, Bruceton Mills • 304-379-1165

Preston County Senior Citizens

108 Senior Center Drive, Kingwood • 304-329-0464

Rowlesburg Senior Center

44 Poplar St., Rowlesburg • 304-454-2012

Terra Alta Senior Center

212 E. Washington Ave., Terra Alta • 304-789-2415

Tunnelton Senior Citizens

1266 Senior Drive, Tunnelton • 304-568-2151

Valley District Senior Center

54 W. Highland Avenue, Masontown • 304-864-6465



Westside Senior Center



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Long-lasting gifts



BY DOREEN SEAMON

for The Dominion Post

This is the time of year we frantically shop for gifts for our loved ones – another toy, clothing, or jewelry. Holiday shopping can be overwhelming, but maybe this year, you

should consider a gift that can grow into something more meaningful.

Each year, we are permitted to give a certain amount free of any federal gift taxes to any person. This is known as the annual gift tax exclusion which is \$15,000 this year. If you would like to make a financial gift to a loved one, you should discuss your options with your various trusted professionals such as your estate planning attorney, accountant, and financial advisor.

Gifts such as cash and savings bonds are

relatively simple to gift, but the donor retains no control over the asset and the opportunity for growth is relatively low. Cash is usually quickly spent or put in a piggy bank or savings account at little to no interest rate. Bonds also have a low rate of return. The 2021 annual fixed rate for savings bonds is just one-tenth of a percent.

Custodial accounts such as UTMA accounts can be a simple way to gift. The transferor makes an irrevocable gift to a beneficiary and appoints a custodian to control the gift until the minor reaches a specified age (which may not extend past 21 years old in West Virginia). The advantage of these accounts is that the custodian can direct the money for any purpose for the benefit of the beneficiary, but the account is the beneficiary's for asset and income purposes so it is subject to Kiddie Tax rules and may affect student aid. To avoid the negative impact on financial aid, the account may be liquidated, and the proceeds trans-

ferred to a custodial 529 Plan account.

529 Plans provide potential tax-free growth for certain educational expenses. The donor remains the owner, retains investment control over the account, and may change the beneficiary to a relative of the beneficiary. The advantage of these accounts is that they do not impact the beneficiary's federal financial aid, government grants, or scholarships. But there may be a penalty if the funds are used for non-educational expenses, and they are an asset of the donor, meaning the account is not exempt if the donor needs to apply for long-term Medicaid.

Finally, trusts can be a great option. The 2503(c) Minor's Trust enables the grantor to shift estate tax liability and income to the younger family members while still controlling the assets. There are special considerations as to whether the grantor should serve as the trustee or if another person or entity should

serve as the trustee. The trustee has a broad discretion to manage the principal and income for the benefit of the minor beneficiary to the age of 21 years, but the trust also provides the opportunity for the funds to remain in the trust beyond that age. The disadvantage of the trust is that the grantor will incur attorney fees to have the trust created and if a professional trustee is used there could be trustee fees. Many people choose family members to serve as trustee to avoid the fees.

This holiday season, consider what gifts may be meaningful for your loved ones today and into the future and work with your trusted professionals to achieve your goals. It is never too early to plan!

Doreen L. Seamon, J.D. is an attorney with Seamon Law Offices PLLC. Her experience includes elder care and estate planning. She writes a regular for Senior Post. Contact her at **columns@dominionpost.com**.



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If you are looking for a Life Plan Community offering an independent lifestyle for seniors aged 62 and over The Village at Heritage Point could be the place for you.

The Village at Heritage Point offers 90 residential apartments, which feature maintenance-free living, and The Suites at Heritage Point, assisted living community, includes 40 private apartments.

Residents health and safety is of the utmost importance to staff of the Village and the Suites at Heritage Point.

"We were still having limited visitation, assisting residents to do telehealth visits with their physicians and limiting occupancy in the dining room," Kristina Adrian, Executive Director for Marketing and Communication for The Village and The Suites at Heritage Point wrote in an email.

"A year later, we are nearly back to normal in all areas with some additional steps to keep our residents and staff safe. I am proud to say that we have over 98% of our residents vaccinated and the staff are 94% vaccinated. These are great numbers. We recently offered boosters to all staff and residents as well. We test all unvaccinated staff twice a week as a precaution. We have had great success in managing COVID-19 in our community and it might just be one of the safest places to be."

"Further, COVID-19 has not stopped our residents from having fun. In recent months, we hosted a luau with live music and live entertainment by drummers, hula dancers and flamethrowers; holiday parties; wide variety of exercise classes; and trips to enjoy the fall foilage at Cooper's Rock, to appreciate the renowned Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and outings to local restaurants and attractions."

"Our residents have benefited from enhanced services throughout the year. We will do their personal shopping for them to eliminate the need for them to go out in public. We have fantastic Wellness programs such as vital sign clinics, exercise, and clinical education. Mon Docs 101, is one of our best attended activities. Mon Health physicians/providers educate about different health issues and latest technological services being provided at Mon Health Med Center and how to remain healthy."

The assisted living area is staffed with RNs, nurse aides and LPNs. There are two licensed nurses in assisted living 24-hours a day, 365 days a year.

"This level of care is unusual for assisted living as often times, nurse aides with some training are used for the medication pass. We want to provide excellence in care at The Village and The Suites at Heritage Point. We





just finished the survey process for this year, and we were, once again, found to be deficiency-free in life safety and nursing. Comments we are most proud of by the nurse surveyors on exit were, "You can tell the culture from the top down." And "When you do a good job-you do a good job!"

Our staff are our best asset. This is very much a family environment, staff and residents and their families. Our mantras are "Do it right, all day, every day." And "They are right, you are wrong, let's find a solution." Seems to work quite well here where our resident satisfaction surveys are always pleasing to read," she wrote.

"We currently have open apartments and would love for you to come and live with us. Our assisted living provides residents with the freedom to remain in place with comprehensive care and dedicated assistance. Independent living offers more than just a pleasant place to live, just outside your door, you'll find opportunities for companionship, entertainment, and learning."

The Village at Heritage Point is located at 1 Heritage Pt, Morgantown. Call 304-285-5575 or 877-285-5575 or go to www.heritage-point.com for information or to request a free information kit, or view on Facebook.



(Left) Residents at The Village at Heritage Point enjoy a late afternoon outdoors roasting marshmallows at the fire pit.

(Right) A chef has a friendly conversation with some of the residents and family members at The Village at Heritage Point.



Senior center activities

Westside Senior Center

Westside Senior Center opened June 10, 2001, and is totally operated by volunteers. It is open from 9 a.m. to noon and 6-9 p.m. Monday through Friday at 500 Dupont Road, Westover.

Members are knitting scarves for veterans and active-duty military as part of Operation Gratitude's "Scarves for the Troops." Anyone is welcome to bring knitting needles and join in the project.

Food is collected every month for the Rock Forge Food Pantry.

Evenings are full of things to do. Monday and Friday, bring a musical instrument and play with the group. Tuesdays and Thursdays, there is card playing, and Wednesday evening is for bingo. There is also a well-equipped exercise room that includes a pool table.

Assisted Living at Evergreen

Assisted Living at Evergreen is an alternative to nursing home care. A variety of specially developed leisure activities include outings to Oglebay, holiday dinners and parties and weekly shopping trips. Housekeeping and personal laundry services are available. There are community areas, dining and family rooms, an activity center and a gazebo with fish pond for outdoor relaxing.

Respite Care Program

As of Jan. 3, Respite Care Program went to three days a week, operating from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at Suncrest United Methodist Church, 479 Van Voorhis Road, Morgantown.

There are openings for all three days.

This program is for caregivers who need a break from the loved ones they are caring for. Bring your loved ones to church, and they will be taken care of while you deal with other responsibilities. Two registered nurses are on duty and willing to answer any questions. There are also several volunteers helping with those in the program.

Monthly rates

One day each week: \$120 per month Two days each week: \$240 per month Three days each week: \$360 per month

Payment at the beginning of each month is appreciated, but it can also be made in two payments. There are times when the program closes, including legal holidays, when the church building is closed, when there is a school closing, Easter week, Christmas week and New Year's week. The program will begin on time during two-hour school delays, unless weather or dangerous roads dictate otherwise.

To learn more or find out if the program is operating, call the church office at 304-599-6306.

Note: Most area senior centers are closed during the coronavirus pandemic.

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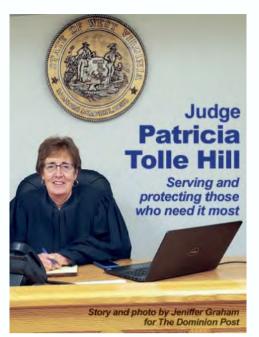
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Judge Patricia Tolle Hill is one of two family court judges that serves Preston and Mon counties. Hill has a master's degree in social service work as well as a law degree.

"I had a private practice for 20 years before I decided I would like to be on this side," she said. "I had an office in Mon County, but I did a lot of work in Preston County."

Family court judges hear cases involving

divorce; annulment; separate maintenance; paternity; grandparent visitation; issues involving allocation of parental responsibility; and family support proceedings, except those incidental to child abuse and neglect proceedings, and final hearings in domestic violence civil proceedings.

"We also do child custody with people who are not married," Hill said. "In these cases we may sometimes have to establish paternity."

Hill said doing her job is almost like being a social worker.

"You want to make things better if you can," she said. "You are dealing with children and with people's lives."

She said of all the cases that come before her, child custody is the most difficult.

"It's because of the amount of drugs sometimes involved and a lot of time there is a lot of hatred between the parents," Hill said. "When parents can't agree, it's my job to determine where to place the child. You want to make sure the child has the best possible life."

She said gender isn't the deciding factor in custody cases, it's what is best for the child. In some instances, there is so much hatred between the parents she has to send them to mediation to help them work out what is best for their children. In cases involving children, parents are required to take a parent edu-

cation class.

"We had a really good program that showed the effect (parents) fighting has on children. We had good trainers but that went to the wayside. Now it's all on line," Hill said. "We used to have a good program through Child Advocate High Conflict Training, now it's online too."

She said she "loves it" when parents come in to court and put aside their differences for the children.

"It's just like teaching manners and potty training. When children see their parents fighting, what is it teaching them?" Hill said.

She said over the past five years, there has been an increase in grandparents raising their grandchildren.

"School today isn't the school of the grandparents. A lot of school work is done on computers, and a large percentage of grandparents are not computer savvy. I've had attorneys come in and show the grandparent how to see the children's grades and school work on line," she said. "There are drugs and other things online a child shouldn't see."

Hill said there is higher drug use among people living in rural areas, due to the lack of available jobs.

"I have someone in Tunnelton who lost

their license due to a DUI. They live a half a mile from the main road. Where do they go to get a job?" she said. "In Mon County, there's busses and more jobs available. Even if this person hadn't lost their license, they couldn't afford a car."

Hill said there is also domestic violence. She said during her career she is aware of several people who died due to domestic violence.

"One was a case that came before me. Three were cases we were working on. In one case, a girl filed charges several times and dropped them and was killed," she said. "In another case, a husband killed both the woman and her mother. I remember a magistrate in Morgantown that denied a protective order and the man went to the woman's place of employment and killed her."

Hill said when someone has a protective order against them, she tries to make sure they can't get a gun.

"I had a protective order I scanned into NCIC," she said. "The man left court and went to Walmart and tried to buy a gun. When they did a background check, ATF (the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms) called and asked me if I put in that order. I said I did and the man wasn't sold the gun. When you scan in a protective order in, it goes to all law enforcement agencies. The number of people we save is worth going the extra mile."

Assisted living and residential care communities

Monongalia County

Evergreen Assisted Living 3705 Collins Ferry Road, Morgantown 304-598-8401

Morgantown Health and Rehab (formerly Golden Living Center) 1379 Van Voorhis Road, Morgantown 304-599-9480

Madison Center 161 Bakers Ridge Road, Morgantown 304-285-0692

Mapleshire Nursing and Rehab Center 30 Mon General Drive, Morgantown 304-285-2720

Sundale 800 J.D. Anderson Drive, Morgantown 304-599-0497 The Suites at Heritage Point 1 Heritage Point, Morgantown 304-285-5575

Harmony at Morgantown 50 Harmony Drive, Morgantown 304-503-4349

Preston County

PineRidge (formerly Heartland) 300 Miller Road, Kingwood 304-329-3195



PineRidge

The search for inner peace as we age



BY IRENE MARINELLI

for The Dominion Post

Changes come to all of us as we grow, mature and eventually cautiously step over the threshold of aging. As we celebrate our 7th and 8th decades, somehow inner

peace takes on more importance. At least that's the way it turned out for me. The years when I was daily whirled like a top from handling a full-time job to raising a family to keeping the house decent and trying to grab some bits of time here and there for my own pursuits are gone. In my mid-70's, I began to seriously consider searching for that illusive inner peace and taking the first hesitant steps on the long road to finding it. I'm not quite there yet, but the journey has been interesting. Allow me to share with you what I have learned along the way, and what I am still learning.

The dictionary definition of peace is "freedom from disturbance. Tranquility." I can't imagine anyone's life without disturbance. Not possible! Problems, mishaps, illness, worry, perhaps even some fear and tragedy: unless one is a hermit living in an isolated forest, these come into every life. The goal is to meet these disturbances calmly and gracefully as they come to us. It seems we are never totally free of concerns, nor should we be. If everyone lived in total unconcern about what was going on around us, with our families, in our neighborhood and around the world, nothing would ever change for the better. We cannot do much to stop the horrors that walk with us on this earth. Neither are we in a position to bring a lasting peace. The best we can do toward a peaceful world is try to understand people of other countries, other cultures, other faiths, and then, during elections, vote our conscience.

Peace of mind does not equate with pas-

sivity or inaction. It sweeps the detritus of worries, bad memories, fears, doubts, self deprecation from our minds to make room for positive thoughts and actions. Inner peace goes hand-in-hand with respect for ourselves. It cannot grow or even exist if we consistently define ourselves by our faults and mistakes. When we love someone we show that love through compassion, forgiveness, empathy, understanding and care. Why does it seem so hard for us to love ourselves in this way? It isn't narcissism, or false pride to love ourselves. It is simple acceptance of who and what we are, and the kind of person we are striving to become.

Acceptance plays a significant role in finding peace of mind. However, the kind of forced acceptance that leads to "peace at any price" is worse than useless. To accept abuse, be it physical or emotional, just to keep peace in the home makes no sense. All it does is weaken the self respect of the one being abused and

inner peace is lost. Acceptance of caustic, toxic people in our lives is counterproductive. It aborts our search for inner peace. Acceptance of the problems, concerns that life ordinarily brings is another matter. This is true acceptance. True acceptance, perspective and self awareness make up the legs of the sturdy three-legged table that holds and balances our inner peace securely.

About a year ago, I came across these words by Hyrum W. Smith, an unforgettable guidepost to finding inner peace: "The secret to achieving inner peace lies in understanding our inner core values — those things in our lives that are most important to us and then seeing that they are reflected in the daily events of our lives." It seems as simple and as complicated as that.

Irene Marinelli writes a regular column for Senior Post. Contact her at columns@dominionpost.com.

Senior emergency assistance

If you are a senior and find yourself in need of emergency assistance, the following is a list of locations where heating, food, pet food, and other emergency help can be obtained.

Catholic Charities

827 Fairmont Road, Suite 203 Westover | 304-292-6597

Christian Help, Inc.

219 Walnut St., Morgantown 304-291-0221

DHHR

Monongalia County
114 S. High St., Morgantown
304-285-3175
Preston County
18351 Veterans Memorial Hwy.
Kingwood | 304-329-4340

North Central West Virginia Community Action

Marion County
215 Scott Place, Fairmont
304-363-4367
Preston County
428 Morgantown St., Kingwood
304-363-2170

Salvation Army Monongalia County

1264 University Ave., Morgantown 304-296-3525 Preston County 124 Morgan St., Kingwood 304-329-1245

Catholic Community Charities

Preston County 304-329-3644

The Raymond Wolfe Center is the only food pantry in Preston County that has specialized diet foods (diabetic, salt free, etc.). It also has some pet food available. Call to check availability.

The Connecting Link

235 High St., Morgantown 304-296-3300

The following locations are for Preston County residents only.

Wesley United Methodist Church 304-329-0707

St. Vincent DePaul Helpline 304-329-6229

Heat for Preston (January - March only) 304-329-2316

Terra Alta Council of Churches (Terra Alta residents only) 304-789-2509

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