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## OBITUARIES

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**Smith**, Carl  
Mary

## HEALTH

### Docs urge use of PCPs, urgent care centers, telemedicine

As respiratory illness cases rise

WVU Medicine

Emergency departments (EDs) across WVU Medicine experienced a holiday surge in patients with respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19, influenza and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and as a result, physicians encourage those who can to use their primary care providers, telemedicine, and urgent care centers when appropriate.

"Most of our EDs are experiencing higher than average visit numbers with many of those patients being sicker and requiring admission. This is leading to delays in some of our departments," Dr. Christopher Goode, chair of WVU Medicine Emergency Medicine, said. "The hardest hit department is our Emergency Department at WVU Medicine Children's Hospital, which is seeing the sickest children requiring admission. Children's Hospital and Emergency Medicine leadership are working to make every treatment space on campus available for care, including an increase in outpatient pediatric acute care clinic availability."

One of the ways patients can help lessen the load at EDs is to go to their local urgent care centers, when appropriate.

Life-threatening emergencies and those that pose a risk of disability, such as symptoms of a heart attack or stroke, injuries sustained in a vehicle crash, and lacerations that cause substantial bleeding, should be treated in an emergency department.

Minor, unexpected injuries and illnesses that do not fall into those categories, including ear infections, strep throat, simple abdominal pain, urinary tract infections, minor lacerations, sprains, and simple fractures, can

SEE URGE, A-3

## MON COUNTY

# Details still unclear in fatal I-79 accident

BY ERIN CLEAVENGER  
ECleavenger@DominionPost.com

Investigators with the Monongalia County Sheriff's Department are still investigating a deadly accident on Interstate 79 Wednesday morning that claimed the lives of two people, sent two others to the hospital and brought interstate traffic to a standstill for around five hours.

The Monongalia County Sheriff's Department (MCSD) sent a

press release confirming the two fatalities Wednesday afternoon, but little additional information has been released since.

Mon EMS officials told The Dominion Post Thursday that the accident, which occurred near the 149 mile-marker between the Westover exit and the I-79/I-68 interchange, involved three vehicles. The two people taken to J.W. Ruby Memorial Hospital were believed to have serious injuries, however one of them was

evaluated and released.

Nurse Hailey Vardell was driving just seconds behind the collision.

"I've never really experienced anything like that ...," she said.

"When I saw the cars burst into flames, I hurried up and drove around it. I remember thinking while driving around it — feeling the heat of the fire in my car, which was insane."

Vardell, who works for Mon Health, said she and another

nurse who came upon the accident quickly pulled over to see how they could assist. Vardell recalled seeing a younger woman and an older gentleman trying to get away from the scene.

The two nurses helped the pair to the guardrail and began evaluating them the best they could.

"I tried to get the girl to regulate her breathing as she was

SEE UNCLEAR, A-2

# Snow or rain?



Ron Rittenhouse/The Dominion Post photos

Teddy Bruce, of Gladesville, brought his two St. Bernards to Morgantown for a day out on the town before this weekend's winter weather hits. The snow on Bruce's truck show the flurries hit hard in Preston County on Thursday.

## Temperatures will largely determine weekend weather

BY BEN CONLEY  
BConley@DominionPost.com

Earlier this week, the hot topic among local meteorology enthusiasts was the possibility of big snow this weekend.

Now, not so much.

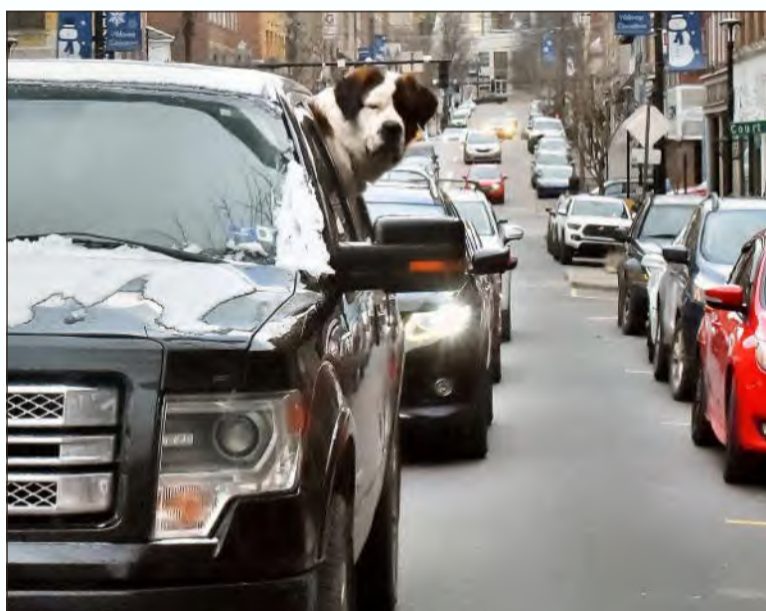
"It's been trending in the right direction. I guess there are some people who might say the wrong direction. The bottom line is it's trending toward less snow," AccuWeather Senior Meteorologist Tom Kines said Thursday.

Asked where meteorologists come down on the snow/no-snow ledger, Kines quipped "We're just cheering for the forecast to be right."

We'll see.

According to Kines, Morgantown can expect temperatures in mid-30s today with clouds forming late in the day.

"Precipitation probably gets in here during the day on Saturday and continues kind of off and on through Saturday night and perhaps even into Sunday



some as well," he said, explaining the overnight hours will likely be the only time temperatures drop low enough to cause any real issues.

"The thing is, temperatures Saturday and even into Saturday night are going to be very marginal to support accumulating snow," he said. "It wouldn't surprise me if very little happens as far as snow is concerned — let's put it that way. Maybe more rain than snow is involved."

Morgantown Engineering and Public Works Director Damien Davis said the city has been monitoring the weather situation all week.

"The Streets Division of the Department of Engineering & Public Works does not typically pre-treat roadways unless a large amount of snow is forecasted. They do not plan to pre-treat the roadways this weekend," he said.

SEE RAIN, A-3

## ENERGY

# Mon Power holds kickoff gathering for Fort Martin solar site

BY DAVID BEARD  
DBeard@DominionPost.com

Local political and business leaders gathered at Mon Power's Fort Martin solar power site Thursday afternoon for a kickoff celebration and "flip the switch" day, as the company prepared to plug the site into the power grid.

Among those invited to attend the kickoff was Delegate Evan Hansen, D-Monongalia, who was the driving force behind the 2020 legislation that enabled the site to rise from the ground.

"I'm really excited," he said before the event began. "We passed a law in 2020, and it takes a few years to come to fruition. But this is a huge milestone for FirstEnergy and a huge milestone for the state of West Virginia."

SB 583 allows the state's two electric utilities (Mon Power, a FirstEnergy subsidiary, and AEP) to build or buy and then own and operate solar plants — four 50 megawatt plants totaling 200 MW per utility — in order to draw national companies to West Virginia that want a significant solar element in their energy portfolio.

This is the first of five planned Mon Power sites, and the largest solar site in West Virginia. It sits on 92 acres adjacent to Mon Power's Fort Martin coal-fired plant, and the solar operation covers 80 of those acres, with 49,032 solar panels generating 18.89 MW.

George Farah, FirstEnergy vice president of Utility Services, opened the program. "It took a little while," he said. "It took a lot of teamwork. And we're just very pleased that we had aligned vision with so many people to allow this to happen."

He explained that Mon Power's decision to pursue renewables coincided with the state's resolve to draw companies with green goals. And FirstEnergy's aim to employ union workers, use domestically sourced materials and build on brown-

SEE KICKOFF, A-3



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WORLD

# Bishop Brennan releases new letter regarding Israel-Hamas war

BY METRONews STAFF  
WVMetroNews.com

CHARLESTON — Wheeling-Charleston Diocese Bishop Mark Brennan says he's continuing to pray for the people of Israel as the war with Hamas rages on.

Brennan released a letter this week saying he still believes Israel can weaken Hamas but that more humanitarian aid is needed and that an international conference should be convened to work out a solution.

"Israel's initial response

to Hamas' October 7 attack was just; its current conduct of the war is causing greater evils than the one it seeks to eliminate," Brennan wrote in his letter.

Brennan said as more time passes, the more Israel needs support.

"Israel is losing support it initially had in its response. It's losing that support even from many of its allies in the world particularly the United States and that's very unfortunate because I think Israel was justified in responding the way it did," Brennan

said on Wednesday's MetroNews "Talkline."

The U.S. has to find a way to target the ones who are causing harm to innocent civilians, Brennan said.

"That's exactly what the task that faces the Israeli Defense Force, how to target Hamas fighters rather than just kill civilians," he said.

In his letter, Brennan also talked about how Israel has a great defense.

"Israel knows how to fight back," he said. "Hamas certainly doesn't

have that ability."

"Talkline" Host Hoppy Kercheval countered Brennan saying Hamas has the capability to destroy human lives.

"Hamas is not capable of eliminating the State of Israel. It cannot do that," Brennan said.

"It's capable of killing, raping and murdering Jews," Kercheval said.

"That's separate," Brennan said.

White House National Security Spokesman John Kirby said this week he thinks Israel can eliminate Hamas's ability to stage attacks inside Gaza, but that the Israeli military still has much work to do.

According to the Hamas-run Health Ministry, the reported death toll stands

at nearly 22,000 since the war broke out on Oct. 7, 2023.

City government leaders across the U.S., including Charleston, have called for a cease fire in Gaza. There was outrage Wednesday night when Charleston City Council voted to table a cease fire resolution proposed by Councilmember Joe Solomon, who is Jewish.

Members of the city's Jewish and Muslim communities chanted "Shame! Shame! Shame!" when Mayor Amy Shuler Goodwin announced the proposed resolution had been tabled.

Former Mayor Danny Jones applauded Goodwin for doing her job.

"I think the mayor

showed her leadership skills last night and her patience," Jones said on Thursday's MetroNews "Talkline."

Jones went on to say it's none of the city's business to get involved with what's going on in the Middle East.

"Charleston City Council needs to stay focused on what's good for Charleston and don't do anything to make any outside enemies. That's what that resolution would've done," Jones said.

Supporters of the resolution said it's meant to prevent more casualties in Gaza. The resolution came after the city sent a letter to the state's congressional delegation about the issue.

MEDICINE

# Mon Health Heart & Vascular performs first renal denervation

## Procedure for treatment of high blood pressure

Mon Health System

On Dec. 29, Mon Health Heart & Vascular's Dr. Wissam Gharib performed West Virginia's first renal denervation procedure for high blood pressure with the new Paradise® Ultrasound Renal Denervation (RDN) system.

Clinical research has shown that denervation, or the interruption of the signals along these nerves, can effectively reduce blood pressure.

Recor Medical's Paradise Ultrasound RDN System uses ultrasound energy to ablate the renal nerves and lower blood pressure. The procedure is minimally invasive and may be performed in an outpatient setting, allowing most patients to return home the same day.

"Mon Health Heart & Vascular is proud to be at the forefront of offering this innovative solution for patients facing the ongoing challenge of controlling their blood pressure," said Gharib. "The Recor Medical Paradise Ultrasound Renal Denervation System demonstrates our ongoing commitment to providing



Submitted photo

Dr. Wissam Gharib and Mon Health's Heart & Vascular team.

our patients with the leading technology to improve their overall health."

In the U.S., more than 54 million adults are being treated for high blood pressure. Traditional treatment options for high blood pressure include lifestyle changes and medications, however, medications are often poorly tolerated by patients due to side effects.

In addition to this, hypertensive patients that remain "uncontrolled," or outside of the normal blood pressure range, are at increased risk for cardiovascular disease — including heart attack and heart failure, stroke, kidney disease and cognitive issues.

Through the use of the

Paradise Ultrasound RDN System, patients undergo a procedure that uses ultrasound energy and is applied in two-three ablations of seven seconds each along both main renal arteries. This total treatment time, normally less than one minute, can result in less patient discomfort, reduced fluoroscopy time and reduced contrast load.

Mon Health Medical Center is one of the first 10 medical facilities in the United States to offer this procedure, allowing West Virginians to receive advanced care close to home.

To learn more about Mon Health's nationally accredited Heart & Vascular Center, visit MonHealth.com/Heart.

EDUCATION

# Third Grade Success Act implementation underway in Monongalia County Schools

BY MIKE NOLTING  
WVMetroNews.com

Components of the Third Grade Success Act are being implemented in Monongalia County this year.

House Bill 3035 lays out specific changes for schools in an effort to improve reading and math skills for students in grades K through 3. Teachers are also being trained to identify and spot symptoms of dyslexia and soon dyscalculia.

The bill requires students to meet math and reading thresholds, or they could be held back.

On W.A.J.R.'s "Ask the Educators," director of Federal Programs and Elementary Curriculum at Monongalia County Schools Norma Gaines said preparation for implementation begins at the top by training the trainers.

"Every elementary classroom teacher, every special educator and every Title I teacher is going to complete about eight hours of intensive reading and instruction training — it's intensive training in small groups at the school level," Gaines said.

For the first time, aides are now in first grade classrooms, according to Gaines. Aides have typically been in the lower grades, but the addition to the first grade classrooms

gives local teachers more help as students learn vital reading and building blocks.

"It's a great opportunity to really invent a job to support the learning of our children," Gaines said. "So, in Monongalia County, we believe a lot in learning for our adults as well, so we've got a lot of training for those assistants."

The bill also directs communication with parents through the process. Gaines said with that communication, there will be tools and advice provided to help parents support children at home. The tools are more than traditional homework; they include digital and virtual resources.

"We're giving parents more information about how their child performs on our benchmark assessments and also helping parents with information about different activities they can do at home to support learning," Gaines said.

When a child misses a benchmark or shows signs of one of the learning disabilities, they begin to work with those students in small groups with "interventionists." Interventionists develop specific plans directed at the

weaknesses that include practice exercises to work with the child while communicating with the parent or guardian.

Currently, 1,197 K through 5th grade students are receiving some form of intervention.

"Lots and lots of practice with the skills of reading; lots and lots of exposure to text and practice on text they can read," Gaines said. "Students who are dyslexic usually need more instruction and practice than the typical child."

Coordinator of School Psychology Angela Hayes said performance scores are monitored so adjustments can be made to offer more help or encouragement where needed. The Student Assistance Teams already in place in Monongalia County are being used to look at the data and help make decisions to help improve scores.

"Being is able to look at the data and determine if we need more intervention, a different kind of intervention, longer amounts of time in intervention, or truly if a student is becoming resistant to the intervention," Hayes said.

The district will implement a math intervention program next school year.

... THEY INCLUDE DIGITAL AND VIRTUAL RESOURCES.

UNCLEAR

FROM PAGE A-1

starting to hyperventilate," Varnhell said.

She also noticed blood on the older gentleman's forehead, so she began asking him questions.

"I asked if he was in any

pain or had any vision changes," she said. "He replied by saying he was OK."

Varnhell said the young lady really wanted to lie down, so she and the other nurse helped the woman to Varnhell's car and made it so she was able to lean back

for a little bit while they waited for EMS to arrive.

Both nurses were on their way to work prior to the accident.

"Again, I just stayed with them until EMS arrived and kept talking to them," Varnhell said. "After EMS arrived, I left to go to my job."

The pair of victims did not walk away unscathed, but the extent of their injuries is unknown.

"They both were able to talk and stay awake with me while we waited," Varnhell said.

The identities of the victims in Wednesday's crash have not been released.

The Dominion Post will continue to follow up on the investigation into the accident.

**BOTH NURSES WERE ON THEIR WAY TO WORK PRIOR TO THE ACCIDENT.**

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## STATE

**Vehicle inspection stickers now good for 2 years in W.Va. instead of 1**BY JEFF JENKINS  
WVMetroNews.com

CHARLESTON — When you get your vehicle inspection sticker in West Virginia this year you'll notice a little increase in the cost but in exchange you'll get a sticker that lasts for two years instead of one.

State Sen. Mike Stuart, R-Kanawha, got the provisions through the legislature last year. He said Tuesday on MetroNews "Talkline" safety won't be compromised.

"Many, many states have eliminated the requirement entirely. So the idea from going from one year to two years is not a substantial challenge to folks on roadways," Stuart said. "Every driver of a vehicle has a responsibility to maintain their car or vehicle in good

working order."

The cost of the annual inspection now goes from \$14 to \$19. Stuart said the new law is crafted in such a way that State Police, who receive funding through the inspection program, won't lose money.

"All we did was to take the \$3 inspection fee per year and make it \$6. So there won't be any cut in revenue for State Police here," Stuart said.

The two-year inspection sticker will be available at your regular inspection time, Stuart said.

"When your inspection sticker is up in March or May or September, whenever it happens to be, go get your vehicle inspected ahead of that day and you're going to get a new vehicle inspection sticker for two years," he said.

**THE TWO-YEAR INSPECTION STICKER WILL BE AVAILABLE AT YOUR REGULAR INSPECTION TIME ...**

## URGE

FROM PAGE A-1

be treated at an urgent care center. The wait times are often shorter, and the cost is lower than going to the emergency department.

Those with non-urgent or emergent medical concerns are encouraged to see their primary care providers, many of whom may offer virtual care appointments.

With telemedicine appointments, adults and children can:

- Receive an examination, diagnosis, and treatment from a WVU Medicine provider

- Be treated for a variety of minor medical concerns, such as cough, sore throat, flu-like symptoms, rash, allergies, and pink eye

- Receive an after-visit summary containing a care plan and any follow-up instructions, including referrals for a specialist visit or diagnostic imaging

- Have prescriptions sent to the pharmacy of their choice

The best steps to help prevent contracting respiratory illnesses are to:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water. Lather for at least 20 seconds every time. If no soap is available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you sneeze or cough and dispose of the tissue in the nearest waste receptacle after use.

- Avoid contact with sick individuals.

- Use social distancing when possible.

- Clean and disinfect surfaces that are frequently touched, such as your mobile phone.

- Stay home if you are sick, unless seeking medical attention.

Safety during RSV season is important because there is no cure or effective treatment for it.

RSV is primarily spread through direct contact. It can survive for several hours on hands and surfaces after wiping noses, coughing, or sneezing. Once exposed, symptoms of RSV can appear within four-to-six days and last up to 14 days, depending on the severity of the infection.

Children with any of the following symptoms should receive medical care immediately:

- Difficulty breathing or breathing too fast

- Flaring of the chest while breathing

- Indentation of the skin between ribs, under the rib cage, or above the sternum

- Showing blueness in the face or body

- Long pauses when breathing

- Dehydration

Some children, like babies who are less than six months old, premature infants, those with chronic lung or heart disease, patients exposed to secondhand smoke, and those with an immune system deficiency, are more at risk for severe RSV infections than others.

Upon diagnosis, focus on symptom relief, like staying hydrated, fever control and nasal suctioning. Do not use over-the-counter medications to stop a cough.

"We want everyone to know that we're here for them when and if they need us. We just ask that they be patient with us as we work through this surge," Goode said. "We're grateful to our staff members who are working tirelessly to treat of all those who are seeking us out for care."

For more information on WVU Medicine, visit WVUMedicine.org.

began pre-treating roads with salt brine on Wednesday.

There are 147 trucks equipped with plows and salt-spreading capabilities in the six-county district. According to Pack, each truck is assigned drivers in 12-hour shifts around the clock, when needed.

"Drivers are on the roadway as long as the snow is falling and then for the cleanup afterwards until the roads are deemed safe and passable," Pack explained.

WVDOH reminds motorists to slow down, give snowplow drivers space and never pass a truck during a winter weather event.

## RAIN

FROM PAGE A-1

If city streets are pre-treated, it's done using the same rock salt that is laid down after a snowfall.

Davis said the city has eight plow trucks that are deployed based on supervisors' observations.

"They often go out to check the condition of the roads. The Morgantown Fire and Police departments also call to alert the Streets Division if they think the roadways are becoming unsafe," he said.

At the state level, Chief Engineer Joe Pack said West Virginia Division of Highways Division 4

## HEALTH

**Breakthrough in treating Alzheimer's using targeted drug delivery reported in New England Journal of Medicine**

WVU Today

A potential advancement in the treatment of Alzheimer's disease was announced today by researchers at the West Virginia University Rockefeller Neuroscience Institute (RNI). A first in-human study, featured in the latest issue of the New England Journal of Medicine, demonstrates that focused ultrasound in combination with anti-amyloid-beta monoclonal antibody treatment can accelerate the clearance of amyloid-beta plaques in the brains of patients with Alzheimer's disease.

Anti-amyloid-beta (A) monoclonal antibody therapies, such as adunacumab, lecanemab, and donanemab, can reduce amyloid-beta plaques and slow the progression of Alzheimer's. Until now, these promising antibody therapies had limitations in reaching the brain due to the blood-brain barrier (BBB), a protective barrier between blood vessels and the brain that blocks harmful substances from getting into the brain, but also limits the access of therapeutics. More than 98 percent of drugs do not readily cross the BBB, thus requiring systemic treatments with higher doses and more frequent therapies.

RNI scientists used a focused ultrasound (FUS) system developed by Insightec to safely and temporarily open the BBB to allow the anti-amyloid-beta antibodies increased access to targeted areas of



WVU Today photos

Above, an Alzheimer's patient undergoes focused ultrasound treatment with the WVU RNI team. Below, this 3-D illustration shows how ultrasound waves from inside the helmet converge on a focal point on the brain used for blood-brain barrier opening.

the brain. The FUS MRI-guided treatment helmet with more than 1,000 ultrasound transducers were directed to specific brain regions with high amyloid-beta plaques.

In this first-in-human proof-of-concept study, three patients (two male and one female, aged 59-77) with mild Alzheimer's disease received six standard monthly infusions of adunacumab antibody, immediately followed by FUS-

mediated BBB opening in regions with high amyloid-beta plaques. The results demonstrated the safety of this approach and increased reduction of amyloid-beta plaques measured by PET scans.

"After six months of antibody treatment, we observed an average of 32 percent more reduction in amyloid-beta plaques (53 percent centiloid) in brain areas with blood-brain barrier opening com-

pared to areas with no such opening," Ali Rezai, M.D., lead author of the study and executive chair of the RNI, said. "Focused ultrasound is a non-invasive outpatient procedure for BBB opening with great promise for improving drug delivery to the brain."

"The next phase of the clinical trial will begin this year to explore how to further accelerate amyloid-beta removal in a shorter time with focused ultrasound in combination with lecanemab antibody," according to Dr. Rezai.

"This is an exciting time in the treatment of Alzheimer's disease," Marc Haut, Ph.D., director of the RNI Memory Health Clinic, said. "We are hopeful that the work we are doing may lead to improvements in outcome for many other patients and their families coping with Alzheimer's."

**About the WVU Rockefeller Neuroscience Institute**

The WVU Rockefeller Neuroscience Institute (RNI) is a comprehensive multidisciplinary patient care, education, and research institute providing neurological and mental healthcare for 275,000 patients annually. The 250 physicians and scientists of the RNI improve lives by pioneering advances in neuroscience, brain health, and therapeutics. The RNI team uses the latest technologies with academic, government, and industry partners to make tangible progress to combat public health challenges ranging from addiction to Alzheimer's disease. For more information about the WVU Rockefeller Neuroscience Institute, visit WVUMedicine.org/RNI.

## KICKOFF

FROM PAGE A-1

field sites all came together, along with a federal tax credit to help underwrite the project.

There would be no project without customers, he said, but it drew interest and subscriptions from residential, commercial and industrial customers wanting to obtain the solar credits. And it drew the interest of the National Energy Technology Morgantown site, which will be explained shortly.

The plan for Thursday, after the kickoff, was to do some testing and then hopefully turn on the site to start feeding power into the grid.

Next to the lectern was Nick Preservati, director of the West Virginia Office of Energy. This was his first visit to the site, he said. "It's awe inspiring. I didn't realize the size and the scope of the project."

He explained why it's important. "Next to food and water, access to affordable and reliable energy is probably the single most important factor for us to be able to continue our way of life. ... This is a phenomenal step in that direction."

West Virginia ranks fifth nationally in energy production but only 31st in electricity generation, he said. That gap presents an opportunity to increase the state's economic viability by moving power generation into the top 10.

This site, he said, helps maximize the state's all-of-the-above energy mix and meets the criteria of the state's new energy policy: West Virginia REAL



Submitted photo

A Mon Power aerial view of the site.

Energy, producing energy here that's Reliable, Efficient, Affordable and Local.

Now to NETL and its partnership with the site, explained by Sean Plasynski, acting director. In the summer of 2022, he said, NETL was asked to develop a carbon-free electricity implementation plan to demonstrate how it would comply with a Biden clean energy executive order, with the specific goal of incorporating 100% carbon-free electricity by 2030.

As it happened, Mon Power reached out to see if NETL would be interested in a long-term solar power purchase agreement (PPA), which would meet the order's requirements.

So NETL developed a first-of-its-kind PPA for its Morgantown site. It will buy 100% of its usage, 29,000 megawatt hours, annually from the site (the site feeds its power into the

PJM regional grid, but the PPA records all the power as being purchased from this site).

The PPA made much more sense than NETL trying to build its own solar plant, he said, and allows it to reach the carbon-free goal ahead of schedule, by 2026.

"We at NETL are excited about this Fort Martin project, as it will advance the nation's clean energy goals and help support the domestic production of high-performance solar panels," he said.

Brian Tierney, FirstEnergy president and CEO, wrapped up the event. "This is a really proud moment for Mon Power" he said. "This is a win-win for the state, our customers, our unions, the country, all happening right here in Madsville."

Two other sites have Public Service Commission approval: a 27-acre retired ash disposal site in Rivesville, Marion County, to generate 5.5 MW, which is the next one set for completion; and a 26-acre reclaimed ash disposal site in Marlowe, Berkeley County with 5.8 MW capacity. Construction of these is expected to be complete by the end of this year.

Mon Power will return to the PSC later this year for final approval on two other sites: a 51-acre site in Wylie Ridge, adjacent to a Mon Power substation in Weirton, Hancock County, 8.4 MW; and a 44-acre reclaimed strip mine property near Davis in Tucker County, 11.5 MW. Construction of these is expected to be complete by the end of 2025.

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EDITORIAL

## Explainer: Ranked choice voting

Secretary of State Mac Warner recently released an op-ed taking a stance against ranked choice voting. Which is fine — except that he made some misleading claims.

For our part, we're going to give an overview of what ranked choice voting is and how it works. For more details, there are several great resources to learn more about ranked choice voting (often shortened to RCV) that you can explore on your own.

Ranked choice voting is what it sounds like: You rank candidates running for office in order of most preferred to least. Say Mickey Mouse, Snoopy and Scooby-Doo are running for president. With RCV, you list them on your ballot from top choice to last choice (e.g., First: Snoopy; second: Mickey; third: Scooby).

Votes are counted in a series of rounds. Everyone's top choice is counted for Round 1. If a single candidate wins the majority of votes, then that candidate wins the election. If no candidate gets the majority, counting moves to Round 2 and the candidate who received the fewest top-choice votes gets dropped. This is why RCV is sometimes called Instant Runoff Voting: The rankings allow for an immediate runoff instead of setting up a separate election (which costs extra) — like when Georgia had to hold a subsequent vote to decide between Raphael Warnock and Herschel Walker because neither earned more than 50% of votes.

In our example, say Snoopy got 42% of the vote, Mickey got 38% and Scooby got 20%. For Round 2, Scooby gets dropped from the race and now only votes for Mickey and Snoopy get counted.

But wait! What if Scooby was your first choice? Then your second-choice candidate becomes your first choice, and your vote is counted toward them. What if Scooby was your second choice? Doesn't matter — your first-choice candidate is still in the race, and that's where your vote went.

The rounds will continue until one candidate reaches a majority. Each time someone's top choice is eliminated from the race, their second (or third or fourth) choice will be moved up to first choice, and that is where their vote will go.

It can sound complicated at first, especially since we are used to a system that generally only has two viable options. And it can seem skewed if the candidate who had the most top-choice votes in Round 1 (e.g., Snoopy at 42%) ultimately loses. However ...

In our example, voters who listed Scooby first, Mickey second and Snoopy third get their votes counted toward Mickey in Round 2, ultimately giving Mickey the win. But that means more voters agreed Mickey would be a better president than Scooby than people who thought Snoopy would be better than Mickey. In this way, RCV is more representative of the people's will.

This is also why RCV tends to favor more moderate candidates. A more extreme candidate may initially receive the most votes with as little as 30% or 40%, but once less popular candidates are eliminated and second and third choices are taken into account, moderates have a tendency to rise to the top.

Notice how our example has three candidates, all with a decent number of votes? RCV allows for more choice, giving third-party candidates a better shot and letting voters do more than simply pick the "lesser of two evils." This takes some power away from the rigid two-party system.

One of the biggest "cons" of RCV are "exhausted" ballots: ballots with fewer candidates listed than candidates in the race. Once all of that voter's choices have been eliminated, that ballot became exhausted — there are no more eligible candidates for the vote to count toward. However, an RCV ballot can go through multiple rounds before being exhausted. So that exhausted ballot counts way more than a throwaway vote for a third-party or write-in candidate does in our current system.

We understand why some politicians dislike RCV: It challenges the status quo, favors moderates, levels the playing field among candidates and — above all — gives more power to voters.

## How to have a meaningful conversation with your MAGA dad

**LATELY, I AVOID CONVERSATIONS WITH MY FATHER BECAUSE OF HIS PASSION FOR LECTURING ME ABOUT POLITICS FROM A HARD-RIGHT PERSPECTIVE.** It began during COVID lockdowns. Not long ago, he told me he sees Tucker Carlson as a hero. Exasperated, I told him he was idolizing a guy who had mocked his daughter's reporting on national TV.

He shook his head as if I were lying or whining, then soliloquized about Carlson's defense of traditional masculinity.

It's not unusual to become estranged from family members who've embraced ideas we view as dead wrong and dangerous. We've grown accustomed to our divides, which many of us see as unbridgeable. But as we enter 2024, I wonder: If we can't have tough political conversations with some of the people we love most, how are we going to overcome our differences as a nation?

This election year could determine whether our democracy lives or dies. What better New Year's resolution than to struggle for its survival by rebuilding relationships with family members on the other side? For many, it would be about more than politics. Personally, I don't want to live the rest of my days unable to connect with my dad.

We can't impose one-sided change on anyone. But if we seek to connect across differences, we can sometimes spark a process of mutual transformation. It's a risky art, particularly for women who've been cultured to make space for the bellicose men in our lives. What if we're dealing with a relative who acts as if he knows everything? Is it worth engaging such a person?

For many of us, it isn't. I spent the last three years learning how to set boundaries. It has been great for my mental health and sense of well-being. But now that I know how to protect myself, I think I might be ready to try to salvage my bond with my father.

Experts believe it can be worthwhile to engage even our most strongly opinionated family members. Braver Angels, a citizens' organization that works to bridge red and blue America, has a free online

course for talking with relatives about politics based on their personality types in debates, including what the group calls the "gladiator," the one who regularly initiates arguments to prove others wrong.

When entering the ring with a gladiator or anyone else, it's important to be in control of one's emotions, said Bill Doherty, Braver Angels co-founder and professor of family social science at the University of Minnesota. "A lot of times where the conversations start is that somebody else in your family or social world says something that bugs you, and then you go after them," he told me. "This is not the best way to start the conversation. Don't start when you're annoyed."

But it's often harder to stay calm when discussing politics with a relative than with almost anybody else, in part because of how family baggage

can bombard us with information that reinforces our prejudices and portrays the other side as a monolith.

Braver Angels suggests four steps for meaningful conversations with gladiators: Clarify, Agree, Pivot and offer Perspective (CAPP). Here's how that strategy could work with a boisterous MAGA relative, whether a classic gladiator or not.

- Clarify: Be curious about what your relative really believes, and paraphrase what you think they believe as accurately as possible. Don't shade or distort what they've said. Ask questions from a place of humility.

- Agree: Find common ground, such as a shared belief, value or objective. Tell the relative that you see eye-to-eye with them on that.

- Pivot: Let the relative know you'd like to share your perspective. Braver Angels suggests the phrase, "Can I give you my thoughts on this issue?"

- Perspective: Offer your perspective if you get a green light. Use personal stories and humanizing anecdotes. If your relative doesn't want to hear your thoughts, return to the first two steps or exit the conversation.

Braver Angels suggests settling for short and sweet conversations. The end goal can't be to win the argument, but to connect more deeply with the other person. If the conversation goes well or better than expected, express appreciation. If your relative lectures and attacks the whole time, then it's best to end the conversation and to do so without returning fire.

Some of us may have a greater gift for these conversations. Others may understandably want to avoid bullying and old patterns of behavior. But closing off communication can't change those patterns. What can inspire change is the effort to connect.

There's a part of my father that longs to connect with me. There are other parts, too. But the part that got through to me is the part that never stopped trying to connect. I gave up for a time. Now, I feel inspired to try again.

**JEAN GUERRERO** is an opinion columnist at the Los Angeles Times.



can possess us. A Braver Angels worksheet on family and politics lists examples of phrases that reveal old resentments, derailing discussion, such as "You're not the boss of me," "You've never taken me seriously," or "You think you're the smart/enlightened/holy one."

One helpful strategy is to talk with relatives one-on-one, especially with gladiators who are riled up by an audience. "If you initiate the conversation in a low-key way, it's less apt to go badly," Doherty said. Other tactics include practicing beforehand and simply reminding ourselves that we don't have to regress to childhood.

During the conversation, we should avoid pejorative labels, generalizations and the impulse to ascribe the most extreme beliefs to the other person. Be mindful of the fact that we're all in different echo chambers

## National debt: The sky IS falling

THE HEADLINE IN TUESDAY'S NEW YORK TIMES CAUGHT MY ATTENTION: "THE DEBT MATTERS AGAIN."

The article by German Lopez draws attention to the growing problem of the national debt, which just passed \$34 trillion.

Lopez writes that "For years, many economists believed the country's debt was not a problem. Interest rates were low, which held down debt payments. Inflation was also low, which suggested debt wasn't hampering the economy."

But, as Lopez writes, times have changed.

The New York Times oft-quoted columnist, economist Paul Krugman, who used to opine that the debt didn't matter that much, is concerned. "Serious deficit reduction, a bad idea a



HOPPY KERCHEVAL

decade ago, is a good idea now," Krugman wrote.

This is no longer Chicken Little "the sky is falling" hysteria from a few budget hawks. Now, even the New York Times is joining the chorus worrying about the debt, and it's about time, for several reasons.

First, just paying the interest on the debt is more of a burden all the time. Interest alone cost tax-

payers \$659 billion in fiscal year 2023. That's double what it was just three years ago, and it's projected to continue to rise unless there are policy changes.

Just as a matter of comparison, that \$659 billion interest payment is about 130 times larger than West Virginia's annual General Revenue Budget.

The Congressional Budget Office warns of future consequences.

"Such high and rising debt would have significant economic and financial consequences," the CBO reported last July. "It would, among other things, slow economic growth, drive up interest payments to foreign holders of U.S. debt, elevate the risk of a financial crisis, and increase the likelihood of other adverse effects."

In Washington, Democrats blame Republicans and Republicans blame Democrats. So what else is new? The Times reports Democrats want higher taxes on the rich and Republicans want to cut spending on social programs, and never the twain shall meet.

Even if they did, we would still be in trouble.

According to the Times, "Even if the preferred policies of each party eventually are enacted, they do not come close to solving the problem. Neither party is willing to cut the biggest government programs: Social Security, Medicare and the military. And both have ruled out tax increases on most households."

Worse yet, Congress constantly fails to follow the regular order of business and pass annual appropriations bills on time. Another government shutdown is looming later this month if the

House and Senate cannot agree on a spending plan.

Members of Congress consistently fail to fulfill that obligation because it is hard and risky. It serves the members well in the short term because there are no political consequences. However, as the non-partisan Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget said, "This is a moment of consequence and continuing to refuse to pay our own bills will not lead us to where we need to be as a nation."

That is so true, and unfortunately the path we are on now leads toward a weaker nation with future generations saddled with an overwhelming debt passed down to them by their irresponsible ancestors.

**HOPPY KERCHEVAL** is a MetroNews anchor and the longtime host of "Talkline." Contact him at hoppy.kercheval@wradio.com.

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PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



BY STEPHAN PASTIS

NON SEQUITUR



BY WILEY

COMMUNITY

## Hoop Dreams: Elks Lodge 411 setting up for another free-throw competition Saturday

BY JIM BISSETT

JBissett@DominionPost.com

Basketball free throws as a metaphor for life and success?

“Of course,” Jon Kline said. “You’re out there, all by yourself. And you have to earn it. No one’s going to do it for you.”

He’s talking about the Morgantown Elks Lodge 411 Hoop Shoot, which happens 10 a.m. Saturday in the SteppingStones gym at Mylan Park.

That’s the competition where youngsters aged 8-13 stand at the

foul line, in hopes of sinking 25 shots — one by one, one right after the other.

Or, as many as they can, at least.

Registration for the Morgantown shoot is easy, Kline said. Just show up at SteppingStones on Saturday morning.

“We’ll get going around 10:15 or 10:20,” he said, “once we get everyone signed up.”

Kline is the current Exalted Ruler of the local lodge and director of the competition, which is in its

51st year, nationally.

Just like, say, NCAA’s March Madness, those with the best percentage in the paint advance through the bracket.

Winners get their names on the wall of an exalted venue: The Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, in Springfield, Mass.

West Virginia is no stranger to that rarified air.

In recent years, a competitor from Morgantown made it to the final rounds, Kline said.

Last year, in the national

finals at Chicago’s Wintrust Arena, Morgan Miehle, of Wheeling, netted 25 in a row to take the big title in her division.

That it was the 50th year for the national event made the feat even more epic, Kline said.

“Twenty-five in a row,” the local director said. “That’s not easy for anyone.”

But not impossible, he said. “Kids get in the zone,” he said, “and they’ll just start sinking free throws.”

Seven in a row.

Eight in a row.

Even 25 in a row — nothing but net.

“You get that muscle memory and that rhythm going,” the director said.

“And when we start out, kids get five practice shots, so that takes some of the pressure off going in.”

**Grit with it**

He likes that it’s all discipline, self-direction ... and grit,

SEE HOOP, A-6

## Photo Friday



Submitted photo

Betsy Pyle happened upon this rainbow during her holiday errands. “I was in Gladesville ... to cut a Christmas tree, and after a few sprinkles, this beautiful scene appeared. We pulled over to capture it on my iPhone,” she said. To submit a shot for Photo Friday, send a high-resolution digital image to DPNews@dominionpost.com. Include your name and information about the photo, including where and when it was taken.

FUNDING

## PACE Enterprises awarded FHLP-AHP grant

DPNews@DominionPost.com

PACE Enterprises was recently awarded \$750,000 from the Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh as part of the Affordable Housing Program.

It will help fund the PACE Place Project.

PACE Place will be a one-of-a-kind, 12-unit independent housing facility in Star City for individuals with disabilities.

The additional voluntary pool of funding for 2023, which is separate and distinct from FHLBank’s required, statutory AHP, is provided to address the critical housing needs within FHLBank’s district. The Board of Directors of FHLBank approved \$24.6 million in awarded grants under the AHP and \$8 million in awarded grants through a voluntary housing grant initiative.

Greg Morris, CEO of

PACE said, “This is the next step in a very important and necessary project for those with disabilities in the Morgantown area. The funding will help kick-start the construction, but we will continue to look for additional opportunities to aid in the building process that should start in early 2024.”

Morris said there are numerous people to thank for supporting this project.

“There are so many individuals to thank, but I feel the need to mention the members of the Widmer and Prete families who initiated the project by gifting the property to our organization. I also would like to thank Terri Cutright of Terri Reed Cutright & Associates and Brad Frankhouser of Desmone Architects for their help in the arduous application process.”

**PAGE PLACE WILL BE A ONE-OF-A-KIND, 12-UNIT INDEPENDENT HOUSING FACILITY IN STAR CITY FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.**

UNITED WAY

## Resolve to get involved? United Way has tons of volunteer opportunities

**WELCOME TO THE NEW YEAR.**

This is always a time for resolutions and fresh starts, and while some of you are committed to losing weight, practicing self-care, shopping local, reading more, throwing out bad habits or just making healthy ones, we’d like you to consider one more.

It’s something little that you can do, but it can make ripple effects for our entire community.

Volunteering.

Yes, in 2024, we’re urging you to find a way to lend a hand to those in need.

If you need ideas and aren’t sure where to start, the United Way of Mon and Preston Counties is a great place to turn for those answers.

To jumpstart your volunteering resolution, here are a few ideas:

- The United Way offers several events throughout the year that desperately need volunteer help. In May, Day of Caring — a one-day, two-county volunteer effort that brings out more than 200 individuals to work at various projects in the community — and the Blue and Gold Mine Sale — a huge rummage sale held at the stadium during WVU’s graduation weekend — will return. The two events are wonderful volunteer opportunities, and folks find that they learn a lot more about community organizations

and programs, while also creating long-lasting friendships at the same time.

Women United, an affinity group of the United Way, is always looking for new members. These ladies work to put together Power of the Purse, a fundraiser for Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library, each summer. This year’s Power of the Purse will be June 27. In addition to planning that event, Women United members work to promote leadership through networking opportunities and fundraising. To learn more, visit [www.unitedwaympc.org/womenunited](http://www.unitedwaympc.org/womenunited).

- Emerging Leaders, like Women United, is another affinity group of the United Way. Its members are between ages 18-40 and work to promote philanthropy amongst young adults, building a strong foundation for United Way’s future volunteers, donors and advocates. These folks meet to learn more about the organization, network and plan fundraisers, while making friendships and building leadership skills. Those interested in joining Emerging Leaders can contact Jack Thompson at [jack@unitedwaympc.org](mailto:jack@unitedwaympc.org).

- United Way’s Helpful Harvest Food Program, headquartered at Hazel’s House of Hope in Morgan-

town, is always in need of volunteers to work in the food pantry. Often, the program receives large shipments of fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as shelf-stable items, that need sorted and organized so that local pantries can come pick up the much-needed goods. Helpful Harvest also receives shipments of hygiene products, cleaning supplies and baby items that need sorted. The organization can make arrangements for one or two volunteers at a time or facilitate projects for larger groups, depending on the volunteers’ needs. To volunteer at Helpful Harvest, contact Jack at [jack@unitedwaympc.org](mailto:jack@unitedwaympc.org).

Various other opportunities, including projects at other area agencies and organizations, can be found at [VolunteerMPC.org](http://VolunteerMPC.org), United Way’s volunteer portal. If you’re interested in seeing all of the options, visit the site and sign up for something that fits your skill-set and personality. And Jack, our community engagement manager, is always up for a conversation about your specific volunteering needs. Email him at [jack@unitedwaympc.org](mailto:jack@unitedwaympc.org) or call 304-296-7525.

**AMANDA POSEY** is the director of marketing and communications for the United Way of Monongalia and Preston Counties. She can be reached at [amanda@unitedwaympc.org](mailto:amanda@unitedwaympc.org).

MOM’S CORNER

## Start the new year by creating a vision board

**HAPPY NEW YEAR, MAMAS!** I hope everyone had a great New Year’s Eve. I was lucky enough to have my mom come to visit for the weekend, which the kids loved.

Now that the holidays are all over, the Christmas decorations are taken down and life is beginning to slow down some, I get to do one of my favorite new year activities — create a vision board for 2024.

I have been creating vision boards for myself since college and it is one of my favorite traditions to help me kick off the new year. A lot of people enjoy making new year’s resolutions and I guess this is my version of that.

I am a more visual person, so creating a digital vision board gives me the opportunity to set it as my computer screen, as a regular reminder of my goals. When I used to make them by hand, I would set the vision board up somewhere in my room so that I would see it every morning while getting ready for the day.

To begin, I sit down and



ANN BURNS

think about what I want my life to look like in the next year. Once I have a handful of goals and ideas, I start looking for images to represent them. Then I create a collage using those images. It’s that simple!

I have learned through the years to not go overboard with too many goals or ideas, because then it seems less likely to achieve them all. So, I typically stick with about five.

This year, my goals are to be more affectionate to my loved ones, spend more one-on-one time with each kid of mine, be more outgoing at work, start cooking and baking again, and pick a hobby and stick with it.

The cool thing about

SEE VISION, A-6

### AREA ARRESTS

#### MON COUNTY SHERIFF

**Robles**, Jason Henry, 24, strangulation, Dec. 24, Deputy Rose.  
**Blosser**, Nathaniel Zachary, 33, destruction of property, domestic assault, Dec. 25, Deputy Watkins.  
**Tubolino**, Mariana Steven, 63, domestic assault or domestic battery – 2nd offense, Dec. 25, Deputy Greenawalt.  
**Dorsey**, Kordell Thomas, 25, violation of protective order, Dec. 27, Deputy Ruscello.

#### MORGANTOWN POLICE

**Atkins**, Trinidad Clouis, 26, breaking and entering-non residence, Dec. 30, Officer Boyles.  
**Hyde**, Daniel Ray, 30, shoplifting, Dec. 29, Officer Hull.  
**Lyons**, Allison Rhae, 27, shoplifting, Dec. 29, Officer Hull.  
**Taylor**, Khalil Malik, 44, domestic battery, Dec. 27, Officer Mayle.

#### STAR CITY POLICE

**Picado-Meza**, Salomon, 26, violation of protective order, Dec. 23, Officer Layton.  
**Zyzniewsky**, Bohdan, 39, shoplifting, motor vehicle tampering, Dec. 27, Officer Gamble.  
**Statler**, Kennedy Ann, 59, domestic assault, Dec. 28, Officer Li.

#### MON METRO DRUG TASK FORCE

**Brock**, Jacquan M., 26, possession with intent, Dec. 27, Sergeant Slagle.

#### STATE POLICE

**Cruz**, Cesar Melchor, domestic battery, domestic assault, refusing fingerprints, Dec. 29, Trooper Merkich.  
**Rivers**, Brendan P., 51, indecent exposure, obstruction, public intoxication, Dec. 31, Trooper Anglin.

#### DUI RELATED

**Hooton**, Jarod Scott, 34, possession, DUI, Dec. 29, Officer Bittner.  
**Stone**, Jaidon Cole, 19, DUI, Dec. 31, Officer Cather.

### VISION

FROM PAGE A-5

this year’s vision board process is my 5-year-old daughter asked what I was doing and I got to talk to her about it and help her think of a few new year goals and dreams for herself. I loved this!  
 She told me that in the new year she wanted to visit family more, go horseback riding and learn to swim without floaties. Having my daughter be a part of a personal tradition I’ve practiced for

years was really amazing and meaningful. I hope that each year moving forward we can create our vision boards together and make it a special time for us to look ahead to the new year together.  
 I love doing this every year and now I get to share it with my loved ones. Hopefully this inspires you to start this tradition in your household, too.

**ANN BURNS** is a Morgantown native, raising two young children with her husband, Drake. She writes weekly columns for The Dominion Post. Contact her at [Columns@DominionPost.com](mailto:Columns@DominionPost.com).

### HOOP

FROM PAGE A-5

he said.  
 And yes, “grit,” is an official term and philosophy that the national Elks organization co-opted several years ago as the motivating philosophy behind its Hoop Shoot.  
 Angela Duckworth, a psychologist who began her professional life as a management consultant and then an educator, came up with the concept when she was the classroom, teaching math to seventh-graders.  
 Her most successful students, she said, weren’t necessarily governed by IQ.  
 So-called “smart kids” would struggle in her class, she said.  
 And the ones who didn’t have cerebral numbers at that level — ones who also identified themselves as not being “math people” — were still making better marks.  
 As a psychologist, she went national with grit, watching cadets at West Point, rookie teachers in tough, inner-city schools and sales and marketing

professionals in hyper-competitive fields.  
 Who would drop out? Who would resign? Who would get fired?  
 It wasn’t the aforementioned IQ or intelligence or good looks, said Duckworth, who mapped it all out in a recent TED talk.  
 Success, she said, all came to that occasionally elusive factor of grit.  
 “Grit is passion and perseverance for very long-term goals,” the classroom teacher and psychologist told her audience during that talk.  
 “Grit is having stamina,” she continued.  
 “Grit is sticking with your future: Day in and day out, not just for week, not just for the month, but for years.”  
 Grit is good, too, Kline said.  
 Especially, he said, when it goes with being immortalized in the Naismith hall.  
 “We want our Hoop Shoot to be an automatic part of the phys. ed. curriculum in Monongalia County Schools,” the tournament director said.

### NATION

## Defendant facing new charges after his attack on a Nevada judge is caught on video

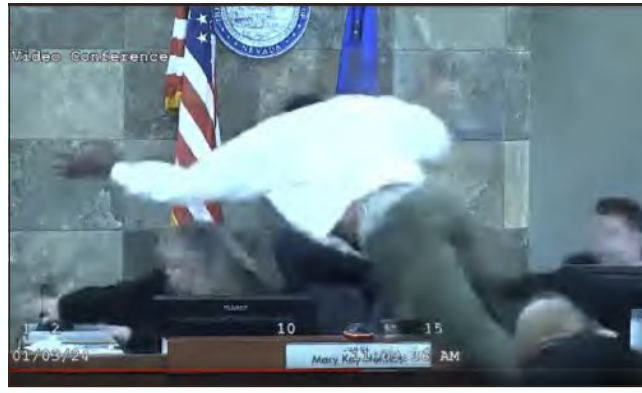
Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Moments after a defendant in a felony battery case tried to convince a Nevada judge he was turning his life around and didn’t need to be locked up, his sentencing went sideways: He leaped over a defense table and the judge’s bench, landing atop her and launching a bloody brawl with court officials and attorneys.

The violent scene on Wednesday was captured by courtroom video showing Clark County District Court Judge Mary Kay Holthus falling back from her seat against a wall as the defendant leaped over the judge’s bench, grabbed her hair and an American flag topped over them. The judge suffered some injuries but was not hospitalized, courthouse officials said.

The defendant, Deobra Delone Redden, 30, was jailed on \$54,000 bail and refused to return to court on Thursday on new charges, so a judge rescheduled his next appearance for Jan. 9.

Redden had to be wrestled off the judge Wednesday by several court and jail officers and courtroom staff members — including some who were seen throwing



Clark County District Court via AP

In this image from video provided by the Clark County District Court, a defendant identified by court officials and records as Deobra Redden is seen launching over the desk of Judge Mary Kay Holthus during his sentencing in a felony battery case on Wednesday in Las Vegas.

punches. One courtroom marshal was hospitalized for treatment of a bleeding gash on his forehead and a dislocated shoulder.

“It happened so fast it was hard to know what to do,” said Richard Scow, the chief county district attorney who was prosecuting Redden for allegedly attacking a person with a baseball bat.

Redden’s sentencing was not immediately rescheduled.

Clark County District Attorney Steve Wolfson said prosecutors are

reviewing the courtroom incident to determine what additional charges Redden will face. He said Redden’s criminal record includes three prior felony and nine misdemeanor convictions, mostly for violent offenses, and should be ordered held without bail as “an extreme danger to the community and a flight risk.”

“He’s been violent his entire adult life,” Wolfson said.

Redden’s defense attorney on Wednesday, Caesar Almase, declined Thursday to comment.

### STATE

## DHHR becomes three separate agencies

BY CARRIE HODOUSEK  
 WWMetroNews.com

CHARLESTON — The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources has officially transitioned to three separate agencies.

As of Jan. 1, 2024, there are three cabinet secretaries that oversee the Department of Health, the Department of Human Services and the Department of Health Facilities.

“The transition has been a long time coming,” said Dr. Sherri Young who left her role as interim secretary of DHHR to become the secretary of the Department of Health. Young served in the interim role since July 2023.

Dr. Cynthia Persily was named the secretary of the Department of Human Services and Michael Caruso was named the secretary of the new Department of Health Facilities.

The change comes after the state Legislature passed a bill in March 2023 to reorganize DHHR, contending the restructuring would make it more

accountable. DHHR had been under scrutiny over how the enormous agency handles a range of issues, including foster care, child protective services and the developmentally disabled.

Young said all three secretaries are working to be more efficient.

“We’ve had several months to work together so that services wouldn’t be disrupted and so that our staff could be prepared,” she said. “We continue to communicate.”

Young previously served as the health officer of the Kanawha-Charleston Health Department during the COVID-19 pandemic before taking the job with the state.

“One thing we learned especially during the pandemic is that we can’t be one thing to everybody. We have to have boots on the ground. We have to have those partnerships delivering health care in the communities and also getting that feedback so that we know what the needs are,” she said.

As part of the transition, there is a new Office of Shared Administration,

which now provides shared services from centralized units such as finance, human resources management, information services, and constituent services.

Young said she knows accountability is important and that all three departments will be under a microscope.

“We know that the Department of Health, at least with the Bureau for Public Health, things have not been paid in a timely fashion. If we have to back up the procurement process or any of the processes to get our grants paid on time, we’re going to do that,” she said.

Young has also been working to fill vacancies within the Bureau of Public Health in the last several months. She said most of the vacancies are nurses and social workers who are eligible for retirement within the next five years.

“What I’ve been doing from the Department of Health side is literally going through every single office and every single position that we have avail-

able, looking at the services that we offer as well as how can we make them more efficient,” she said.

Under the reorganization, the Department of Health now includes the Bureau for Public Health, Office of Emergency Medical Services, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Center for Threat Preparedness, Health Care Authority, Office of Inspector General and Human Rights Commission.

The Department of Human Services now includes the Bureau for Behavioral Health, Bureau for Child Support Enforcement, Bureau for Family Assistance, Bureau for Medical Services, Bureau for Social Services and Office of Drug Control Policy.

The Department of Health Facilities now includes Hopewell Hospital, Jackie Withrow Hospital, John Manchin Sr. Health Care Center, Lakin Hospital, Mildred Mitchell-Bateman Hospital, Welch Community Hospital and William R. Sharpe, Jr. Hospital.

### TRAVEL

## Study finds West Virginia has many hidden gems in overall mountain towns across U.S.

BY JARETT LEWIS  
 WWMetroNews.com

CHARLESTON — A few West Virginia winter “hidden gems” aren’t so hidden anymore.

A recent study from “Architectural Digest” found that Thomas, in Tucker County, was ranked as the No. 1 hidden gem as well as the fourth-best mountain town in the entire country.

Elkins, in Randolph County, was ranked No. 2 as a hidden gem and was ranked as the 30th-best overall mountain town. Marlinton, in Pocahontas County, was ranked as the No. 8 hidden gem.

Thomas scored a 95.09 out of 100. The scoring is based on things that make a place a great tourist attraction in the wintertime like snowfall, skiing, restaurants and entertainment.

Jessica Waldo, execu-

tive director of Tucker County Convention and Visitor’s Bureau (CVB), calls this national recognition quite the honor.

“It’s a pretty amazing list and we’re honored to be included in it, especially in the top four,” said Waldo.

Waldo was a guest on MetroNews “Talkline” Thursday and said she was surprised by the rankings and that a town in her county was on a list with other popular winter destinations across the country. At the same time, it’s also a testament to the hard work of the Tucker County CVB.

“I will give credit to our tourism office, they do a great job on getting the word out about West Virginia and how it’s a great destination,” Waldo said.

Waldo said the town of Thomas has turned into a hot spot for local folks and tourists to enjoy music and

art. She said the rise in recognition was “organic” and entrepreneurs saw potential in the area to develop the “walking town.”

There’s plenty to do in the town. Tucker County is home to two full service ski resorts in Canaan Valley and Timberline Ski Resort. In addition to traditional skiing, Canaan Valley Resort State Park offers outdoor ice skating and a four-lane snow tubing hill. There’s also a lift-accessed sledding hill at Blackwater Falls State Park. Canaan Valley Resort State Park sees an average snowfall of 150 inches a year.

Mountain State Brewing Co. is in Thomas, too. Waldo said the area has plenty of fantastic food options for visitors as well.

In the study, “Architectural Digest” searched for the best places to own a

mountain home and the best “hidden gems.” The western part of the U.S. took up most of the top mountain towns overall, but West Virginia was seen a lot in the hidden gems section.

“The word is out,” Waldo said about Tucker County. “It’s really an honor to be included in that and be a great destination for the winter season.”

Thomas has fewer than 1,000 people and is also one of the most affordable towns, according to the study. The median value of a home in Thomas is approximately \$140,400.

The town of Davis in Tucker County and Snowshoe in Pocahontas County are among the best winter traveling destinations in the U.S., according to a 2023 study from “Architectural Design.”

## Calling all clubs

**Would you like to see news of your club published in The Dominion Post?**  
**Let us know what you are up to. From telling people when your next meeting or event is to sharing photos from your latest outing, we can help.**  
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**Have questions? Contact Editor Pam Queen or Managing Editor McDowell. [editor@dominionpost.com](mailto:editor@dominionpost.com) or [ame@dominionpost.com](mailto:ame@dominionpost.com)**  
**Or call 304-291-9425**

## OBITUARIES

Dorothy Marie Koval Simons, 82, of Morgantown, passed away on Wednesday, Jan. 3, 2024, at her residence. She was the daughter of the late John and Irene Koval.

**Dorothy Simons**

Dorothy coached girls basketball from the early 1970's until 1989, becoming one of the winningest coaches in the state of West Virginia. She won three state championships and earned her spot as an inaugural member of the St. Francis High School Hall of Fame. She thoroughly enjoyed teaching physical education and being a guidance counselor to many of her students with whom she had a positive impact

on their lives.

Dorothy enjoyed many activities including swimming, dancing, and tennis, as well as walking her dog, Daisy. She was an outstanding mother and grandmother, and most of all enjoyed spending time with her grandchildren. Dorothy worked alongside her husband, Bernie, in the insurance business for many years until they both retired. In her later years, Dorothy loved spending time with Carole Koval, Charolette Bolyard, and Roger Brown shopping and going to restaurants.

Dorothy was Catholic by faith and was a member of St. Mary Roman Catholic Church.

The family would like to recognize her wonderful neighbors and friends, Rosemary Cianfrocco, Carol Wooton, and Donna Scott.

## Dorothy Simons

The family would also like to give a special thank you to a true family friend, Rex Wolf, who was a tremendous help throughout her battle with lung cancer caused by the covid vaccine.

Dorothy is survived by her sons, Bernie Michael "Butch" Simons, of Pittsburgh, and Stephen James Simons, of Morgantown; grandchildren, Allison Graziani of Pittsburgh, Nicolette Marie Simons of Pittsburgh, and Laila Simons of Masontown, Pa.; great-grandchildren, Arlo and Mateo Graziani; as well as a brother, Stephen Koval, and his wife Jackie of Morgantown.

Dorothy was preceded in death by her husband of 50 years, Bernard "Bernie" Wilson Simons; son, John Edward Simons, John Koval of Morgantown, Wilma Richie (Paul) of

Louisville, Ky., and Julia Thomas (Don) of Taylortown, Pa.

Friends and family will be received at St. Mary Roman Catholic Church, 3346 University Ave., Star City, from 5:30-8 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 7., and again on Monday, Jan. 8, from 10 a.m. until the Mass of Christian Burial at 11 a.m., with Father John McDonough as celebrant.

One of Dorothy's greatest wishes was for her granddaughter to get a college education. In lieu of flowers, donations in Dorothy's memory can be made to Laila Simons' college education fund at 390 Jacobs Drive, Morgantown, WV 26505.

Condolences: [hastingsfuneralhome.com](http://hastingsfuneralhome.com)

**Hastings**

## Mary Herrington

Mary Jane "MJ" Herrington, 66, of Cranberry Township, Pa., passed away on Dec. 26, 2023.



**Mary Herrington**

MJ was born in Yardley, Pa., to Charles "Buck" Herrington and Catherine Herrington on Nov. 5, 1957. She attended high school at St. Francis Catholic High School in Morgantown and graduated in 1975. She went on to earn degrees in bachelor of fine arts and masters in elementary education from West Virginia University. She taught Art Education in the Monongalia County School District, Art Education at Quigley Catholic High School, and English at Central Catholic High School in the Pittsburgh Catholic Diocese.

Mary Jane is survived by

her husband, Donald DeCarlo of Cranberry Township, Pa.; her daughter, Catherine "Katie" Cross and husband Josh Cross; her three grandchildren, Wyatt Cross, Audrey Cross and Juliet Cross all of Charleston; her son, Matthew Mohler and wife Angela Mohler; her four grandchildren Luke Mohler, Jack Mohler, Thomas Mohler and James Mohler all of Scarsdale, New York; her three siblings, Patricia Schlesinger and husband Mel Schlesinger of Phoenix, Ariz., Gary Herrington and wife Collen Herrington of Cincinnati, Ohio, and Cathy Drzal and husband Jeremy Drzal currently living in Panama.

No Memorial Service or viewing is currently scheduled. Memorial donations may be made to NSABP Foundation, Nova Tower 2, Two Allegheny Center — Suite 1200 Pittsburgh, PA 15212-5402.

It is with deep sorrow that we announce the peaceful passing of



**Carl Smith**

Carl James Smith on Dec. 29, 2023, at the age of 79, after bravely facing a decline in health. Born on Sept. 25, 1944, in Reading, Pa., Carl lived a life of dedication, service, and unwavering passion.

Carl leaves behind a legacy of love and commitment, survived by his beloved wife, Cheryl Riley, with whom he had many fun adventures. He will be fondly remembered by his daughter, Valerie Smith, and her partner, John; son, Chris Smith, his wife, Krista Sheets, and their children, Parker and Bella;

stepdaughter, Erin Kocurek and her husband, Elden; stepdaughter, Kerry Riley, and her daughter, Piper Bastian. Carl is also survived by his brother, Herb Smith, and his wife, Andi; his sister, Kelly Horning, her husband, Dean, and their daughter, Riley; as well as other members of the "Smith Clan".

Carl's life was marked by service to his country, dedicating 30 years to the U.S. Navy, achieving the esteemed rank of Commodore during Desert Storm. His commitment extended to the state of West Virginia, where he served for over 30 years before retiring as the State Geologist and Director of the West Virginia Geological Survey. A proud member of the Military Officers Association in Florida, a devoted Lions Club member in Palm Harbor Chap-

## Carl Smith

ter 11, and a thoughtful contributor to the Parish Council of St. Frances De Sales Catholic Church, Carl left an indelible mark on the communities he served.

Known for his zest for life and love of red wine, Carl was a captivating storyteller and a source of joy to those around him. Quick with a joke and a warm smile, he forged friendships wherever life took him. His absence will be keenly felt by all who had the privilege of crossing paths with him.

Carl is preceded in death by his late wife of 36 years, Trudy DiSabella Smith; his son, Carl Jr.; his daughter, Trudy Ann; his brother, Ric Allen Smith; his mother and stepfather, June (Haage) and Harold Bechtel; and his father, Herbert Smith.

The family expresses profound gratitude for the

compassionate care provided by HopeWest Hospice Care and Care Facility during Carl's final days.

A military funeral honors and committal service will be held at the National Memorial Cemetery in Grafton, on Friday, April 26, 2024, at 11 a.m., paying tribute to Carl's dedicated service to his nation. A Celebration of Life will follow, allowing friends and family to come together and share memories of this extraordinary man.

In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests donations be made to HopeWest Hospice Care Center in Grand Junction, Colorado, or CurePSPorg in honor of "Captain Carl" James Smith's memory. May he rest in eternal peace, and may his legacy of love and service endure in the hearts of those he touched.

## HEALTH

## More hospitals are requiring masks as flu, COVID-19 cases surge

Associated Press

NEW YORK — More U.S. hospitals are requiring masks and limiting visitors as health officials face an expected but still nasty post-holiday spike in flu, COVID-19 and other illnesses.

While many experts say this season likely won't prove to be as deadly as some other recent winters, it still could mean hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations and many thousands of deaths across the country.

New York City last week instituted a mask mandate for the city's 11 public hospitals. Similar measures were ordered last week at some hospitals in Los Angeles and Massachusetts. Some hospitals

reinstated masking rules for employees months ago, in anticipation of a seasonal rush of sick people.

Flu and COVID-19 infections have been increasing for weeks, with high levels of flu-like illness reported in 31 states just before Christmas. Updated national numbers are to be released Friday, but health officials predict infections will grow in many states well into January.

"What we're seeing right now, in the first week of January, is really an acceleration — of flu cases, in particular," said Dr. Mandy Cohen, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

There is some good news. Flu and COVID-19 cases may peak by the end of the

month and then drop, Cohen said. Though the flu has been skyrocketing, this year's cases are being caused by a strain that usually doesn't cause as many deaths and hospitalizations as some other versions. What's more, signs suggest current flu vaccines are well-matched to the strain.

"I don't think it's going to be overwhelming," said Dr. William Schaffner, Vanderbilt University infectious diseases expert. He deemed the current season "moderately severe."

The CDC is pointing the public to an agency website where people can look up their county, which can help them make decisions about whether to wear masks or take other precautions. Cohen urged people to get

vaccinated and to seek treatment for flu and COVID-19.

Vaccinations are down this year, officials say. About 44% of U.S. adults had gotten flu shots by Dec. 23, according to the most recently available CDC vaccination survey data. Only about 19% of U.S. adults were reported to have received an updated COVID-19 shot as of early December.

COVID-19 cases are causing more severe disease than the flu but have been rising less dramatically. Health officials are keeping an eye on JN.1, a new version of the ever-evolving coronavirus. The omicron variant was first detected in the U.S. in September and just before Christmas accounted for an estimated 44% of COVID-19 cases.

## VIDEO GAMES

## 13-year-old gamer becomes the first to beat the 'unbeatable' Tetris — by breaking it

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — The falling-block video game Tetris has met its match in 13-year-old Willis Gibson, who has become the first player to officially "beat" the original Nintendo version of the game — by breaking it.

Technically, Willis — aka "blue scuti" in the gaming world — made it to what gamers call a "kill screen," a point where the Tetris code glitches, crashing the game. That might not sound like much of a victory to anyone thinking that only high scores count, but it's a highly coveted achievement in the world of video games, where records involve pushing hardware and

software to their limits. And beyond.

It's also a very big deal for players of Tetris, which many had long considered unbeatable. That's partly because the game doesn't have a scripted ending; those four-block shapes just keep falling no matter how good you get at stacking them into disappearing rows. Top players continued to find ways to extend their winning streaks by staying in the game to reach higher and higher levels, but in the end, the game beat them all.

Until, that is, Willis managed on Dec. 21 to trigger a kill screen on Level 157, which the gaming world takes as a victory over the game — something along

the lines of pushing the software past its own limits.

The makers of Tetris agree. "Congratulations to 'blue scuti' for achieving this extraordinary accomplishment, a feat that defies all preconceived limits of this legendary game," Tetris CEO Maya Rogers said in a statement. Rogers noted that Tetris will celebrate its 40th anniversary this year and called Willis' victory a "monumental achievement."

It's been a very long road.

Early on, "the Tetris scene people didn't even know how to get to these higher levels," said David Macdonald, a gaming YouTuber who has chronicled the gaming industry for years. "They were just stuck in the 20s and 30s because they just didn't know techniques to get any further." Level 29 posed an especially tough roadblock because the blocks began falling more quickly than the in-game controller could respond.



Published obituaries can now be viewed for free at [dominionpost.com](http://dominionpost.com).

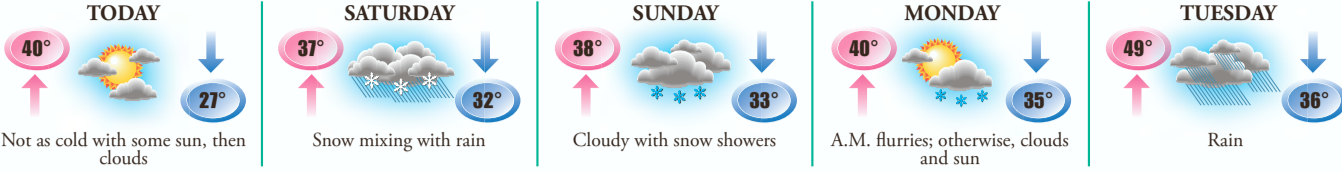


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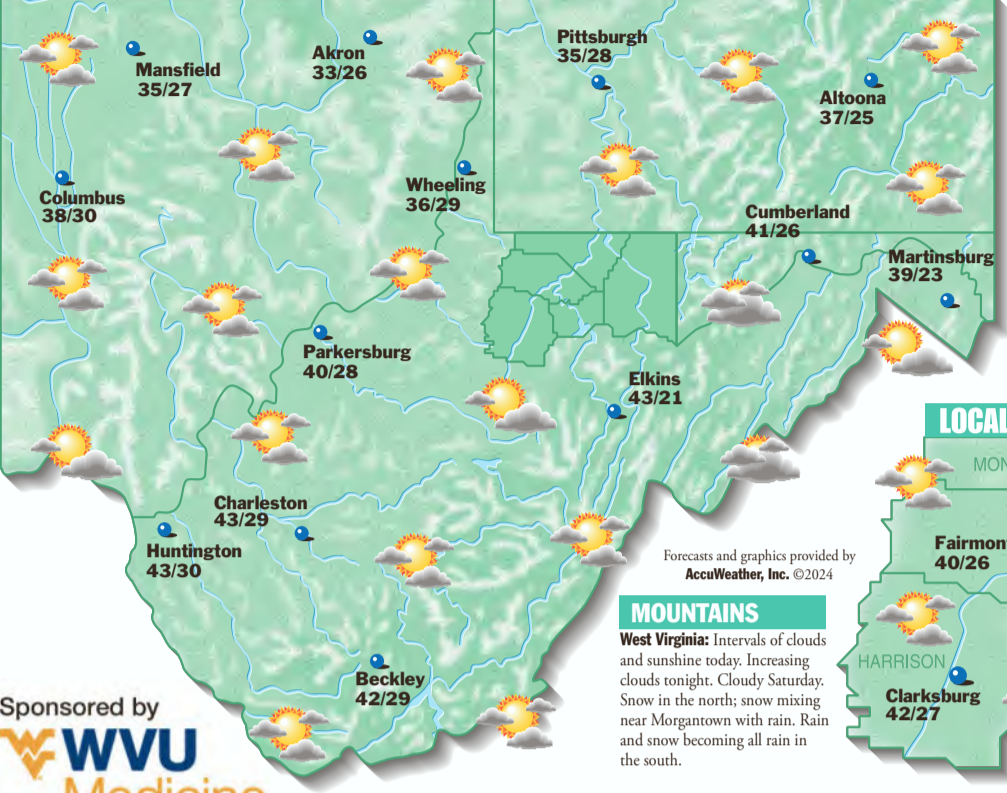
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FIVE-DAY FORECAST FOR MORGANTOWN



REGIONAL WEATHER



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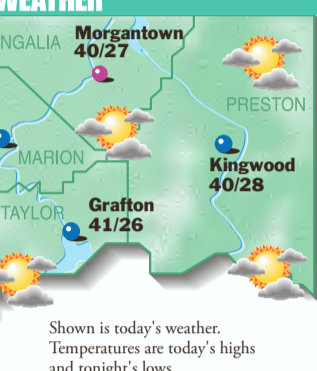
ALMANAC

Morgantown through 4 p.m. Thursday. Temperature: High/low 35/32, Normal high/low 39/22, Record low -9 in 1918.

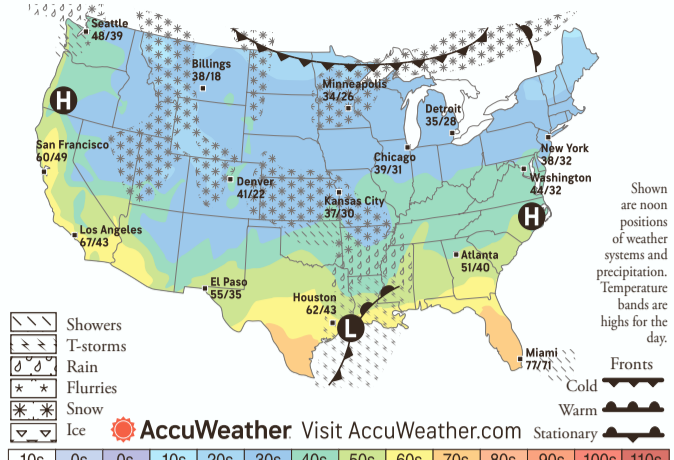
SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today 7:41 a.m., Sunset tonight 5:09 p.m., Moonrise today 1:39 a.m., Moonset today 12:35 p.m.

LOCAL WEATHER



NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



SKI CONDITIONS

Table with columns: Ski Area, New snow (in), Base (in), Trails Open. Lists areas like Canaan Valley, Seven Springs, etc.

SOLUNAR TABLES

Table showing five-day forecast for peak feeding times for fish and game, with columns for Major, Minor, and Minor fish species.

REGIONAL CITIES

Table with columns: City, Fri. Hi/Low, Sat. Hi/Low. Lists cities like Beckley, Charleston, etc.

LAKES AND RIVERS

Table with columns: Lake, 7 a.m. Yest., 24-hour Change. Lists lakes like Cheat Lake, Deep Creek, etc.

ALMANAC

Associated Press

Today is Friday, Jan. 5, the fifth day of 2024. There are 361 days left in the year.

Highlight: In 1953, Samuel Beckett's two-act tragicomedy "Waiting for Godot," considered a classic of the Theater of the Absurd, premiered in Paris.

On this date: In 1896, an Austrian newspaper, Wiener Presse, reported the discovery by German physicist Wilhelm Roentgen of a type of radiation that came to be known as X-rays.

In 1914, auto industrialist Henry Ford announced he was going to pay workers \$5 for an 8-hour day, as opposed to \$2.34 for a 9-hour day.

In 1922, Australia denied entry to tennis star Novak Djokovic, who was seeking to play for a 10th Australian Open title later in the month; authorities canceled his visa because he failed to meet the requirements for an exemption to COVID-19 vaccination rules.

Today's birthdays: Actor Robert Duvall is 93. Juan Carlos, former King of Spain, is 86. Singer-musician Athol Guy (The Seekers) is 84. Actor-director Diane Keaton is 78. Actor Ted Lange (lanj) is 76. Rock musician Chris Stein (Blondie) is 74. Former CIA Director George Tenet is 71. Actor Pamela Sue Martin is 71. Actor Clancy Brown is 65. Singer Iris Dement is 63. Actor Suzy Amis is 62.

Mother has second thoughts on decisions made for sons

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I moved near the ocean last year. I have two sons, 21 and 17. My older son moved across the country with some friends. The younger son, "Cody," chose at the last minute to stay with his dad.



JEANE PHILLIPS

Abby, it has been awful. Cody dropped out of high school and did not keep up with his home-school work. He quit his jobs, and he's on depression medication. This week, both boys moved where I am. My house is small, so I got them an apartment in my name. The landlord thinks I'm going to be living there.

My question is, how often should I go there and clean, make dinner and visit? I feel like I'll want to be there all the time — before work, after work and on weekends. My husband thinks I should back off, but Cody is only 17 and going through a lot. They moved into the apartment today, so this is still new. Also, is it crazy that I paid to put them in their own apartment? I felt like it was an OK choice since our house is so small. They both are planning to get jobs, and the younger one wants to start college classes. But they're lazy and

messy, and I feel like I need to step in to help more. Any suggestions? — MOM OF BOYS IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR MOM: Your older son is an adult. Your younger one is on the verge of becoming one. It's time for both to learn the skills they need to take care of themselves. Going there every day to cook, clean, do laundry and visit would be counter-productive to teaching them how to become independent.

If your older son has a job, he should contribute to the rent and groceries. Your younger son will never get into college if he doesn't do the homework he's ignoring. Having a small home doesn't mean he couldn't live with you until he establishes a healthy routine.

JEANE PHILLIPS writes "Dear Abby" under the pseudonym Abigail Van Buren. Write Dear Abby at DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

TV LISTINGS

Large table with columns for time slots (6 PM, 6:30, 7 PM, etc.) and rows for Broadcast Channels, Cable Channels, and Movie Channels. Lists various TV shows and movies.

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PREP SPORTS

## Preston in AAAA, Trinity down to A after WVSSAC reclassification

BY MICHAEL GRIFFITH  
Sports@DominionPost.com

On December 20, the WVSSAC approved the implementation of a four-class system for the sports of football, boys' and girls' basketball, volleyball, baseball, softball, and cheerleading.

Boys' and girls' basketball has been four classes for multiple years, but will also feel a change as the SSAC has also announced the reclassification of schools within the state.

With the four-class system will also come realignment, with some schools moving up to a higher class and some dropping down to a lower one.

The factors of the scoring system that was used to determine each school's class were broken down into three categories; Location, enrollment and economic. Location and economic scores made up 10% each (20 total), while the enrollment number of each school made up 80% of the score.

Morgantown High School was the highest-rated school on the list with a total score of 94.6. This was determined by an enrollment score of 1.00 (scaled 0.00-1.00), a location score of 0.99, and an economic score of 0.47. For a school like MHS, its classification didn't come with any shock or question. With the highest enrollment numbers and being

located in one of the busiest cities in the state, it wasn't a surprise the MHS was in Class AAAA or even at the top of the list.

"We are where we thought we would be," MHS athletic director John Bowers said. "Anyway we can close the enrollment mark from top to bottom in each class is a good thing. Hopefully scheduling AAAA schools will be a reality for us."

For one of the schools with the smallest enrollment in the state, Trinity Christian, the realignment will see it drop from Class AA to Class A when the implementation takes effect at the beginning of the 2024-2025 school

SEE CLASS, B-2



William Wotring/The Dominion Post

Preston football coach Mark Deep looks on during their game against Fairmont Senior this season.

## STILL ON TOP



William Wotring/The Dominion Post

Morgantown's Sofia Wassick (2) drives to the net against the Parkersburg South on Thursday.

### Morgantown girls remain perfect, take down Parkersburg South 64-36

BY ERIC HERTER  
Sports@DominionPost.com

There is a reason the Morgantown High School girls' basketball team is ranked No. 1 in Class AAAA and the defending state champions.

They're pretty darn good. So good that the Mohigans (8-0) beat Parkersburg South 64-36 on Thursday and the Patriots (8-2) entered the contest with just one loss.

"They're number one for a reason," Parkersburg South coach Ed Davis said. "No one

has come within 30 points of them all season. We were a little amped up at the beginning of the game and sailed some passes and that limited our transition game."

Limiting the transition game was exactly what MHS head coach Doug Goodwin had in mind.

"That was a big focus for us tonight," Goodwin said. "Everything we watched on film; they just want to transition and get out and get buckets. Our focus was to get back, keep the ball contained in front of us and just really work hard on the defensive side."

South hung with the Mohigans for much of the first quarter as a 3-pointer from Emilee Owens tied the game at 13-13 before MHS went on a 14-4 run that spanned the last minute of the first quarter and much of the second quarter.

"At that point, I thought we were getting

good boards," Goodwin said of the game-sealing run. "We really hit the defensive boards better at that point in time. We were able to control the ball and control the tempo of the game a little bit."

MHS was patient on offense much of they night as it worked the ball around the perimeter before either dumping the ball into Lily Jordan in the post or driving to the bucket for an easy shot.

Jordan finished with a game-high 21 points while Sadaya Jones added 20 points and five rebounds and freshman guard Kayli Kellogg added 17.

"We thought we could attack (the basket) and in the first quarter we made a little adjustment," Goodwin said. "We work on those things daily and we kept telling the girls it was there - just don't fade away

SEE MHS, B-2

MEN'S HOOPS



JUSTIN JACKSON

### RaeQuan Battle could be the best scorer the rest of the nation never heard of

There is no crystal ball or anything similar that's available to tell us how WVU guard RaeQuan Battle will play for the rest of the season.

He may continue to go out game after game and become a model of scoring consistency, go in the opposite direction or fall somewhere in between.

"He's got more," WVU head coach Josh Eilert said during a Zoom call Thursday. "He's a very coachable young man and he's a great person and a great teammate. He wants to do everything he can for us to win."

"He'd be very happy if he scored five points and we got a win. That's the type of person he is. That's the type of teammate he is."

If Battle is only scoring five points a game the rest of the season, then this column can be wadded up and thrown in the trash can (that probably should happen regardless).

But — and we realize this is a big but — if Battle can go out and keep scoring 20-plus points a game, then he is at the beginning stages of what could be the most unfortunate statistical season in NCAA basketball history.

First, let's give you some context of what Battle has already accomplished.

He missed the first 10 games of the season due to the fight with the NCAA over his eligibility and then he sat out one game with the flu.

Coming in cold to start his season, Battle has gone for 29, 29 and 24 points.

You've got to go back 54 years to find another WVU men's hoops player — Wil Robinson — who had a better start to his season. Robinson scored 39, 39 and 29 in the first three games of his

SEE JACKSON, B-2

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The Dominion Post





COLLEGE FOOTBALL

# Ted Roof fired as defensive coordinator at Oklahoma



AP file photo

Oklahoma defensive coordinator Ted Roof speaks during an NCAA college football media day Aug. 1, 2023, in Norman, Okla. Oklahoma announced it has moved on from defensive coordinator and linebackers coach Roof. Oklahoma coach Brent Venables said in a news release that he told Roof he was being let go as defensive coordinator. Roof declined to stay on the staff in a different role.

Associated Press

NORMAN, Okla. — Ted Roof was fired on Thursday as defensive coordinator and linebackers coach at Oklahoma, following a season in which the Sooners' defense started strong but struggled down the stretch.

Sooners coach Brent Venables said in a news release that he told Roof he was being let go as defensive coordinator, and that Roof declined an offer to remain on the staff in a different role.

Oklahoma made significant improvements this season, Roof's second with the Sooners. Oklahoma ranked second nationally with 20 interceptions and sixth in takeaways with 26.

The Sooners held their first five opponents to 20 or fewer points. Oklahoma then handed Texas its only regular-season loss,

improving to 6-0.

The rest of the season didn't go as well. The Sooners lost to Kansas and Oklahoma State, and they gave up 520 yards in a 69-45 win over TCU in the regular-season finale.

Roof's final game was a 38-24 loss to Arizona in the Alamo Bowl. Arizona quarterback Noah Fifita passed for 354 yards and two touchdowns.

The Sooners, who are leaving the Big 12 to join the Southeastern Conference next season, will have new coordinators on both sides of the ball. Before the Alamo Bowl, the Sooners promoted Seth Littrell from offensive analyst to coordinator, filling the void left by Jeff Lebby, who was hired as Mississippi State's head coach. The Sooners also previously promoted tight ends coach Joe Jon Finley to co-offensive coordinator.

COLLEGE SPORTS

# NCAA agrees to \$920 million, 8-year deal with ESPN for women's March Madness, 39 other championships

Associated Press

The NCAA and ESPN announced on Thursday a \$920 million, eight-year agreement that will give the network exclusive rights to 40 championships, including the Division I women's basketball tournament, an event growing in popularity that the association has been accused of undervaluing in the past.

NCAA President Charlie Baker told The Associated Press the deal has an average annual value of \$115 million, an increase of more than 300% per year on what the previous 14-year deal with ESPN was paying the association.

"Yes, it's a bundle, but it's a bigger bundle and it's a bigger bundle that will be much better," Baker said.

The deal covers 21 women's and 19 men's sports, adding tennis, track and field, men's gymnastics, the women's Division II and III volleyball and basketball championships and the men's DII and DIII basketball championships.

The deal guarantees national championship events in Division I women's basketball, women's volleyball, women's gymnastics, and the second-tier of Division I football known as FCS will be aired on ABC, though it does not guarantee any start times.

ESPN will also air selection shows for at least 10 championships on its linear networks.

"We had lots of conversations with lots of third parties and lots of interested parties, but we stayed with ESPN as long as they continued to make progress on the deal," Baker said. "I do believe this was the best deal that was available."

Baker said the NCAA's media consultant, Endeavor's IMG and WME Sports, has estimated



AP photo

Iowa guard Caitlin Clark, right, celebrates in front of Michigan State guard Moira Joiner, left, after her three-point basket at the end of an NCAA college basketball game, Tuesday, in Iowa City, Iowa. Iowa won 76-73.

about 57% of the value of the deal — or \$65 million annually — is tied to the women's March Madness tournament.

The popularity of the women's tournament has steadily increased during its time as an exclusive ESPN property, setting viewership records last year. The title game between LSU with Angel Reese and Iowa with Caitlin Clark drew nearly 10 million viewers.

"From Day 1, we made it very clear to Charlie and team that we were interested in an extension on the exclusivity side as well as the fact that we were interested in acquiring more rights, not less," ESPN chairman Jimmy Pitaro said.

Baker said NCAA membership will discuss creating performance units paid out to conferences for success in the women's tournament similar to those paid out for the men's tournament.

The rights to the NCAA men's basketball tournament are owned by CBS and Warner Brothers Discovery, a deal that pays the association about \$900 million per year and runs through 2032.

After being criticized for having inequitable

resources and facilities at the the 2021 men's and women's single-site basketball tournaments, the NCAA — under previous president Mark Emmert — commissioned a law firm to do an outside review of gender equity throughout the association.

Among the numerous recommendations in the Kaplan report was to consider unbundling the women's basketball tournament from the rest of the championships. Within that report, there was an estimate from Desser Sports Media that the tournament could be worth worth between \$81 and \$112 million annually beginning in 2025, when the new deal begins.

Hillary Mandel and Karen Brodtkin, executive vice presidents for Endeavor, said those estimates set unrealistic expectations.

"We thought that there was a lot of flaws in that report," Brodtkin told the AP. "We think that every media partner we've ever spoken to thought that when it came out, they didn't change their mind at any point in time, notwithstanding their interest in the property or properties."

Endeavor modeled val-

uations for the women's basketball tournament both bundled and unbundled, Mandel said.

"It's important to know that the exercise was done, and it was looked at and they were open to (unbundling) and there were no sacred cows in this whatsoever. And where they landed is because ESPN came up with the best package for the women's basketball championship," Mandel said.

Patrick Crakes, a media consultant and former Fox Sports executive, said he was skeptical of the estimated values for the women's tournament as a standalone property considering the uncertainty traditional media companies are dealing with due to consumers moving away from cable TV.

"Some of these numbers people were talking about, were not realistic," Crakes said. "They just weren't."

Crakes said ESPN, with ABC broadcast, multiple cable networks, and a subscription streaming service, was the most sensible partner for the NCAA.

"This is worth more to ESPN as a bundle than it would be if the women's basketball tournament was probably broken out and offered to fill in the blank (network)," he said. "Where's it going to go? There's not a lot of programming windows available for it. Who's going to program that and pay?"

The deal was also struck within ESPN's exclusive negotiating window and never brought to the open market.

"We had a good sense of who was interested in what, where they were going to put it and, generally speaking, what it would garner financially, production, promotion, distribution," Brodtkin said.

PRO HOCKEY

# Sidney Crosby named an NHL All-Star for the 10th time as league unveils the initial rosters

Associated Press

Sidney Crosby has been named an NHL All-Star for the 10th time, as the league unveiled its initial rosters Thursday night for the event next month in Toronto.

The Pittsburgh Penguins captain was one of the first 32 All-Stars chosen by the league's hockey operations department. One player from each team is picked, with others added by fan vote later.

Tom Wilson from the rival Washington Capitals, a Toronto native, was also picked and is an All-Star for a second time. The Capitals had Wilson's dad, Keven, deliver the news by video to him in front of his teammates.

"We will all be there to cheer to you on," Wilson's dad said. "And your 95-year-old Grampie will be so pumped when he hears the news."

Reigning MVP Connor McDavid is Edmonton's representative, and league-leading scorer Nikita Kucherov was picked from the Tampa Bay Lightning. Chicago rookie of the year front-runner Connor Bedard, Colorado center Nathan MacKinnon and defending champion Vegas center Jack Eichel are also chosen.

Auston Matthews, the first player to 30 goals this season, is the first Maple Leafs player picked, though he'll almost certainly not be the home team's only representative. William Nylander is Toronto's leading scorer with 51 points.

Brady Tkachuk was picked from the Ottawa Senators.

"I'm excited, especially

being in Toronto where I'm going to be the enemy," Tkachuk told reporters in Seattle. "I'm definitely going to take advantage of that opportunity."

All-Star Weekend takes place Feb. 1-3. This year the popular player draft is back with celebrity captains being paired with NHL All-Stars to chose the four teams for the 3-on-3 tournament.

Fan voting will determine the final eight skaters and four goalies.

### INITIAL NHL ALL-STARS

Goalenders: Connor Hellebuyck (Winnipeg), Jake Oettinger (Dallas), Igor Shesterkin (N.Y. Rangers), Cam Talbot (Los Angeles)

Defenseman: Rasmus Dahlin (Buffalo), Quinn Hughes (Vancouver)

Forwards: Sebastian Aho (Carolina), Mathew Barzal (N.Y. Islanders), Connor Bedard (Chicago), Oliver Bjorkstrand (Seattle), Sidney Crosby (Pittsburgh), Alex DeBrincat (Detroit), Jack Eichel (Vegas), Filip Forsberg (Nashville), Tomas Hertl (San Jose), Jack Hughes (New Jersey), Boone Jenner (Columbus), Kirill Kaprizov (Minnesota), Clayton Keller (Arizona), Travis Konecny (Philadelphia), Elias Lindholm (Calgary), Nathan MacKinnon (Colorado), Connor McDavid (Edmonton), Nikita Kucherov (Tampa Bay), Auston Matthews (Toronto), David Pastrnak (Boston), Sam Reinhart (Florida), Nick Suzuki (Montreal), Robert Thomas (St. Louis), Brady Tkachuk (Ottawa), Frank Vatrano (Anaheim)

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PRO SOCCER

# MetLife Stadium to remove 1,740 seats for 2026 World Cup, officials hoping to host final

Associated Press

NEW YORK — MetLife Stadium officials plan to remove 1,740 seats to widen the field for World Cup matches as they hope to host the 2026 final but will retain a narrower surface for this year's Copa América.

The stadium in suburban East Rutherford, New Jersey, is among the contenders for the final of the expanded 48-nation, 104-game World Cup on July 19, 2026, along with AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas.

"I speak on behalf of New Jersey but also as our partner of New York City, do not underestimate how aggressive we're prepared to be to get the best package of games possible," New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy said during a telephone interview last fall.

FIFA has not announced a date for revealing the sites of specific games, and the FIFA media office would not speak about renovations at other stadiums. For the 1994 tournament, FIFA announced sites of specific games in June 1992, award-

ing the final to the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, Calif.

Heimo Schirgi, who replaced Colin Smith as the World Cup's chief operating officer last July, was not available for comment. Unlike the 1994 World Cup, FIFA is running the 2026 tournament itself without a local organizing committee.

"The few stadiums that require capital projects are handling each project differently — with some venues scheduling the work across multiple NFL off-seasons, while others plan to complete everything at once sometime between now and spring 2026," FIFA said in a statement.

MetLife, which opened in 2010, has had a high crowd for sports of 83,367 for a Jets-Giants NFL game in October, and the World Cup bid book estimated a capacity of 74,895. The current dimension for soccer matches is 64-by-105 meters, spokeswoman Helen Strus said.

Strus said construction will be in the corner and extend along the sidelines,



AP file photo

A general view as the Washington Redskins take on the New York Giants during an NFL football game Oct. 28, 2018, at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J.

though field-level club areas will not be impacted. The removed seats will be in the corners and will be replaced with seats in removable sections after the World Cup. Murphy said who pays the cost of the construction was under negotiation.

"The FIFA setback provisions really impact MetLife only at the corners. Other stadiums have a much tougher nut where they have to set the entire

perimeter back," Murphy said. "FIFA wants a deal that works for them. New Jersey and New York City — remember our partners New York City — we're prepared clearly to put serious skin in the game. In fact, we have already."

FIFA requires a 68-by-105 meter field for World Cup games, although that requirement was ignored by some venues during the 1994 tournament. Both MetLife and AT&T will

have to replace artificial turf with grass, along with stadiums in Atlanta; Foxboro, Massachusetts; Houston; Inglewood, California; Philadelphia; and Seattle.

MetLife's narrower field was used for the 2016 Copa América final, won by Chile on penalty kicks over Argentina, and will be used for three matches at this summer's South American championship: Argentina-Chile and Uruguay-Bolivia group stage games and a July 9 semifinal.

Murphy also hopes UEFA will stage a European Champions League final at MetLife.

"We would be able to sell 10 stadiums worth of tickets for the UEFA Champions League final," he said. "We would welcome the opportunity, and I've said many times I welcome the opportunity to host what we would call in the States regular-season league games for any of the big European leagues at MetLife, as well."

Joe Trahan, a spokesman for the Dallas Cowboys, who run AT&T

Stadium, declined comment on dimensions and possible changes. He referred questions to FIFA and the Dallas Sports Commission, which did not respond to emails seeking comment.

FIFA awarded the 2026 tournament to the U.S., Mexico and Canada in 2018 and announced the 16 host cities in 2022.

All 11 U.S. stadiums for the World Cup are the homes of NFL teams, which use playing fields of 53.3-by-120 yards.

Giants Stadium, adjacent to where MetLife was built, hosted seven games in 1994, including Bulgaria's quarterfinal upset of defending champion Germany and Italy's semifinal win over Bulgaria. At the 1994 tournament, government officials closed the Lincoln Tunnel to regular traffic to allow FIFA executives faster access from Manhattan.

"I think we'll do the right thing by the VIPs who need to get transited," Murphy said. "We'll do it in a way which doesn't take it out of the hide of the regular customers, but we'll also do it in a way — we're committed that to FIFA, that we'll move folks expeditiously and with the right level of care."

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

# The AP Top 25 remains a college basketball mainstay after 75 years of evolution

Associated Press

When he first moved from coaching into broadcasting in the early 1980s, Dick Vitale would keep track of what was happening across the college basketball landscape by picking up the newspaper every morning.

Just about every score would be listed there. Important games might have box scores, giving Vitale a little more information. And the biggest games of the day might have full stories, providing a more rounded picture of what had transpired.

"People stayed up late to publish that stuff for the next morning," Vitale recalled.

These days, just about every Division I men's college basketball game is available to watch somewhere, whether broadcast on television or streamed on an app. Highlights rip across social media the minute they happen, and forums provide fans a chance to not only rehash what happened but discuss the finer points of their favorite teams.

All of which makes voting for the AP men's college basketball poll easier. And at times harder.

The Top 25 is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year. The initial poll sent in January 1939 installed Saint Louis at No. 1, but it would not be long before Kentucky took over the top spot, the first of 125 weeks it has spent there over the years.

And much like the way college basketball has



AP file photo

Gonzaga guard Jalen Suggs (1) celebrates making the game-winning basket against UCLA during overtime in a men's Final Four NCAA college basketball tournament semifinal game, April 3, 2021, at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. Gonzaga won 93-90.

evolved, so has the poll. What began with 20 teams and contracted to 10 in the 1960s expanded to its now-familiar Top 25 for the 1989-90 season. The panel of voters has become more inclusive, adding more women and minorities to help rank the best teams in the nation every Monday.

But the biggest evolution might be in the way those voters formulate their opinions.

"In the early years, the eye test was more of a factor," said Jerry Tipton, who spent more than four decades covering the Wildcats for the Lexington Herald-Leader, and who was a regular AP voter. "I hate to say that because there's many more games now. But as time went on, it was more word-of-mouth. I got to know people and other writers covering teams, and there was conversation

on who was good and that sort of things. And now we see many more games.

"It's amazing to me," added Tipton, who retired as a full-time beat writer in 2022, "to see how many games are on TV, and I tried to watch as many as I could, just to have a sense of what was going on."

That's fairly easy for AP voters such as Seth Davis of CBS, who has an entire command center at his disposal.

"If I'm putting in a long day in the studio," he said, "I'll be able to keep an eye on probably two dozen

games. I have access to reams of research material, and very capable researchers who are in my ear, passing along stat nuggets and important info. I'd actually argue it's more important to know what happened than watch games, although I try to do both."

Voters know that fans are watching, too. They hear about their ballots on social media, or in emails and direct messages. There are entire websites that are devoted to tracking what teams they are voting for each week.

That's something else that voters never had to worry about in the early days of the AP Top 25.

"I love the way technology has progressed," said Vitale, a longtime ESPN color analyst who remains one of the 63 media members that submit ballots each week. "It's great for the sport to see all the games on TV, from small mid-majors to the classic top-10 matchups. I like being able to watch as many games as I can. It makes me a better analyst."

"The AP voters take it seriously," he added, "and they try to make sure the most deserving teams are ranked."

NBA

# Magic to retire Shaquille O'Neal's No. 32 jersey in ceremony Feb. 13



AP file photo

Orlando Magic center Shaquille O'Neal (32) hangs from the rim after a slam-dunk during the first quarter of their NBA basketball Eastern Conference semifinal game against the Atlanta Hawks, May 8, 1996, in Orlando, Fla.

Associated Press

Shaquille O'Neal's number will be retired Feb. 13 by the Orlando Magic, who will become the third NBA franchise to give that tribute to the four-time champion and Basketball Hall of Famer.

O'Neal will be the first player to get a jersey number — he wore No. 32 in Orlando — retired by the Magic. The Los Angeles Lakers retired his No. 34 jersey in April 2013, and the Miami Heat retired his No. 32 jersey in December 2016. O'Neal won three titles with the Lakers, and another with the Heat.

"When someone asks who was the first player to officially put the Orlando Magic on the map, the answer is simple — Shaquille O'Neal," Orlando Magic CEO Alex Martins said. "He took this franchise to new heights, both on and off the court, and his legacy is still felt within our organization today. On behalf of the DeVos family, we are excited to honor Shaquille by raising No. 32 into the rafters of the Kia Center, where it will remain forever."

O'Neal was the No. 1 pick in the 1992 NBA draft by the Magic, and he spent his first four pro seasons in Orlando before leaving for the Lakers in 1996. He was the NBA's rookie of the year for Orlando in 1993, was an All-Star in all four of his seasons with the Magic, led them to their first NBA Finals in 1995 and still ranks among the franchise's career leaders in several categories, including blocked shots (second, 824), rebounds (third, 3,691) and points scored (sixth, 8,019).

The decision was announced on TNT's "NBA Tip-Off" on Thursday, the show that O'Neal has been part of for several years. O'Neal said he was particularly thankful for Rich DeVos — the original owner of the Magic, who died in 2018 — for bringing him to Orlando.

"It was a great four years there," O'Neal said on the show. "I just wanted to come in and just make a name for myself. ... I'd like to thank the city of Orlando, like to thank the Orlando Magic organization. Appreciate you very much."

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# COLLEGE BASKETBALL

## No. 12 BYU hopes to build on surprising start as debut Big 12 season opens

**PROVO, Utah** — BYU knew that if it was going to compete in arguably the nation's best basketball conference, serious changes were needed.

Coach Mark Pope and his staff went to work building a roster after the Cougars accepted an invitation in 2021 to join the Big 12 Conference, knowing the transition would be difficult in the short term. BYU took plenty of lumps last season while mostly relying on inexperienced freshmen and sophomores.

One year later, the Cougars are 12-1, ranked 12th and showing they intend to make a serious splash in their debut Big 12 season.

BYU is off to its best start since opening the 1987-88 season with 17 straight wins. The Cougars are imposing their will on both ends of the court, scoring 90.4 points per game with a 58.5 effective field goal percentage while allowing 61.5

points per contest. All three categories rank in the top 12 nationally.

"Everybody has this DNA now," BYU guard Trevin Knell said. "We believe this is who we are and it's so fun to see."

Who the Cougars are now offers a sharp contrast to who they were during their final season in the West Coast Conference. BYU went 19-15, tying for fifth place in the WCC at 7-9. The Cougars failed to reach 20 wins for only the second time in 18 seasons and totaled their highest number losses since 2005.

It's one reason BYU was picked 13th in the 14-team Big 12 media poll.

Perhaps the more seasoned Cougars knew better given their deep familiarity with what Pope wants his team to accomplish. His formula for success is simple — crash the boards, make the extra pass, take care of the ball and shoot almost at will from the perimeter.

BYU is doing all those



BYU guard Trevin Knell (21) drives around Evansville forward Ben Humrichous (13) during the second half of an NCAA college basketball game Dec. 5, 2023, in Provo, Utah.

things at an elite level. The Cougars lead the nation with 22.5 assists per game and rank first nationally with a 2.31 assist-to-turnover ratio. They also top Division I with 12.8 made 3-pointers per game and a plus-13.0 rebound margin.

"The identity that we're chasing is not going to change," Pope said. "I think we have a lot of faith in our preparation. We are humble. We understand what we're walking into, but we know who we're trying to be and it's who we've been trying to be every day."

BYU has accomplished all this even while not playing at full strength.

Fousseyni Traore, the team's top returning scorer from last season, missed seven games last month with a hamstring injury. Leading scorer Jaxson Robinson battled an ankle injury in late December. Aly Khalifa, Dawson Baker and Dallin Hall missed games or played under minutes restrictions early in the season because of injuries.

Still, the Cougars keep rolling and have built quality depth to effectively combat the injury bug. BYU features nine players who have at least one 20-point game in their collegiate career.

"Our depth is important," Pope said. "We still haven't had a game with a healthy roster. I would like to do that at some point. I would like to have a healthy roster, but these guys have answered the bell in spite of that for a really impressive

two-month run."

Robinson, Khalifa and Noah Waterman have helped provide much of the spark.

Robinson leads BYU with 16.0 points per game. Waterman is the No. 2 scorer (11.8 average) and top rebounder (6.6). Both players are also shooting better than 40% from 3-point range. Khalifa sports a nation's best 14.0 assist-to-turnover ratio and has committed only three turnovers in the 10 games he's played.

But now the schedule gets tougher as the Cougars head into conference play, beginning with Saturday's home game against Cincinnati. A dozen Big 12 teams rank in the top 100 of the NCAA NET rankings and nine are in the top 50.

"We're stepping into 18 straight really challenging games where we'll have all kinds of things happen to us," Pope said, "but I think we have a chance."

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<p><b>ASPHALT PAVING</b></p> <p>NUMBER ONE ASPHALT RICHARD SMALLS PAVING</p> <p>Seniors &amp; Veterans Discounts</p> <p>Driveways, Parking Lots, Patchwork &amp; Seal Coating</p> <p>Work Guaranteed Free Estimates</p> <p>Licensed and Insured <a href="http://www.smallsaving.com">www.smallsaving.com</a></p> <p>304-292-1109 304-613-0202 304-366-1717 WV#014145</p>	<p><b>DEMOLITION</b></p> <p>BEATTY CONSTRUCTION "Building on Higher Planes" Steve Beatty, Owner (304) 368-9000</p> <p><b>DEMOLITION</b> ASBESTOS INSPECTION &amp; REMOVAL</p> <p>EXCAVATING</p> <p>LAND CLEARING</p> <p>SEPTIC TANKS</p> <p>HEAVY HAULING</p> <p>DUMPSTERS WV033905</p>	<p><b>HAULING</b></p> <p>ABSOLUTELY ANYTHING HAULED! Basement &amp; Attic Cleaning, Brush Removal, Gravel &amp; Mulch 304-282-7135 Morgantown</p> <p><b>HOME IMPROVEMENTS</b></p> <p>ABSOLUTELY A BETTER DEAL LAUREL HOME IMPROVEMENTS Free Est. WV005031 Insured. 304-296-2050 LHlrroofing.com "WE NAIL IT"</p> <p><b>LANDSCAPING</b></p> <p>JOE'S LANDSCAPING &amp; TREE REMOVAL We cover all of your Lawn Care &amp; Landscaping needs. Jobs include: Mulching, Hedge Trimming, Tree &amp; Stump Removal, Weeding, Lawn Care and MUCH MORE!! Residential &amp; Commercial Licensed &amp; Fully Insured 724-231-5275 724-710-0365 WV062504</p>	<p><b>PAINTING</b></p> <p>HARTLEY PAINTING LLC</p> <p>Residential &amp; Commercial</p> <p>Interior &amp; Exterior</p> <p>Power Washing</p> <p>Staining</p> <p>Cleaning Services</p> <p>Over 20 Yrs Experience</p> <p>Free Estimates 304-216-1068 WV054653</p> <p><b>3D-K PAINTING LLC</b></p> <p>Call for a free estimate on any interior, exterior, painting, wall repairs, pressure washing and staining! We do the best for desired results!! 304-376-3738 Call today while we still have openings this season!</p> <p>HARRIS HOUSEHOLD SOLUTIONS Painting Inside or Out General Repairs Call Today 304-216-1410 ask for Allen Fully Insured 10% Discounts for Veterans and Seniors</p>	<p><b>PLUMBING</b></p> <p>VIDEO DRAIN INSPECTION &amp; CLEANING Underground Water/Sewer Line Replacement or Repair *utilities WV#010427 304-216-9696 304-319-0976 Barnett Excavating, LLC</p> <p><b>ROOFING &amp; SIDING</b></p> <p>AREA'S #1 ROOFING &amp; SIDING CONTRACTOR Leading the competition in Sales Service Satisfaction for over 50 years! Proud to be an Owens Corning Preferred Contractor and a Master Certified Roofing Contractor. FREE ESTIMATES Laurel Home Improvements 304-296-2050 We Nail It!!! WV # 005031 Insured LHlHwennail.com</p> <p><b>CREEK SIDING &amp; ROOFING</b></p> <p>Residential Contractor Vinyl Siding Institute Certified Gutter Covers/ Cleaning Siding &amp; Roofing Credit Cards Accepted (304) 599-4999 #WV057088</p> <p><b>MORGANTOWN'S PLUMBER</b></p> <p>We handle all your plumbing needs! Treat yourself to a New Bathroom and/or Kitchen! You DESERVE it! WV#PL15831 Call/Text Anytime Jason Thompson (304)322-5249 Morgantownplumber.com</p>	<p><b>STUMP REMOVAL</b></p> <p>FEARER'S STUMP REMOVAL CALL US FIRST! Since 1993 Bruceton Mills. Insured Free Estimates! 304-698-6033</p> <p><b>TREE SERVICES</b></p> <p>C &amp; M TREE Super Winter Rates! Fully Insured Free Estimates CALL NOW 304-216-5280 <a href="http://www.candmtree.com">www.candmtree.com</a></p> <p><b>ALL-TREE SERVICES</b></p> <p>Tree Trimming &amp; Removal Stump Grinding Chipping Service Fully Insured Free Estimates 304-292-3131 304-698-5155</p> <p>MYERS TREE SERVICE LLC Give us a call for all your tree service needs. We give Veteran &amp; Senior Citizen discounts and as always we are fully insured. Free estimates. CALL 724-970-9293</p> <p>PRO V TREE SERVICES LLC Family Owned &amp; Operated! 10% Seniors Citizens &amp; Veterans Discount Lic. &amp; Ins. Free Est. 304-288-7825 304-288-7696</p>
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**SCRABBLE G R A M S SOLUTION**

H4 U1 M3 E1 R1 U1 S1	RACK 1 = 86
P3 R1 O1 N1 O1 U1 N1	RACK 2 = 59
M3 A1 T1 R1 I1 X8	RACK 3 = 15
I1 N1 F4 L1 E1 C3 T1	RACK 4 = 66
<b>PAR SCORE 150-160</b>	<b>TOTAL 226</b>

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a community paper recycling effort of *The Dominion Post*

read it • return it  
recycle it

Drop off your newspapers, magazines and corrugated cardboard at *The Dominion Post*.  
Newspapers and magazines **MUST** be separated.

Receptacles located at  
the Dominion Post warehouse,  
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HOCKEY

# U.S., Sweden will play for world junior gold after U.S. beats Finland and Sweden tops Czech Republic

Associated Press

GOTHENBURG, Sweden — The United States will face host Sweden for gold at the IIHF world junior championship.

The U.S. advanced to the tournament final after Cutter Gauthier scored on the power play with 3:13 left in the third period to beat Fin-

land 3-2 on Thursday. The Philadelphia Flyers prospect's goal came after the Americans erased a two-goal deficit in the semi-final game.

"I'm proud of our guys," U.S. coach David Carle said. "Even though we were down, I didn't mind our first period and there was no panic in the room. Our

special teams and goaltending were excellent, and we're excited to have the chance to play for a gold medal."

Jimmy Snuggerud, a 2022 St. Louis Blues first-round pick, and Will Smith, whom the San Jose Sharks drafted fourth in 2023, scored the goals to mount the comeback. Detroit Red

Wings prospect Trey Augustine made 19 saves in net to send the U.S. back to the world junior final, which takes place Friday.

Sweden got there by beating the Czech Republic 5-2, led by Jonathan Lekkerimaki, who scored twice, including the go-ahead goal.

"It's going to be a lot of

fun," Lekkerimaki said of the gold-medal game. "Very excited."

The U.S. lost to Sweden at the under-18 worlds in 2022 before the players of this age group got a measure of revenge in the 2023 rematch.

"Stripped the gold medal from our necks," Gauthier said of the under-18 defeat.

"We remember it like yesterday."

American captain Rutger McGroarty, another player born in 2004 on the wrong end of things in 2022, is ready for the jeers from the partisan crowd — including plenty of Canadians cheering on the Swedes — at Scandinavium arena.

LEGAL ADVERTISEMENT

29958 ADVERTISEMENT MR-34-BR Jan. 5

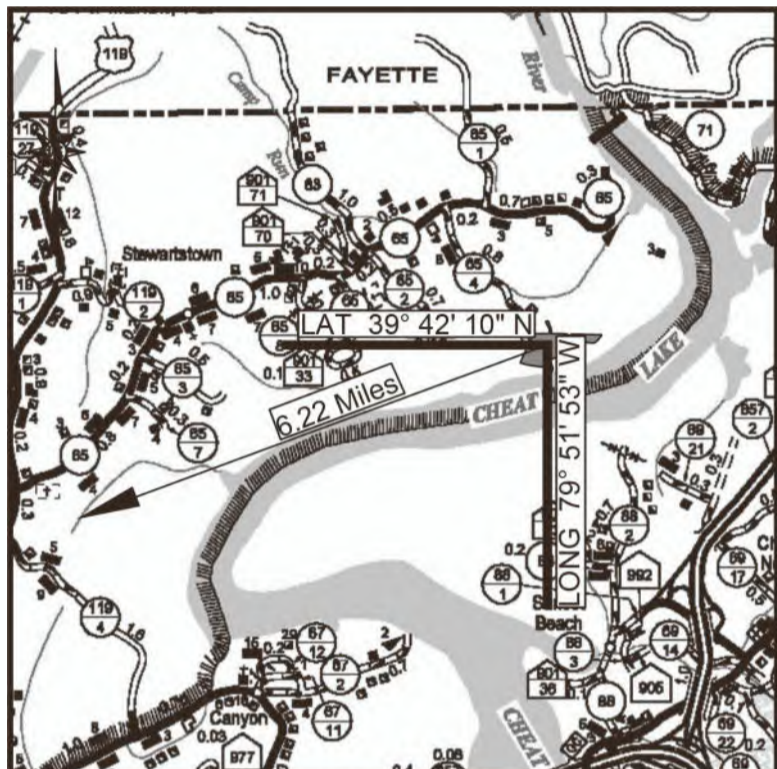
Notice is hereby given that WVDEP OFFICE OF SPECIAL RECLAMATION 601 57TH SE, CHARLESTON, WV 25304 has submitted an application for the reissuance of Article 11/WVNPDES Permit No. WV1027255 to the Department of Environmental Protection, 47 School Street, Suite 301, Philippi, WV 26416-1150 in order to operate a treatment facility in the N/A seam/mineral bed. The operation will discharge treated storm water into Unnamed Tributary of Cheat River and is located 6.2 (miles), east of Maidsville, in Union District(s) of Monongalia County(ies), Longitude 79° 51' 53" and Latitude 39° 42' 10" (Coordinates from USGS Topographic Map).

The Department of Environmental Protection is seeking information on private surface water intakes for human consumption located in the above listed receiving streams and located down stream of this operation. Please provide your name, phone number, mailing address, the name of the stream being with the intake, and the physical location of the intake. This information needs to be submitted to the address above.

An anti-degradation review has been conducted. Tier 1 protection is afforded because effluent limitations ensure compliance with water quality criteria for all designated uses. Where applicable, a full Tier 2 anti-degradation review has been conducted.

Comments on the Article 11/WVNPDES application or requests for a public hearing regarding the Article 11/WVNPDES application shall be in writing and if a public hearing is requested shall state the nature of the issues proposed to be raised in the hearing. Such written comments or requests should be sent to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) at the address above, and must also reference the Article 11/WVNPDES permit numbers shown above. Comments received by 2/4/2024, or thirty (30) days from date of publication, will be considered. A copy of the Article 11/WVNPDES application, draft permit, rational page, and fact sheet (if required) will be available for inspection and obtaining copies during normal business hours at the DEP Regional Office located at the address above.

DEP Telephone No. 304-457-3219 Article 11/WVNPDES Permit No. WV1027255



**LOCATION MAP**  
Monongalia County Highway Map - Scale: 1"=1 Mile  
Union District, Monongalia County WV  
WVDEP Revoked Permit No. S-1041-89  
Lake Lynn 7.5' USGS Quadrangle  
Nearest P.O.: Maidsville  
NPDES No.: WV1027255

LEGAL ADVERTISEMENT

29752 DECEMBER 22, 29 JANUARY 5

2022-C-000304-MONONGALIA COUNTY-WVTA LLC

To: GARY CARL WALDEN, TIFFANY WALDEN, TIFFANY WALDEN, CITY OF MORGANTOWN, PHILLIP M. MAGRO, TRUSTEE, AMANDA BOLYARD, ANGOTTI & STRAFACE, PLLC, REAL MAC, LLC DBA CHICO APPRAISAL SERVICES C/O JASON WINGFIELD, OCCUPANT, IRS, ATTN: ADVISORY CONSOLIDATED RECEIPTS, WV STATE TAX DEPARTMENT, GINNOLA BURNUM BECHTEL & JENKINS LC, or heirs at law, devisees, creditors, representatives, successors, assigns, all known heirs, guardians, conservators, fiduciaries, administrators, lienholders, co-owners, other parties having an undivided interest in the delinquent property, and other parties that may have any interest in the subject property.

DISTRICT WESTOVER CORP MAP 4 PARCEL 0077 0000 0000

You will take notice that WVTA LLC, the purchaser of the following real estate, **Cert No. 2022-C-000304**, located in WESTOVER CORP District, BL F LOT 3 WESTERN AVENUE which was returned delinquent or nonentered in the name of WALDEN BRIAN CARL & TIFFANY MARIE, and was sold by the deputy commissioner of delinquent and nonentered lands of MONONGALIA County at the sale for the delinquent taxes on May 25, 2023. WVTA LLC requests that you be notified a deed for such real estate will be made on or after June 1, 2024, as provided by law, unless before that day you redeem such real estate. The amount needed to redeem on or before May 31, 2024 will be as follows:

Amount equal to the taxes and charges due on the date of the certification, with interest, for tax year ticket number 2021 - 70252.	\$1,637.44
Back tax tickets, with interest, and charges due on the date of certification for ticket number	\$0.00
Subsequent of taxes paid on the property, with interest to for tax year 2022-77805.	\$1,459.87
Additional taxes with interest.	\$0.00
Auditor's Certification, Publication, and Redemption fee plus interest.	\$212.40
Amount paid for Title Examination, notice to redeem, publication, personal service, Secretary of State with interest.	\$1,112.47
Additional Statutory Fees with Interest.	\$0.00
<b>Total Amount Due and Payable to WV State Auditor - cashier check, money order, certified or personal check.</b>	<b>\$4,422.18</b>

**You may redeem at any time before May 31, 2024 by paying the above total less any unearned interest.**

Given under my hand December 14, 2023

/s/: **G. Russell Rollyson, Jr.**  
G. Russell Rollyson Jr.  
Deputy Commissioner of Delinquent and Nonentered Lands of MONONGALIA County, State of West Virginia

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

LEGAL ADVERTISEMENT

30026 JANUARY 5

LEGAL NOTICE

The Star City Police Department will administer a competitive Civil Service Examination for the position of full-time Police Officer on Saturday, January 13, 2024 at 10:00 am at the Star City Municipal Building, 370 Broadway Avenue, Star City, WV. A physical agility examination will follow immediately after written exam. Please visit [www.starcitywv.com](http://www.starcitywv.com) to apply or call (304)599-3550 for more details.

30022 JANUARY 5

NOTICE OF NAME CHANGE

**Rana M. M. Masri**

To Petition Number: **23-P-303**

**Rana M. M. Hamedeh**

Please take notice that on the 9th day of February, 2024, at 9:30a.m., in Monongalia County, West Virginia before Judge Perri Jo DeChristopher, Rana M. M. Masri will apply to said Circuit Court for permission to legally change her name as such.

Any person having any objection(s) to said change of name shall appear at the time, place and date aforesaid and make their objection(s) known.

Please note that the hearing may be rescheduled without further notice or publication pursuant to W.Va. Code 48-25-101(c).

/s/: **Rana M. M. Masri**  
Petitioner's Signature

29978 JANUARY 5, 12

IN THE FAMILY COURT OF MONONGALIA COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

**JENNIFER SUE ELY,**  
Plaintiff,

Vs.

Civil Action: **23-D-308**

**CRAIG ALLEN ELY,**  
Defendant(s),

THE OBJECT OF THIS SUIT IS TO OBTAIN A DIVORCE

To The Above-Named Defendant:

It appearing by affidavit filed in this action that **CRAIG ALLEN ELY** has been unable to be located by **JENNIFER SUE ELY** and that she has used due diligence to determine the address. Therefore, **CRAIG ALLEN ELY** shall serve upon **JENNIFER SUE ELY**, plaintiff, **27 Oneal Lane, Morgantown, WV 26508**, an answer, including any related counterclaim or defense he may have to the Petition filed in this action on or before **February 1st, 2024**. If you fail to do so, thereafter judgement, upon proper hearing and trial, may be taken against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

A copy of said Petition can be obtained from the undersigned Clerk at her office.  
Entered by the Clerk of said Court: **January 2nd, 2024.**

/s/: **Donna Hidock**  
Donna Hidock, Clerk of the Court

## Monongalia County Canine Adoption Center

# Adopt-A-Pet

presented by **The Dominion Post**

These furry friends are awaiting their forever homes at the **Monongalia County Canine Adoption Center** on River Road in Morgantown.

for information about any of them, call: **304-291-7267**

**11-Month-Old Male  
57 Pounds**

**Domingo**

**HILLCREST VETERINARY CLINIC**  
Please Spay/Neuter Your Pets!  
Allely J. Owen, DVM • Aaron T. Pollock, DVM  
P. Anderson, DVM • Molly Allen, DVM • Mikell Adair, DVM  
3043 Point Marion Rd., Morgantown, WV 26505  
ph 304.292.6933 fax 304.292.8009  
hillcrestveterinaryclinic.com

**1-Year-Old Female  
70 Pounds**

**Ophelia Hastings**

**1-Year-Old Female  
50 Pounds**

**Sophie**

**PAW PRINTS Veterinary Clinic**  
Member of the National Veterinary Associates  
Mon-Fri 8:00am-7:00pm; Sat 8:30am-2:00pm; Sun Closed  
5900 Nancy D. Drive • Westover, WV 304-296-7387  
After-Hours Emergency Care 304-363-2227

**10-Month-Old Male  
45 Pounds**

**Chevelle**

**THE DOMINION Post**

**7-Month-Old Male  
35 Pounds**

**Winston**

**THE DOMINION Post**

**1-Year-Old Male  
43 Pounds**

**Chappy**

**THE DOMINION Post**

If you are unable to become a forever owner but would still like to see pets get adopted, please consider becoming a volunteer or making a donation.

For more information, please call the Classified Department at **(304) 291-9420** or email: [classads@dominionpost.com](mailto:classads@dominionpost.com)

**Monongalia County Canine Adoption Center**

**HOURS OF OPERATION:**  
Mon, Wed & Fri: 10am-4:30pm | Tue & Thur: 10am-6:00pm

Fee for Adoption: **\$125/Dogs** **\$85/Cats** Includes: Spay/Neuter, One Combo Vaccine & One Dose of Wormer  
*Cash Only* There are no guarantees and no refunds.

# It's debatable if flies can pass H. pylori

**DEAR DOCTORS:** In your recent column about gastritis, you didn't mention the possibility of getting H. pylori from flies. I was diagnosed with H. pylori decades ago, and soon after I saw a video in the doctor's waiting room about its connection to flies. I now go to war with any flies in the house.



**DRS. ELIZABETH KO & EVE GLAZIER**

Dear Reader: For those who haven't read that column, a reader diagnosed with gastritis asked for information about the condition. They also wondered how they may have acquired the infection that often causes it.

The term gastritis refers to inflammation, irritation or swelling of the mucosa in the stomach. That's the layer of specialized cells that line the stomach. The mucosa is also where glands that secrete digestive juices are located. Because the enzymes and acids involved in digestion are so corrosive, the mucosa has several defense mechanisms that protect its cells from damage. These defenses also fend off infectious agents that someone might ingest, including bacteria and

viruses. If these protections become weakened, or are somehow evaded, damage to the stomach lining can occur.

H. pylori, a bacterium that is the most common cause of chronic gastritis, is able to get past the mucosa's defenses. It takes up residence beneath the mucosa, in what is known as the epithelial layer of the stomach, and causes a persistent infection. This can cause the mucosa to increase production of stomach acid and lead to the inflammation, pain and other symptoms associated with gastritis. Only a portion of H. pylori infections, about 20%, cause symptoms.

## Friday, Jan. 5 2024

Use your emotional energy wisely. Focus on clearing the way for what's to come. Getting your life in order will require decisions that are difficult but necessary. Use your imagination, and you'll come up with a plan that leads to the happiness you desire. Don't hesitate when action will get you to where you want to be.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)** — Cut to the chase and make your dreams a reality. Don't linger on things you cannot change.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 19)** — Don't get worked up over trivial matters. Letting your emotions take the reins will result in negative responses and loss.

**PISCES (Feb. 20-March 20)** — Put restrictions on spending, and concentrate on gaining knowledge and insight into what's possible.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19)** — Communication will be crucial to getting things done. Refuse to let anyone decide what's next for you.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20)** — Start making changes that promote opportunity. Connect with people and share information.



**EUGENIA LAST**

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20)** — Looking out for your interests instead of relying on others will put you in a better position and help you avoid mistakes.

**CANCER (June 21-July 22)** — Attend events that can offer introductions to valuable people. Sign up for something that will broaden your awareness.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)** — Sulking won't fix anything. Taking the lead will help you realize your dreams.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)** — A change may not be something you want, but after observing what's available, it could lead to an unexpected opportunity.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23)** — Gathering information will help you avoid a sticky situation.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 22)** — Don't allow emotional matters to boil over. Put your time and effort into an enjoyable pastime.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23-Dec. 21)** — Surround yourself with like-minded people you can trust to tell the truth. Look at the big picture.

### CROSSWORD

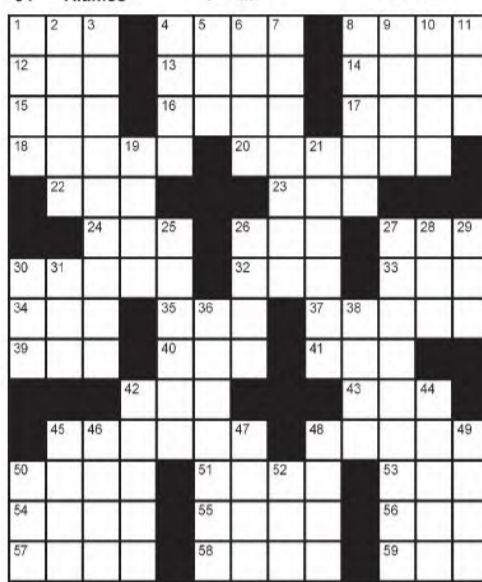
- ACROSS**
- 1 "The — Bang Theory"
  - 4 Mackerel shark
  - 8 "Darn it!"
  - 12 Actress — MacGraw
  - 13 EU nation
  - 14 Needle case
  - 15 Kid
  - 16 Furnish
  - 17 Charged particles
  - 18 Forbidden
  - 20 Mystery
  - 22 Certain party mem.
  - 23 "Holiday —"
  - 24 Rend
  - 26 Vaudeville routine
  - 27 Paid athlete
  - 30 Sends forth
  - 32 DDE, familiarly
  - 33 Wine variety
  - 34 — Alamos
  - 35 Linking word
  - 37 Artless
  - 39 Letters on roadside signs
  - 40 Actor — Pace
  - 41 Singer — McGraw
  - 42 Elec. unit
  - 43 Winter mo.
  - 45 Distorts
  - 48 Provide food for
  - 50 Pesci and Namath
  - 51 Great Salt Lake state
  - 53 Actress — Lupino
  - 54 Iridescent gem
  - 55 — Scotia
  - 56 Spoil
  - 57 Two-wheeler
  - 58 America's Cup trophy
  - 59 "Able was I — ..."

### Answer to Previous Puzzle



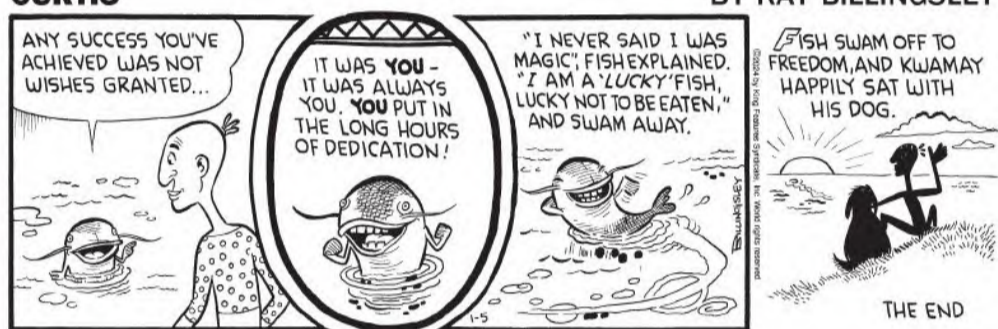
### DOWN

- 7 Satan (2 wds.)
- 8 Hold sway
- 9 Tiny piece
- 10 Fish in a can
- 11 Family mem.
- 19 Leave out
- 21 Aim
- 25 Holy songs
- 26 — -de-camp
- 27 Network ratings focus (2 wds.)
- 28 Race an engine
- 29 Pindaric
- 30 Shade tree
- 31 Swab
- 36 Distant planet
- 38 Verdi opera
- 42 Usher's beat
- 44 Fragrant wood
- 45 Pith helmet
- 46 Diluted
- 47 Pack
- 48 Burn
- 49 Not at all common
- 50 Chore
- 52 Rd.



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### CURTIS



BY RAY BILLINGSLEY

### MARMADUKE BY BRAD & PAUL ANDERSON



"What did that poor rock ever do to you?"

### PEANUTS



BY CHARLES M. SCHULZ

### SCRABBLE G.R.A.M.S.

PAR SCORE 150-160  
BEST SCORE 226

FOUR RACK TOTAL  
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

Directions: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. Finally, 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blank" used as any letter have no point value. All the words are in the Official SCRABBLE® Players Dictionary, 5th Edition.

Solutions — B-5

### THE GRIZZLELLS



BY BILL SCHORR

### GARFIELD



BY JIM DAVIS

### FAMILY CIRCUS BY BIL KEANE



### BEEBLE BAILEY



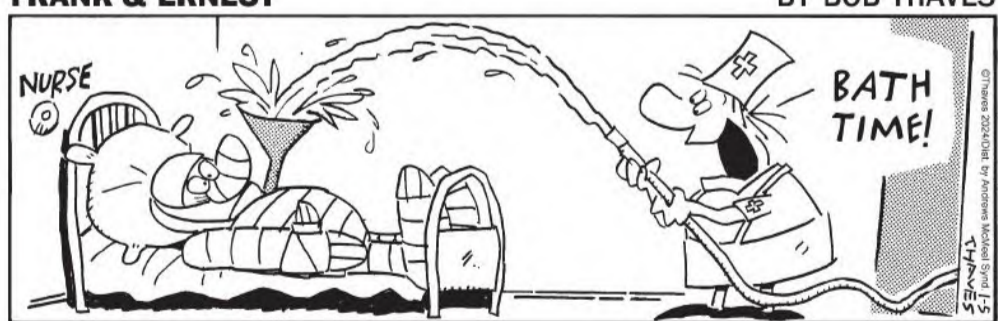
BY GREG, BRIAN & NEAL WALKER

### BLONDIE



BY DEAN YOUNG & JOHN MARSHALL

### FRANK & ERNEST



BY BOB THAVES

### BORN LOSER



BY ART & CHIP SANSON

### HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



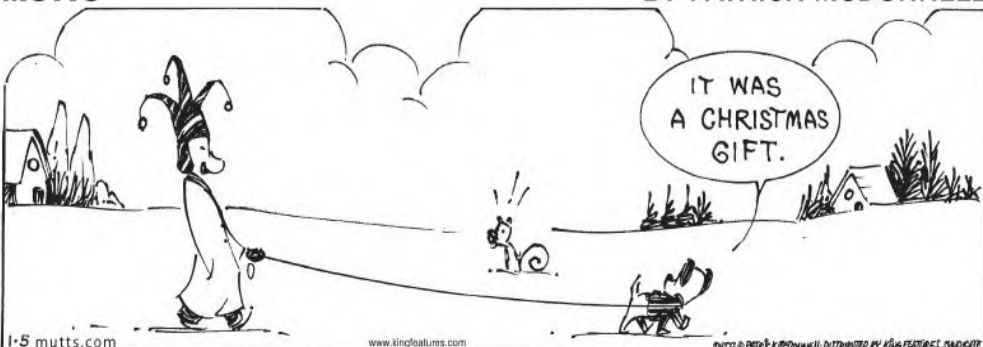
BY DIK BROWNE

### RHYMES WITH ORANGE



BY HILARY PRICE

### MUTTS



BY PATRICK MCDONNELL



# morgantown mitsubishi

# 0%\*

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-TO-  
BUMPER**

**7 YEAR/  
100,000 MILE  
ANTI  
CORROSION  
PERFORMANCE**

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