

Senior Post

Living well and gracefully through the golden years

Snowbird Survival Guide

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DECEMBER 2025
A MONTHLY MAGAZINE BY

THE DOMINION
Post

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DID YOU KNOW?

According to Allergainformation.org, as many as 450,000 people in the United States have Alpha-gal syndrome, a food allergy that triggers an allergic response when individuals consume products derived from mammals. Despite such a sizable number of people with the condition, a significant percentage of health care providers lack awareness of Alpha-gal syndrome, which usually begins after a person is bitten by a Lone Star tick. Forty-two percent of health care professionals who participated in a 2022 survey from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention acknowledged they had not heard of Alpha-gal syndrome, while 35 percent noted they lacked sufficient confidence to diagnose or manage patients with the condition.



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Center expansion

Services for Preston Co. seniors get boost with \$712,500 grant

BY JENIFFER GRAHAM

DPNews@DominionPost.com

KINGWOOD – Preston County Senior Citizens will soon be moving into a new building. A funding request made through U.S. Rep. Riley M. Moore, R-WV, via The Community Project Funding Program has resulted in a \$712,500 grant for the non-profit.

According to Director Tina Turner, the money will go toward the purchase of a 5,200-square-foot concrete building located next to the USDA. The building, located behind Auto Zone, is completely fin-

ished on the outside, and the inside layout is to be determined by the purchaser.

“We have to finish the inside and expand the parking lot,” Turner said. “We’ll keep our current building and the kitchen upstairs. The building will be for senior care. The new center will be where activities like wellness happens.”

Turner said the existing Kingwood center will continue to play a vital role.

She said our nutrition staff will still prepare over 320 home-delivered and congregate meals each day, and we’ll be able



Submitted photo

Preston County Senior Citizens will soon occupy a new 5,200-square-foot building, next to the USDA and behind Auto Zone in Kingwood.

SENIOR CENTERS AND FACILITIES

Monongalia County

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



Westside Senior Center, Westover

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 Ave., Masontown • 304-864-6465

to expand much-needed congregate respite care services. We will also begin exploring adult day service programs.

“The new site will be a brand-new space for not only Kingwood, but for seniors across the county to share meals and participate in wellness activities,” Turner said. “Having the new space will also allow us to use some of our current space to increase our congregate respite service.”

She said this will allow seniors to come to the center for meals, games, and to discuss the “good old days,” giving family and caregivers a break.

“We can only do that one day a week now,” she said. “But with the new facility we will be able to expand that program.”

Turner said she would

also like to start an adult day service that would give seniors a safe place to enjoy their day while family members are working.

“This isn’t just about a building — it’s about giving seniors across Preston County a new place to share meals, connect with friends, and participate in wellness programs that help them stay healthy and independent,” she said. “We are deeply grateful to Congressman Moore for believing in our mission. This investment sends a powerful message to our seniors: you matter, and this community is committed to your well-being.”

The Preston County Senior Citizen Center celebrated its 50th anniversary in May.



Did you know?

80% of older adults are either **currently financially struggling or are at risk of economic insecurity in retirement**

Research conducted by the National Council on Aging and the LeadingAge LTSS Center @UMass Boston found that 80 percent of older adults are either currently financially struggling or are at risk of economic insecurity in retirement. Further analysis found that living in the community without some assistance is beyond the reach of most older adults. Rising living costs and financial shocks, which are inherently difficult to predict, also pose a threat to older adults’ capacity to maintain economic security in the future. The NCOA offers a range of scenarios designed to help retirees make their money last, and making a concerted effort to grow savings is among those suggestions. Doing so may not be possible for current retirees, but seniors nearing retirement can emphasize growing their savings as their target retirement date draws closer. That’s a philosophy that thus far adults have been slow to adopt, as a recent report from the U.S. Government Accountability Office found that roughly half of all households age 55 and older have no retirement savings.

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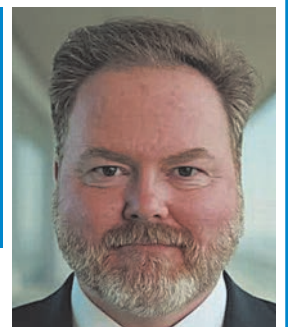
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Senior Health Advisor
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What aging drivers can do to improve their driving skills

MetroCreative

Motor vehicles have come a long way since the days of the Model T. Safety features in particular have undergone significant enhancements over the last several decades. Improvements in airbags, structural modifications like crumple zones and technological features like automatic emergency braking have helped to make modern vehicles far safer than the cars and trucks of yesteryear.

While there's no denying that modern vehicles are safer than ever, the human element remains an unpredictable variable. Even in an era marked by vehicles with greatly enhanced safety features, distracted or impaired drivers can compromise the well-being of everyone on the road. Age is another variable unique to each driver that merits consideration when considering road safety. The National Institute on Aging notes that certain conditions associated with aging, including increased stiffness of muscles and joints, can make it difficult for seniors to safely operate motor vehicles. Seniors who want to ensure they're safe to drive can take various steps to ensure they are not compromising their own safety or the safety of others when getting behind the wheel.

- Have your driving skills assessed by a trained professional. The NIA notes that the American Occupational Therapy Association maintains a database of driving specialists who can help seniors assess their skills behind the wheel. These trained professionals may assess existing skills and offer advice about how to overcome any issues aging drivers might be having.

- Take a driving course. Safe driving courses can help drivers of all ages stay up-to-date on the latest safety protocols and advice on how to drive safely. Modern driving is vastly different than it was when many current seniors became licensed drivers. A safe



driving course can refresh drivers' memories about safety protocols, and some may even offer advice on how to navigate modern roadways, which may be marked by distracted drivers and feature vehicles with brighter headlights that can make it more difficult for older drivers to drive at night.

- Speak with your physicians about your medications. A recent study from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration found that the average adult age 65 and older now uses roughly four medications. Medications produce side effects that can affect every area of a user's life, including their ability to drive. Those effects might be heightened when taking more than one medication, and interactions also can lead to side effects that might not manifest if individuals were taking just one prescription. Aging drivers can maintain an honest and ongoing dialogue with their physicians to ensure they're aware of the effects their medications might be having on their ability to drive safely. Report any new side effects the moment they appear.

Aging can compromise seniors' ability to safely operate motor vehicles. But aging adults can employ various strategies to improve their skills behind the wheel.

SENIOR MONONGALIANS

DECEMBER'S UPCOMING EVENTS and SPEAKERS

- **Tuesday, Dec. 2** at 10 to 11:30 a.m.
Blood Pressure and Glucose Screenings
Students from the WVU School of Pharmacy will be offering FREE blood pressure and glucose level screenings. Tracking these values can help you maintain your overall health.

- **Tuesday, Dec. 2** at 11 a.m.
Dec. Birthday Party with Peak Health
Chelsea from Peak Health will be hosting our Dec. Birthday Party. She'll bring the cake and the decorations. You bring the fun.

- **Wednesday, Dec. 3** at 10:30 a.m.
Medicare Basics with Peak Health
John from Peak Health will discuss some things that you may want to consider when reviewing or signing up for Medicare and benefits associated with Medicare. This will cover the basics and answers to your questions.

- **Thursday, Dec. 4** at 10 a.m.
Chew & Chat
Licensed therapist Oliva Carnes will discuss the changes in your chewing, swallowing, and general communication as you age. She'll help you understand what is normal and what may be signs and symptoms of more serious issues.

- **Friday, Dec. 5** at 10 a.m.
Bingo with Renaissance Care
Keri from Renaissance Care will lead a few games of bingo and award prizes to the winners. Come out of the cold and into the warmth and fun of this event. Be sure to stick around to play our 50/50 Cash Cover All game. It is \$2 to play this game and you could walk away with some extra spending cash.

- **Tuesday, Dec. 9** at 10 a.m.
Chair Exercise with Personal Touch
Nathan with Personal Touch hosts a fun and easy exercise class. The exercises focus on maintaining or improving stability, range of motion, and overall well-being. All the exercises can be done while sitting in a chair.

- **Friday, Dec. 12** at 10 a.m.
Sponsored Bingo
A local business or agency will host our bingo and award prizes to the winners. Gather a friend or two and join us for this fun weekly event.



- **Thursday, Dec. 18** from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Christmas Luncheon

Celebrate the season with us during our annual Christmas Luncheon. Get ready to jingle your bells and put some pep in your step as you enjoy rising country artist Jeff Huesman. Our kitchen elves will serve a festive meal sure to delight. Let us know that you will be joining us by calling 304-296-9812.

- **Friday, Dec. 19** at 10 a.m.
Bingo with Morgantown Health Care Center

Melody with the Morgantown Health Care Center will lead a few games of bingo and award prizes to the winners. Gather up a few friends and bring them along for a morning of festive fun. Be sure to stick around for our 50/50 Cash Cover All game. *It is \$2 to play and you could walk away with extra cash in your pocket.

- **Wednesday, Dec. 24 & Thursday, Dec. 25**

Closed for Christmas

- **Friday, Dec. 26** at 10 a.m.
Bingo with Care Partners

Goble with Care Partners will keep this season of fun moving by hosting a few games of bingo and awarding prizes to the winners. Spread the merry cheer by bringing some friends with you. Stick around for the 50/50 Cash Cover All game. You could walk away with extra money in your pocket.

- **Wednesday, Dec. 31** at 11:30 a.m.
New Year's Toast

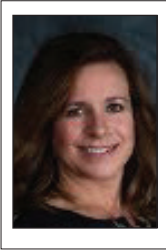
Let's say "Good bye" to 2025 and look forward to the new year by having one last toast.

- **Thursday, Jan. 1**
CLOSED for the New Year Celebration

Experience matters in long-term care medicaid planning

BY DOREEN SEAMON

For The Dominion Post



Navigating the Medicaid program can be daunting. You may be seeking

help with long-term care planning for a senior family member or are ready to apply to Medicaid yourself. In either case, working with an experienced elder law attorney who understands the complexities of Medicaid is crucial. Nursing home care in the United States can cost more than \$10,000 a month depending on where you live. Medicaid has become the default form of long-term care coverage for millions of aging Americans. However,

an estimated \$1 trillion in Medicaid cuts are likely in store over the next decade. Meanwhile, many people mistakenly believe that Medicare, a different program, will cover the costs of long-term care. However, Medicare does not cover long-term custodial care. (Custodial care includes assistance with daily living activities such as getting dressed, eating, and moving from place to place safely, such as from a bed to the bathroom. It does not encompass medical treatment that requires a licensed nurse or doctor.)

Medicaid planning is a complex area of elder law that focuses on qualifying for Medicaid benefits without depleting one's assets unnecessarily. To be eligible for the program, you must meet strict income and asset limits.

In most states, you cannot receive Medicaid benefits if you have more than \$2,000 in countable assets.

In part, this is why Medicaid planning is so important. Planning involves reviewing all your assets, including bank accounts, retirement accounts, real estate, vehicles, and life insurance. A professional can help you with this and with distinguishing between your "countable" and "noncountable" assets. In addition, with the help of an expert, you can pursue legal strategies that allow you to spend down your assets so that you can qualify for the program.

Although it sounds like a very narrow field of law, elder law can cover many areas, not all attorneys have the expertise required to handle Medicaid cases effectively.

Let's explore some potential red flags:

- If the attorney cannot clearly explain what Medicaid covers regarding long-term care services, this may signal a lack of familiarity with elder law nuances. Medicaid policies can change frequently so an adept elder law attorney should be aware of and able to discuss the latest updates and their implications.

- Every Medicaid consultation requires a personalized approach, given that financial and health care needs vary widely among seniors. An elder law attorney lacking experience might offer broad, generalized advice instead of recommendations tailored to your individual circumstances. A seasoned attorney in this area of law will dig deep into the client's

financial well-being, health needs, and family circumstances to offer precise guidance.

- Protecting assets while qualifying for Medicaid is a key aspect of elder law. If an attorney cannot provide a clear plan for how to legally transfer or protect assets, this can indicate a lack of expertise. An attorney experienced with Medicaid knows the importance of the Medicaid look-back period and should clearly explain how it affects eligibility.

- The way consultations are conducted can reveal much about an attorney's professionalism and experience. An inability to communicate complex concepts in an understandable and logical way may reflect inexperience or insufficient expertise.

- Understanding the time-

lines and processes involved in Medicaid applications is crucial. If an attorney is unsure about when or how long it takes to file a Medicaid application, this can indicate inexperience. Misguidance about the steps involved can jeopardize the outcome of your application.



Be sure to find an experienced attorney that you trust and feel comfortable with to help you navigate this critical planning process. Remember, it is never too early to plan!

Doreen Seamon is an estate and elder law attorney serving both WV and PA. She has dedicated her practice to helping our community plan for their future while protecting their loved ones and their assets. She can be reached at Doreen@SeamonLawOffices.com.

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Snowbird survival GUIDE



MetroCreative

There are many reasons to welcome the arrival of winter each year. The holiday season, recreational activities like skiing and snowboarding, and the undeniable beauty of snow-covered landscapes are just some of the reasons to look forward to winter.

Winter certainly has its positive attributes, but some may shudder at the thought of colder temperatures and shorter hours of daylight. In fact, some people dislike the cold so much they take to the road each winter and make for locales noted for their mild temperatures. Snowbird is a term used to refer to individuals who depart their homes around the beginning of winter so they can

ON THE COVER: Snowbirds often are retirees, but the flexibility of remote working has enabled more and more working professionals to become snowbirds, too. (MetroCreative photo)

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES

Westside Senior Center

The volunteer-operated center is open from 9 a.m. to noon Monday through Friday at 500 Dupont Road in Westover. Our exercise room is available when the center is open.

BINGO: Bingo every Wednesday at 6 p.m. Doors open at 4 p.m. and kitchen open at 5 p.m. No reserved tables. Cards are \$5 each (e.g. - 4 cards are \$20 and 6 cards are \$30). Concessions.

CARDS AND GAMES: Tuesday and Thursday mornings are especially active for our card plays and anyone is invited to join in. Playing usually starts around 9:30.

DULCIMERS: They get together on Tuesday mornings to play and practice. They welcome anyone who would like to learn also. Judy Werner leads this group, and it is enjoyable to just sit and listen.

LINE DANCING: We now have line dancing classes on Wednesday morning at 10:15 a.m. The classes are designed for beginners, but all are welcome.

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.



Assisted Living at Evergreen, Morgantown

spend the ensuing months in warm climates. Snowbirds often are retirees, but the flexibility of remote working has enabled more and more working professionals to become snowbirds, too. Those considering a pivot to the snowbird lifestyle can consider these tips to make that transition successful.

- Find the right locale. Those new to the snowbird lifestyle might assume anywhere that isn't cold will fit the bill, but warm weather isn't the only variable to consider when choosing where to spend your winters. Many snowbirds spend several months at their winter destinations, so you will want somewhere that can accommodate the lifestyle you've grown accustomed to. First identify your priorities and then consider variables like the accessibility of nightlife, the availability of recreational activities and opportunities to socialize. A warm but especially remote location might appeal to some, but those who like to get out might do best spending their winters in a more vibrant locale.

- Get a firm idea of the cost. Though there's ways to save on the snowbird lifestyle, it can be costly.

WHETHER YOU PLAN TO RENT A WINTER HOME OR PURCHASE A SECOND HOME, THERE'S NOTABLE COSTS THAT COME WITH EACH APPROACH.

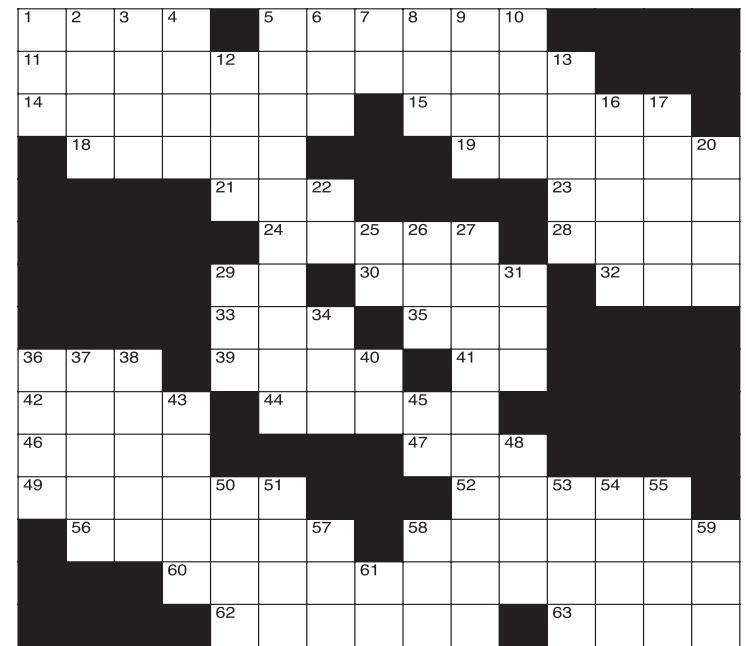
Whether you plan to rent a winter home or purchase a second home, there's notable costs that come with each approach. The costs of renting might seem more straightforward, as renters may think a deposit and monthly rent is all the added expense. But snowbirds who plan to work during the winter will need to consider the tax implications if they will be living and working in a different state or province. Buying a second home also comes with its own tax implications, so it might be best for aspiring snowbirds to work with a certified financial professional who can help them navigate those costs. Certain locales may be tax-friendly for retirees, who also can work with a financial professional to identify locations where the financial implications of snowbirding might not be too significant.

- Don't forget your pets. Pets merit consideration when pondering the feasibility of the snowbird lifestyle. If you plan to rent lodgings for the winter, you must find a pet-friendly op-

tion, which can prove difficult depending on the type and size of your pet(s). Pets' comfort also merits consideration. If you have a dog, a winter residence with access to a yard or nearby dog park should be a priority. And some complexes that specialize in offering winter lodgings may restrict pets or charge hefty fees to allow them.

- Don't forget your current home. Snowbirds also need to arrange for the homes they live in most of the year to be looked after. If you plan to rent your primary home over the winter, that might come with hefty tax implications. If not, someone will need to look after the home while you're gone. Snow removal and security are two notable components of winter home care that will need to be arranged before you head for warmer locales.

The snowbird lifestyle is tailor-made for people who prefer year-round warm weather. But several variables merit consideration before adults can commit to the snowbird lifestyle.



CLUES ACROSS

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Dough made from corn flour | 35. Body of water |
| 5. Rise | 36. Record of one's heartbeat |
| 11. Gratitude | 39. Signs a contract |
| 14. A low wall | 41. Atomic #24 |
| 15. Kidnap | 42. Bind securely |
| 18. A cup golfers want to win | 44. French Jesuit theologian |
| 19. Outgoing | 46. Fragrant brown balsam |
| 21. "Partner" to flow | 47. Post office box |
| 23. Former Michigan coach Brady | 49. Sells tickets at inflated prices |
| 24. Proverb | 52. Places to hang coats |
| 28. Gasteyer and de Armas are two | 56. Jewish salutation |
| 29. Helps a body recover | 58. Yellow fruits |
| 30. Baseball Cy Young winner | 60. Poorly educated |
| 32. Very fast airplane | 62. Microorganism |
| 33. Offensive baseball stat | 63. Talk show host Barrymore |

CLUES DOWN

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. A way to plan | 29. Greek alphabet letter |
| 2. Three-banded armadillo | 31. Body part |
| 3. Mobile | 34. Referee-declared outcome |
| 4. Romanian city | 36. Means to moving money |
| 5. Making sour | 37. Popular footwear brand |
| 6. Take a seat | 38. Cockatoo |
| 7. "The Golden State" | 40. NFL's big game |
| 8. When you hope to arrive | 43. Botswana currencies |
| 9. Pointed ends of pens | 45. News-reporting organization |
| 10. Extinct flightless bird | 48. Batman villain |
| 12. Sharp-pointed dueling sword | 50. Urgent request |
| 13. Nape of neck | 51. Not all |
| 16. Problems (Spanish slang) | 53. Hallmark's specialty |
| 17. Narrow carpet | 54. Knot in a tree |
| 20. To avoid the risk of | 55. Satisfy |
| 22. Spiritual academic degree (abbr.) | 57. Notable space station |
| 25. Equally | 58. Baby's dining accessory |
| 26. Traditional cars still need it | 59. Stitch clothing |
| 27. Eligible voters | 61. ___ and behold |



Memories and moments can shape our lives



BY IRENE MARINELLI

For The Dominion Post



"I am a collector of precious moments."

— **Dr. Robyne Hanley-Dafoe**

Our brains are hard-wired with a negativity bias. This is a dubious gift from our early ancestors.

With everything around them trying to eat them or kill them with freezing cold, our earliest ancestors used this negative bias to survive. Although we don't live in such a dangerous environment, we do live in a fast-paced society. Sometimes when stress is at a high level, we tend to focus on the negative, allowing it to trample small joys and moments of contentment hidden in plain sight.

Memories, especially sad, painful memories, can surface in times of stress or difficulty. Research suggests we tend to focus

on bad memories more than good ones. It's easy to allow painful memories from the past to negatively affect our present. Consciously making good memories can help drop a curtain on negativity. Small moments that lift our spirits, tiny and insignificant though they may appear, can change our perspective and bring contentment and joy to our daily living. The old bit of advice to "stop and smell the roses" is still valid but in our fast-paced society sometimes it's even hard to remember that there are roses to see and smell and enjoy.

One of the best ways I have found to pull away from too much negativity is to actually create small moments of joy and appreciation. As winter makes its slow way over our mountains, I get out my stock of candles and holders. Candlelight in the darkness of an early morning as I putter around the kitchen brings a feeling of coziness and comfort, a tiny spark of joy. Candles on the dinner table seem like a pleasant way to

usher in a late autumn evening.

Another small spark of joy is my bedtime. I go to bed much earlier than my husband, usually around 9:00. When I bid Rob and our dog, Pierre, good-night and take my cup of tea into my bedroom, something like a transformation happens. I slide under the covers of my warm, comfy bed, knowing nothing more will be expected of me. My busy day is finished. Whatever did not get done will have to wait until another day. The peace contentment and comfort are almost palpable.

I think of the pleasure of a daily shower. Not even the mightiest medieval king with all his gold and glory could experience the delight of standing under a hot shower on a cold winter evening after a long day. There are so many little things that can spark a smile and a small moment of joy: the smell of morning coffee brewing in the pot, Pierre lifting his muzzle for a kiss, a phone conversation catching up with a friend or our children and

grandchildren. A hug, a smile, a single rose still valiantly blooming in the flower bed: these small, seemingly insignificant moments of joy add up and can pull us away from negativity.

Of course in every life there are days when it seems a struggle just to get through them intact. Those are the days it's important to practice good self-care. Part of that self-care is setting boundaries so we get enough sleep at night and enough rest during the day. It's ensuring ourselves a balance between solitude and companionship, between work and play. Self-care is also consciously making good memories upon which we can look back with joy. Indeed we do all go through struggles and bad, chaotic times, but we somehow find the strength to come out of the shadow into the light, always.

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

ASSISTED LIVING AND RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITIES

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)

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