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INFRASTRUCTURE

County VFDs, Morgantown finalizing excess fire levy renewal language

BY BEN CONLEY
BConley@DominionPost.com

Should voters renew the county's fire protection excess levy in May, the Morgantown Fire Department will likely be among the agencies receiving support.

Monongalia County Volunteer Fire Association President Mickey Rinehart said the association and the city of Morgantown are working out the necessary details to add the city to the levy language this time around.

Rinehart said the parties walked away from a Tuesday meeting with an "amicable agreement," noting, "It looks like they will be on the levy."

The amount of money the firefighters are looking to generate through the levy renewal, and exactly how those dollars will be divided among departments, is still being finalized.

As previously reported, the MCVFA and the county's volunteer departments organized, presented and campaigned for both the original fire levy passed in 2016 and the initial renewal passed in 2020. The city was not involved in those efforts and the

SEE **LEVY**, A-2

More snow on the way

The sun sets on Chestnut Ridge Road (above) as Deckers Creek shows ice at right. AccuWeather forecasters are calling for more cold and snow in the area. Today's temperatures will top out at 36 with some sun and snow. Friday's forecast calls for snow to start about 2 a.m. and continue through 5 a.m. Saturday. Accumulations are expected to be 2-4 inches, with slippery roadways. Friday's high will be 33. Saturday will be 18 with cloudy skies and more snow. Sunday will be sunny and 26.
Ben Powell/The Dominion Post photos

MON COUNTY

Commission to produce timeline for subdivision regulation process

BY BEN CONLEY
BConley@DominionPost.com

A Subdivision and Land Division Ordinance (SALDO) is ready for the Monongalia County Commission's consideration.

In fact, save a few minor changes and clarifications, it's been ready and available for review on the county's website for about two years.

The question now becomes if and when the commission will take it up.

Following a presentation Wednesday from County Planner Andrew Gast-Bray, Commission President Sean Sikora said the body intends to produce a timeline indicating dates for a public hearing and potential adoption of the ordinance.

"At the end of the day I don't know what the temperature is for this. I know I've just been wanting to have the conversation and there's been so much resistance about even having that conversation. Every time we mention it in a meeting, I'll start getting phone calls and texts about it," Sikora said.

"It's evident when you look across our county that there are plenty of examples of why something like this is necessary. We don't want to take people's rights away as far as what they do with their land. We're just trying to help people plan better and we're trying to do it in a sensible way."

As has been reported, subdivision regulations have been an on-again-off-again topic for the county going back some 60 years.

Gast-Bray reiterated the point that regulating the subdivision of land is not zoning. That point, he

SEE **PRODUCE**, A-2

MURDER

MPD makes arrest after fatal stabbing

DPNews@DominionPost.com

Morgantown Police arrested a Texas man Wednesday for the stabbing death of a Morgantown man.

At about 4:39 p.m. Tuesday, Morgantown Police officers responded to 537 Milford St., off of Collins Ferry Road, regarding a medical emergency.

Upon arrival, officers entered the home and found the body of a man with multiple stab wounds.

According to an MPD press release Wednesday, the victim, identified as Jacob Patrick Lough, 26, of Morgantown, was pronounced dead at the scene.

Detectives identified the suspect as Jonathan Ramirez, 23, of Watauga, Texas. Ramirez was found around 10 a.m. Wednesday and taken into custody.

He was charged with first-degree murder and transported to the Monongalia County Sheriff's Department for transport to the North Central Regional Jail.

The Morgantown Police Department is still investigating this case and thanked the West Virginia University Police Department for its assistance in this investigation.

If you have information about this incident, or to report other suspicious activity, call 304-284-7522.

If you need immediate police attention or a crime is in progress call 911.

Milford Street is off Collins Ferry between its intersection with University Avenue and Burroughs Street.

LEGISLATURE

Pay raises for educators not a done deal

BY BRAD McELHINNY
WVMetroNews.com

CHARLESTON — Pay raise bills for West Virginia educators passed their first committee hurdle with a more ambitious proposal than what had been publicly discussed up to now, but there's still much more to go.

The House Education Committee passed two bills providing pay raises for teachers and school service personnel during a Wednesday afternoon meeting.

House Bill 4767 would provide pay raises for teachers, saying the change is to "bring them into parity with salaries offered in surrounding states."

The pay raise bill for teachers raises the base pay, with starting pay at a bachelor's degree level at $44,000, and then adjusts for each year of service. The bill has a formula to meet that goal of bringing teacher salaries in line with surrounding states, committee leaders said, so that's a twist on the average 5% pay raises discussed up until now by the governor and others.

"The goal was to say let's get us competitive with our neighboring states, try to take away the argument of 'We're not being paid competitively and our people are leaving us,'" Education Committee Chair Joe Ellington, R-Mercer, said following the meeting.

"We want to get them to the point where they're comfortable, competitive, get people to stay here in the state so we can fill our slots and get our students educated. That was the goal. But we also want to give them the comfortable lifestyle. We'd like to give them more. However, there's a finite amount."

House Bill 4202 raises salaries for school service personnel. It would provide a raise of $670 a month for those workers. Most of the text of each bill shows changes to pay scales.

Each bill was also referred to the House Finance Committee. Fiscal estimates suggest the teacher raise bill could total $116 million. The total between the two bills is estimated to be $210

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LEVY

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MFD was not a recipient of those funds.

During last week's commission meeting, Rinehart expressed frustration that Morgantown was coming to the table late in the game, noting the two sides had yet to have any official discussions and levy language must be finalized and submitted to the state by the end of the month.

City representatives said they made it known late last year that the city wanted the MFD to be included.

Morgantown City Manager Kim Haws said the request is ultimately aimed at improving fire services and ensuring taxpayers within the city are treated fairly.

"We're not focused simply on Morgantown, but we want to continue to support fire services inside and outside the [city]," Haws said. "We simply wanted to talk a little bit about the process and how it came about and what the city can do to help with that process, and also how the citizens of the municipality might gain some benefit from supporting the fire levy."

The current levy generates about $660,000 annually to be divided among the county's 12 volunteer departments and its brush fire and hazardous materials teams. The volunteer fire association also receives a small portion of the proceeds.

According to budget documents, the city anticipates collecting about $4.1 million in fire fees, which makes up a little more than half of the MFD's $7.64 million budget for the current fiscal year.

The current levy ends June 30, 2025. Any levies passed in the May 14 primary would take effect July 1, 2025.

PRODUCE

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added, has been made by the Supreme Court of Appeals for West Virginia.

"The principal difference is that subdivision ordinances regulate infrastructure and zoning regulations regulate land use," he said. "Not the same thing."

In other words, a SALDO doesn't tell you what you can or can't build on your land, but it will tell you what you must do to support what you build on your land.

"Subdivision regulations enable government bodies to ensure safe development by guaranteeing proper development of roads, storm water management, utilities, rights-of-way and other infrastructure needs," Gast-Bray said. "It's important that when we have development that it has the appropriate infrastructure, and that's what the SALDO is intended to provide."

As for the historic reluctance to move the issue forward, Sikora said he believes it comes down to multiple factors.

One, he said, is a fear of the unknown in a county that's never had any type of regulation over development.

He also conceded that elections have played a role throughout the years as one of the three commissioners is always facing reelection.

"That does hurt the fortitude and willingness to bring it up because everybody is worried about it being used against you in the election. I think we need to do our jobs and let the chips fall where they may," Sikora concluded.

Commissioner Tom Bloom agreed.

Bloom has filed as a candidate in the May primary. He's seeking his third six-year term on the commission.

"Not at all," he said when asked if he has concerns about taking this issue up with an election looming. "It's an issue where some people want to hear it and some people don't, but it needs to be dealt with one way or the other. I'm elected as a commissioner to make difficult decisions. I'll look at all sides before I decide."

CLARIFY

The Dominion Post strives to publish accurate information. If a factual error does occur, notify: Editor Pam Queen, 304-291-9425 or editor@dominionpost.com

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The Dominion Post

STATE

WVEA gets educator satisfaction survey results

BY KATHERINE SKELDON
WVMetroNews.com

CHARLESTON — Salaries, student behavior and burnout are just some of the concerns at least 700 West Virginia teachers have that are being reflected in a survey conducted by the West Virginia Education Association.

WVEA President Dale Lee met with members of the media and the association to discuss the results of that survey during a press conference Tuesday.

Lee said as it's becoming increasingly difficult to find, recruit and retain teachers, among other school employees, this prompted WVEA to conduct the survey of 700 of its members in November 2023 to try to gage the issues that's keeping people away from the profession further.

The survey responses were broken down by age, employment classification and length of service, and Lee said all of them say the same — they are not happy with the landscape of the current education system in the state.

"In all instances, the dissatisfaction was overwhelming," he said. "And keep in mind, the working conditions of our educators are the learning conditions of our students."

The survey found a 73% dissatisfaction rate with working conditions in the past year in education, with just 2% saying they are satisfied.

School employee salaries, student behavior, stress and burnout, cost of employee health care, lack of respect, employees leaving the profession and public funding going to charter schools and vouchers were among the top issues participants revealed in the survey as to the cause of their dissatisfaction.

A total of 62% of the survey participants said they are experiencing higher levels of burnout with the profession than ever before, a statistic Lee said is even up from 2020 during the peak of the COVID pandemic. The burnout numbers showed they were highest among those working at elementary and high school levels, and early career employees.

The survey showed 85% of members say that taxpayer funding for education should only be used for public schools.

In addition, the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission indicates there is 14% reduction in the number of students entering the education program.

Lee said these results are not showing the future in education looking any brighter for the state based on the current trajectory.

"Couple this with the lack of students seeing education as a career, and you will see the staffing issues will continue to grow if something isn't done to address these concerns," he said.

While 54% of the survey participants said they are confident they will continue working in education as a career, nearly half of them said they are much more likely to retire or leave education earlier than planned.

A total of 35% said they are not at all confident they will continue working in education, with early career employees being the highest of that percentage once again.

Lee said in 2018, there were 728 teacher positions across the state without a certified teacher filling the role — he said that number had grown to 1,705 positions in 2023. Lee said this number will continue to increase if nothing changes, and more issues will be created as a result.

"What that does is cause our students to have people that are not certified filling these positions," Lee said. "I know first grade positions that have had 10 substitutes in a year, that's doing harm to kids."

However, participants said they could see themselves staying in education if pay and compensation increased, student behavior, discipline policies and school safety improved, and they were treated with more respect.

Lee said these are all issues states and school systems are dealing with across the nation, and they are working to mitigate the issues by offering significant pay increases and implementing other reforms.

He said, however, West Virginia has given pay increases to education employees in four out of the last five years, but those increases have not kept pace with the other state's pay raises.

"In the latest rankings in state salaries, West Virginia fell from 46 in the nation to 50th in the nation in average teacher pay, even though we had received those multiple salary increases," he said.

Lee said it's time to take these proposed changes to better the state's education system to the Legislature.

He said WVEA plans to present the findings of the survey to both the Senate and House education committees, but they want to work with the legislators to find the solutions.

Lee said WVEA also has a number of bills it plans to introduce and support at this current 60-day legislative session.

CRIME

Man charged with malicious assault at Pilot truck stop

BY ERIN CLEAVENGER
ECleavenger@DominionPost.com

A Mannington man was arrested Friday after Monongalia County deputies responded to a disturbance at the Pilot truck stop on Smithtown Road.

Deputy Cole French, who responded to the call at around 7:22 p.m., said he spoke with Gregory Buda, 40, of Mannington, at the truck stop.

According to the criminal complaint, Buda said another individual hit his wife's vehicle while backing a truck out of a parking spot at the truck stop.

Buda said the vehicle began to leave the scene, so he jumped in the back of the truck and began hitting the back glass in an attempt to stop the driver.

The complaint states he then picked up a shovel and began hitting the back glass, which eventually shattered.

Buda then allegedly threw the shovel inside the cab of the truck, striking the driver in the back of the head, causing a laceration. The victim was checked out by EMS.

Buda is now facing malicious or unlawful assault charges. He was arraigned in Monongalia County Magistrate Court on Saturday and was released after posting the required 10% of a $25,000 personal recognizance bond.

A preliminary hearing is scheduled before Magistrate Reyes on Jan. 23.

CANDIDATE FILINGS

DPNews@DominionPost.com

The candidate filing period in West Virginia runs through Jan. 27.

Early voting will be May 1-11.

Primary election day is May 14. Polls open at 6:30 a.m. and close at 7:30 p.m.

These statewide and area state office candidates filed with the secretary of state on Tuesday. The notation (I) indicates incumbent.

U.S. President
Joe Biden (I), Delaware, D

U.S. Senate
Glenn Elliott, Wheeling, D

Governor
Patrick Morrisey, Harpers Ferry, R

Auditor
Mary Ann Roebuck Claytor, St. Albans, D

House of Delegates
Michael DeVault (I), Fairmont, R, District 74 (filed Jan. 12)

These are recent candidate filings for Monongalia County.

Sheriff
Jason Morgan, R

Magistrate
Ron Bane — Division 1
Sandy Holepit — Division 4
Tim Pocius — Division 2
Dimas "Ponch" Reyes — Division 5

Prosecuting attorney
Gabrielle "Gabe" Mucciola, D,.

DEAL

FROM PAGE A-1

million to $220 million.

"The governor gave us his budget. He told us what the revenue expectation is. My opinion is, it's up to the Legislature to decide how we want to spend it," said Ellington, who said he has started discussions with House Finance Chair Vernon Criss.

Ellington continued by acknowledging, "Finance is going to look at the whole budget. They've got to look at the whole big picture. We're trying to look from the standpoint of education, what things do we need to do to get us to be competitive nationwide and to do the best for our students and our citizens."

Following the education committee meeting, Fred Albert, president of American Federation of Teachers-West Virginia said he was encouraged.

"We're very pleased, of course," Albert said. "And this is a different bill from what the governor had proposed. This would create a bill that would pay our teachers and our service personnel more. It's much needed because we all know we're facing shortages in both our professional staff and our support staff, and something needs to be done.

"So this is welcome news, we appreciate it, and we're hoping that it will continue to move through the Legislature in a positive way."

Pay is a top concern

Gov. Jim Justice in his State of the State address called for average 5% pay raises for state employees at a cost to the state of $123 million. Justice said the pay raise is meant to cover increased costs under the Public Employees Insurance Agency and more.

West Virginia Education Association President Dale Lee said compensation has fallen behind for state educators and that pay is a top concern.

"Pay is part of it. The PEIA, the health benefit — and last year's raise, while everybody says 'Well you got four in five years,' last year's raise was eaten up with the 24.2% increase in PEIA premiums," Lee said Wednesday on MetroNews' "Talkline."

"We're facing another 10.5% premium increase this year. If you had to pay the spouse penalty, you actually lost money from last year to this year."

In the Senate

The Senate is assessing how the state's own finances will hold up with the raise proposal.

Last week, Senate Finance Chair Eric Tarr, R-Putnam, said that $123 million expense would be a tight squeeze.

Tarr noted that officials are already assessing the financial effects of the 21.25% personal income tax cut signed into law last year. And he sized up coming expenses such as the continuing rollout of the Third Grade Success Act, which puts additional aides in early-grade classrooms, an additional expense of $33 million each year of the expansion.

Tarr said previously that he supports state employees getting paid as much the state can possibly afford relative to what their market is. He cautioned, though, that the state needs to hold the line to not grow spending beyond 3% while there are still tax cuts moving into place.

Senate Education Chair Amy Nichole Grady, speaking Wednesday on "Talkline," said the majority caucus in the Senate has not yet reached a consensus on whether the proposed pay raises are affordable for the state.

EDITORIAL

For family-friendly downtown, focus on store looks, not store type

How many smoke and vape shops is too many?

The Morgantown Planning Commission is considering a change in zoning ordinances to limit any more vape/tobacco stores from coming to downtown. The concern is that too many such stores make High Street and its offshoots a less welcoming place for families.

We can certainly respect that concern, especially considering all the work the City of Morgantown has put into reviving downtown. And, to be fair, a quick Google Maps search will turn up five smoke and vape businesses between Willey Street and Walnut Street.

But we don't think it's good practice for the city to change ordinances to keep certain businesses out. Whether five smoke and vape shops in one area is too many should be up to consumers. If all five shops can thrive in close proximity, then there is obviously high demand for their products.

It seems to us that the concern is more about aesthetics and atmosphere than any issue of safety. The City of Morgantown is trying very hard to make High Street the kind of place where all kinds of people — including parents with kids — can stroll down the sidewalk and pop in and out of the locally owned businesses. Downtown already has a bustling nightlife; the city has been encouraging an equally busy daylight-life.

Instead of changing the zoning to limit what it considers non-family-friendly shops, the city should shift focus to maintaining family-friendly storefronts and increase efforts to attract the kind of businesses that reflect the city's desired clientele.

Many main streets and historic districts have and enforce certain maintenance and curb-appeal standards. No one would argue that businesses have the right to advertise their wares, but there have always been reasonable limitations on advertising products geared specifically to adults.

The City of Morgantown could issue guidelines for keeping storefronts appropriate for all ages: Shops could be required to keep adult-only products out of the front windows and replace big, bright, bold signage with more subtle (and perhaps adult-height) signs.

Focusing on the appearance of the storefronts would allow the city to cultivate the atmosphere it desires downtown without limiting what businesses can open.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

EMAIL submissions to opinion@dominionpost.com. **MAIL** submissions to: The Dominion Post, 1251 Earl L. Core Road, Morgantown, WV 26505. **INCLUDE** your name, hometown and phone number for confirmation. Letters should not exceed 300 words and should be received no later than noon Thursday for weekend publication.

U.S. bombing Houthis latest example of Congress sidelined for military action

PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN'S DECISION TO ORDER A WAVE OF STRIKES AGAINST HOUTHI TARGETS IN YEMEN WAS INEVITABLE the moment the Yemeni militia disregarded Washington's warnings a week earlier and sent a swarm of 18 drones and three anti-ship ballistic missiles in the direction of U.S. warships.

Last week's strikes, which took place with the cooperation of the United Kingdom and were aimed at 60 locations, were designed to degrade the Houthis' capabilities and hopefully deter additional attacks on shipping lanes in the Red Sea.

As one would expect, the U.S. military is highly proficient at these types of standoff operations. Tactically speaking, the mission was a success. The Houthis woke up the next morning with less military hardware than they had the previous night. As one anonymous U.S. defense official said shortly after the joint U.S.-U.K. strikes were over: "We hit them pretty hard, pretty good."

Beyond the tactical and strategic questions surrounding the operation, however, are the legal and constitutional ones that were largely brushed aside. The key question: Does the president have the right to order military action without a vote from Congress?

In an ideal world, the country's elites and institutions would actually abide by the Constitution as it's currently written. With respect to a wartime action, the Constitution is quite clear: The legislative branch has the sole responsibility to decide whether the nation enters hostilities. This can be taken through a formal declaration of war or, as is more commonly practiced since World War II, by voting through an authorization giving the president the authority to initiate military action.

That's how the system is supposed to work, and it's indicative of the checks-and-balances principle that our nation's Founders astutely established when they were debating how the American republic should be organized and governed.

Unfortunately, in the real world, checks and balances are watered down as to be almost irrelevant, at least when matters of war and peace are concerned. Outside a few ardent constitutionalists on Capitol Hill such as Rep. Ro Khanna and Sen. Rand Paul, the vast majority of lawmakers either don't seem to care about Congress being sidelined or are perfectly happy with an all-powerful executive taking exclusive control of the reins.

One needs only to take a fast glance at the statements from congressional leadership after last week's strikes to appreciate just how nonchalant Congress has gotten on what is the most consequential issue elected lawmakers will make in their careers. Whether it's House Speaker Mike Johnson or Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Jack Reed, the rhetoric is largely supportive of the U.S. operation against the Houthis.

THE CONSTITUTION IS QUITE CLEAR: THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH HAS THE SOLE RESPONSIBILITY TO DECIDE WHETHER THE NATION ENTERS HOSTILITIES. ... IN THE REAL WORLD, CHECKS AND BALANCES ARE WATERED DOWN AS TO BE ALMOST IRRELEVANT, AT LEAST WHEN MATTERS OF WAR AND PEACE ARE CONCERNED.

In terms of constitutional questions, it's depressing that so many lawmakers are untroubled with the idea of a single individual making the decision to bomb another country for the rest of us. Yes, Biden is the president and also the commander in chief. But there's a big difference between being a president and being a king. The former holds a lot of power but is forced to share some of it with others in the system; the latter holds all the power and is unaccountable to no one. Sometimes, it's hard to differentiate between the two.

To be fair, Biden is not the only U.S. president to order military action without Congress' buy-in. You would be hard-pressed to find any U.S. president over the last several decades who hasn't done this. Ronald Reagan invaded Grenada (1983) and bombed Libya (1986) without congressional approval. While George H.W. Bush sought and received congressional approval for Operation Desert Storm in Iraq, he also invaded Panama (1989) and sent U.S. forces into Somalia (1992) on his own.

Bill Clinton bombed Iraq three times (1993, 1996 and 1998), authorized airstrikes in Bosnia (1995) and spearheaded a NATO bombing campaign against Serbia in Kosovo (1999). George W. Bush expanded the so-called war on terrorism to Yemen (2002) and Somalia (2003). Barack Obama organized a U.S.-led multilateral bombing campaign in Libya in 2011 on the legally ridiculous notion that airstrikes without ground troops didn't constitute "war" in the constitutional sense. Donald Trump sent Tomahawk cruise missiles into Syrian government airports and military facilities not once, but twice (2017, 2018), in retaliation for dictator Bashar Assad's chemical weapons attacks against his own people. Biden's strikes on Houthi targets are only the latest in a long series of presidential war-making.

In short, keeping Congress sidelined has become such common practice that it can now sadly be referred to as the normal way of doing business. This isn't how the system is supposed to work, and it certainly isn't the way the Constitution should be interpreted. Frankly, the architects of that document likely would be yelling expletives if they were still alive and knew how their work product was being used — and just as importantly, not used.

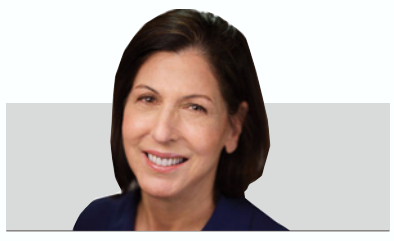
Can the situation change for the better? Yes, it can. But it will require bold action on the part of Congress as an institution and a willingness from lawmakers to actually do their jobs. You can't fix this asymmetry of constitutional power by relying on the executive to help out. The antidote is showing some backbone and political courage to take difficult but necessary votes.

Continuing to hide under the desk whenever the subject of war comes up will, over time, gut the legislative branch and turn what should be a republic into a de facto kingdom.

DANIEL DEPETRIS is a fellow at Defense Priorities and a foreign affairs columnist for the Chicago Tribune.

Christie enters the pantheon of patriots

CHRIS CHRISTIE HAS DONE HIMSELF A SERVICE, DONE HIS REPUBLICAN PARTY A SERVICE AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, DONE HIS NATION A SERVICE.



FROMA HARROP

He convincingly expressed great remorse for having endorsed Donald Trump in 2016. Then he entered the 2024 nomination race with the goal of stopping a repeat disaster. That was the personal part.

Christie gave his party a measure of self-respect by going after Trump as a threat to America when most of the other Republican candidates wouldn't even point out his criminality. That was the high point of Christie's emotional speech on suspending his campaign: When asked whether they would vote for Trump if he were a convicted felon, Christie said in a tone of disbelief, every other candidate in an earlier Republican debate raised a hand.

Including Nikki Haley. That should have been the lowest bar to clear.

But with Haley closing in on Trump in New Hampshire primary polls, Christie knows full well that by leaving the race he would enhance her chances of beating Trump. Or at least melt his aura of invincibility.

At the same time, Christie did not officially endorse Haley. She will obviously have to do more. She will have to start airing more unvarnished truths about Trump. It's not enough to argue that she has stronger poll numbers against Joe Biden in a national election. That may be true, but it's a weak retort, as is her age argument. (Haley has at least broken with some competitors by saying that the 2020 election was not stolen.)

Trump obviously sees Haley gaining and so he is dusting off his greatest hits of vulgarity. He has already resurrected "birther" nonsense by posting an item claiming that Haley was not a U.S. citizen because her Indian parents weren't citizens at the time of her birth. That should be enough to reach for the brass knuckles. After all, she is running against an authoritarian who is clearly losing his marbles.

Christie has been at politics for a long time. One would think that as a Republican-elected governor in the Democratic state of New Jersey, Christie would be something of a party hero. But he could not avoid collisions with the growing Hatfield-McCoy mindset of his party. In 2012, when President Barack Obama visited the Jersey shore after the devastation of Superstorm Sandy, Christie embraced him. That sweet photo drew condemnations from brutes on the right.

Christie may join Rep. Jim Clyburn as a mover of the electoral tides. A South Carolina Democrat and civil rights icon, Clyburn in 2020 steered the Democratic Party to the one candidate who could smite Trump. At the time, Democrats in the early caucus and primary states were embracing their glamorous lefties, Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren. Biden was all but dismissed by the political media.

Clyburn knew that the Southern primaries, with their heavy representation of Black voters, could change the course of the election. But the voters needed the signal from Clyburn to activate the wave. Clyburn delivered, and from then on Biden became the Democratic frontrunner. And he went on to defeat Trump.

It's said that Christie left the race because he could no longer see a path to victory. That's not quite right. As a moderate Republican, Christie never had a path to victory, and he knew it. His role was to be the Republican who could call out Trump publicly and loudly on the debate stage when none of the others would.

But Christie is not going to disappear. Combative and colorful, he will remain a regular on the news shows. And there's a long term: For his defense of the democracy, Christie will enter the pantheon of American patriots.

FOLLOW FROMA HARROP on Twitter @FromaHarrop. She can be reached at fharrop@gmail.com.

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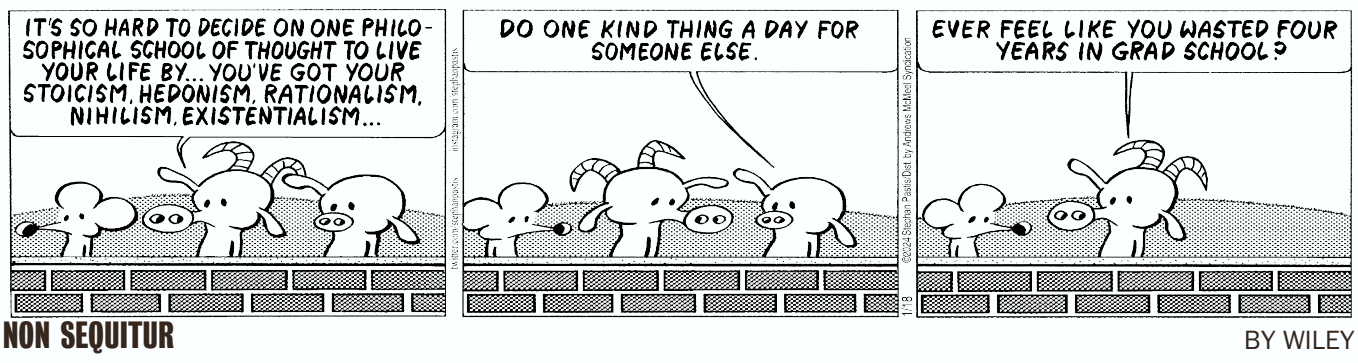
PEARLS BEFORE SWINE BY STEPHAN PASTIS



NON SEQUITUR BY WILEY

COURTS

WVU files lawsuit against WV Campus Housing

BY ERIN CLEAVENGER
ECleavenger@DominionPost.com

A civil suit concerning the operation of the University Place (UPlace) complex on University Avenue in Sunnyside was filed by the West Virginia University Board of Governors this month in Monongalia County Circuit Court.

Defendants in the lawsuit include a series of limited liability companies, including WV Campus Housing (WVCH), Downtown Campus Parking Associates (DCPA), Falcon Services, Westridge Corporate Park, Toro Equities, and Ryan Lynch, owner of those LLCs.

The court document also names any John Doe entities that are currently unknown as well as BDO USA, a Delaware-based limited liability partnership that provides tax and advisory services, including audit services.

WVU's suit claims that over a period of several years, unbeknownst to the university, certain defendants have been "secretly diverting money from the payments made by students who reside at UPlace and other parties and intended for the financing, operation, and maintenance of UPlace. Defendants have actively concealed this fraudulent scheme from WVU."

In the 40-page lawsuit, WVU makes numerous claims against the defendants including breach of contract, fraud, promissory fraud, tortious interference with contract, conspiracy, aiding and abetting a tort, conversion and negligence regarding the UPlace complex.

UPlace is a mixed-use housing, retail and parking facility where Seneca Hall — a popular residence hall for WVU freshman — is located. The property provides 256 residential units with 979 beds and 29,650 square feet of retail space, portions of which are used by WVU and its affiliates.

The complex, opened in 2015, is a WVU Public-Private Partnership with WVCH and DCPA.

The partnership includes a series of contracts and agreements collectively referred to in the suit as the "UPlace Agreements," including a long-term lease, subleases and an operating agreement.

The lawsuit states that under the UPlace Agreements, WVU manages and operates the residential part of UPlace as on-campus housing, collects revenues from the garage and housing, provides all student services, and maintains, manages and pays for all maintenance and operating costs and obligations associated with the residences and parking garage.

WVCH was supposed to operate the retail portion of UPlace and pay the debt service and utilities. However, according to

SEE **WVU**, A-5

CVB

Foodies can get their fill

IT MAY LOOK LIKE A WINTER WONDERLAND OUTSIDE, but that doesn't mean there isn't plenty to do inside! These next few weeks in Mountaineer County are no doubt going to be a foodie's paradise. With a chili cook-off, a tasting event and many more, there is sure to be something to excite your taste buds! If you want something to keep your kids and yourself active, check out Launch Pad's Family Fun Day. As always, Mountaineer Country is alive with a variety of events.

If you'd like more information on events in and around Morgantown, there is a variety of resources to be found at VisitMountaineerCountry.com. Plus, follow us @VisitMountaineerCountry on all major social media platforms, or search "Visit Mountaineer Country" on the Apple App Store or Google Play Store to download our free trip planner app. There, you can plan your ideal day trip/staycation in Monongalia, Preston and Taylor counties, all while saving money on lodging, dining and shopping with our Mountaineer Deals.

■ Triple S Harley-Davidson Chili Cook-Off, 1-3 p.m. Sunday.

Join Triple S Harley-Davidson at its location for the annual Chili Cook-Off to benefit Pantry Plus More. Registration to enter your famous chili is only $10. If you aren't much of a chef, be a taster. With a donation of $10, you receive raffles, prizes, beverages and the opportunity to taste every chili and vote for your favorites! There will be a $500 prize for the judges' favorite chili and a $250 prize for the people's favorite. The winner will also receive a trophy and bragging rights!

SEE **CVB**, A-5

Chestnut Ridge tubing hill opens Friday

DPNews@DominionPost.com

After years in the making, the new tubing hill at Chestnut Ridge Park & Campground is gearing up for its first fully functional weekend.

Monongalia County Director of Parks & Recreation J.R. Petsko said the frigid temperatures and the park's ability to make snow have the slope ready for action.

There are two tubing sessions available on Friday, Saturday and Sunday; from 10 a.m.-noon and from 2 p.m.-4 p.m. Tickets can be purchased for $10 at moncountyparks.com.

Each session is limited to 50 people and only Chestnut Ridge rental tubes are permitted.

The Saturday morning session and the Sunday afternoon session are sold out. As of Wednesday eventing, there were 10 tickets left for Saturday afternoon and 25 remaining for Sunday morning. Both Friday sessions had more than 40 tickets remaining.

Sneakerhead Night with WVU women's basketball

William Wotring/The Dominion Post photos

Those attending Wednesday evening's WVU women's basketball game at the Coliseum were invited to wear their favorite sneakers and swag for Sneakerhead Night, one of several promotions held throughout the season.

Team continues promotions at home games

DPNews@DominionPost.com

It was Sneakerhead Night Wednesday as the WVU women's basketball team took on Houston in a mid-week Big-12 match-up.

Fans were encouraged to wear their best sneakers and swag and enter to win prizes throughout the night, including a pair of WVU color Nike Dunk Lows or basketball shoes.

This was one of several promotions planned for the season, culminating in Senior Day March 2.

SEE **TEAM**, A-5

WVU women's basketball fans sign up for give-aways at Wednesday's home game vs. Houston. For complete game coverage and more photos, see **Page B-1.**

BUSINESS

Book Exchange celebrates 90 years

Meet-and-greet Friday with WVU basketball players Josiah Harris, Kobe Johnson

DPNews@DominionPost.com

Members of Morgantown and the surrounding communities are invited to join The Book Exchange in kicking off its 90th anniversary celebrations with a special meet-and-greet with Country Roads Trust's basketball players Josiah Harris and Kobe Johnson.

The event will be from 5:30-7 p.m. Friday at the Evansdale Book Exchange, 342 Patteson Drive, Morgantown.

The event is free and open to the public. Members of the community are encouraged to grab selfies and to bring any memorabilia or posters they wish to be signed.

"The Book Exchange has served Morgantown and the WVU community for 90 years, and in this new age of name, image and likeness, we are excited to support our student athletes, too," said Vice President Jonathan Fleming.

The event, in collaboration with WVU's NIL partner Country Roads Trust, will kick off the store's anniversary celebrations that will be held throughout the year. In addition to meeting the two players, the event will feature giveaways and more.

The Book Exchange features a wide collection of branded gear and apparel, featuring name brands such as Nike and Champion, as well as locally owned West Virginia companies and designers. The Evansdale location also features a newly renovated Nike sports area with all the latest designs.

"Morgantown is our home, and being a family-owned and operated business for nearly a century is something we're very proud of," Fleming said. "We can't thank the community enough for their support, and hope to have more of these events in the future."

The Book Exchange was established in Morgantown in 1934 and currently has two locations — on the Downtown Campus (Willey Street) and Evansdale Campus (Patteson Drive).

Customers can shop the entire collection at bookexchangewv.com online 24/7, with both in-store pickup and shipping options available.

COMMUNITY

Mayo bath for Bloom?

Pantry Plus More still raising funds for creamy dunking

BY JIM BISSETT
JBissett@DominionPost.com

Tom Bloom can tell you all about the spread offense.

After all, the Monongalia County commissioner hails from gridiron-rich Pennsylvania and the football-crazed city of Philadelphia, in particular — whose Eagles, unfortunately for him, spiraled out in their wild-card run to the Super Bowl last week.

It was another football game last month, though, when Bloom, who is also a founding board member of Pantry Plus More, took the offensive on a decidedly different spread.

Or dunk, or bath, whatever you want to call it.

That was after WVU outmuscled North Carolina 30-10, in the Duke's Mayo Bowl.

Said bowl has one of the goofiest — or most gross, some might say — postgame traditions in all of college football.

The one where, the winning coach, if he agrees to it, gets a 4.5-gallon bucket of the sponsor's signature condiment poured over his head for a charity of choice.

Said coach was Neal Brown, and said charity was a certain food bank in Westover.

"I'm gonna take it like a champ," WVU's top football boss said, as he drew in deep for the Duke's.

Which, prompted a response from Bloom, who famously observed, "For that kind of money for Pantry Plus More, I'd take a bath in mayonnaise any day."

As it turned out, the board took him up on it, immediately launching a campaign of its own, that, as of 5 p.m. Wednesday, beckoned 19 people to the cause, who have kicked in $1,234 toward the $10,000 goal.

Don't hold the mayo on this one, the pantry's board president, Julie Woolwine said.

"We're gonna keep it going until we make that goal," she said.

"It's for a good cause, and besides, it's Tom getting dunked in mayonnaise."

Amanda Bolyard, who chairs the pantry's annual Back to School Bash, among other events, said in all seriousness, that it's really more about the former — than it is the latter.

"It's about getting the word out to more people about what we do," Bolyard said.

"We have an all-volunteer staff, and we're working to make sure no kid goes hungry in Monongalia County."

Motivating mayo

Even in relatively prosperous Mon, which economically fares better than a lot of its Mountain State neighbors, that's a tall order.

SEE **MAYO**, A-5

TEAM

FROM PAGE A-4

Season-long promotions

■ Hometown Hero: Each game one Hometown Hero will be honored for their service to the community.

■ Tee's for 3's: Following every Mountaineer 3-pointer this season, T-shirts courtesy of the Mountaineer Maniacs will be tossed into the crowd.

Single-game promotions

■ Jan 27 vs. Iowa State — 50th Anniversary Celebration and Gold Rush

Join the Mountaineers as they honor the classes of 14 to present and all their accomplishments as part of the 50th anniversary of WVU women's basketball. All fans in attendance will receive a gold commemorative 50th anniversary rally towel. Additionally, all fans are encouraged to wear gold for the annual Gold Rush game vs. Iowa State.

■ Jan. 30 vs. UCF — "I Belong" Diversity & Inclusion Game

The first 200 fans in attendance will receive an "I Belong" T-shirt. It's also Faculty/Staff Appreciation night and all WVU employees will be granted free admission with a valid employee ID.

■ Feb. 6 vs. Texas Tech — National Girls &Women in Sports Day, Black History Month Celebration

Join the Mountaineers as they celebrate National Girls and Women in Sports Day with a pregame clinic on the concourse from other WVU Women's sports teams. The Mountaineers will also be honoring Black History Month with NPHC Night. At halftime, the Mountaineers will recognize all NPHC fraternities and sororities for their work on campus.

■ Feb. 17 vs. Oklahoma — Pink Game

Fans are encouraged to wear pink in support of the fight against breast cancer.

■ Feb. 24 vs. Baylor — 50th Anniversary End of Year Celebration and Alumni Welcome Back

Join the Mountaineers as they celebrate all 50 years of WVU women's basketball. All former team members will be invited back to Morgantown and will be recognized during halftime. Fans in attendance will receive a 50th Anniversary Commemorative giveaway.

■ March 2 vs. TCU: Senior Day

The 2024 seniors will be honored with a pregame ceremony.

Fans can purchase tickets by visiting WVUGAME.com, calling 800-WVU GAME or visiting the Mountaineer Ticket Office at the Gold Gate of the WVU Coliseum. The ticket office is open 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 90 minutes prior to tipoff on game days.

Single-game tickets are $10 each for reserved seats, $8 each for general admission (GA) and $5 each for groups of 10 or more when purchased in advance at WVUGAME.com. At the WVU Coliseum ticket window, tickets will be $12 for all reserved seats, $10 for adult GA, $5 for youth and seniors GA and $5 for groups GA. The discounted online pricing will be available until tipoff of the game.

MAYO

FROM PAGE A-4

Food insecurity — that is, the clinical state of simply not getting enough food to sustain one's self nutritionally — is ever-present here, across West Virginia and within the confines of Mon County.

In Mon County, around 15% of school-age children are food insecure, according Feeding America, a national watchdog group.

Across West Virginia, it's 1 in every 7 children who are going to bed with grumbling bellies, the organization reports.

"How can you expect a kid to focus in class on Monday," Bolyard asked, "when he never really had anything to eat over the weekend?"

She appreciates all the people who contribute to Pantry Plus More and all the volunteers who make the place go, she said.

That includes Bloom, she said, who is willing take a Duke's dive for the good of the order.

"If I get to do this, I'm gonna make it into a huge public event," Bloom said, "because it's for Pantry Plus More."

Ideally, he said, Mountaineer football stars Garrett Greene and Nick Malone would do the dunking honors — "Because they volunteer a lot with us. The whole team does, really. Coach Brown has been great for our community."

Visit Pantry Plus More's Facebook page to find out more about the organization, and how you can volunteer while contributing to the Bloom/Duke's campaign, Bolyard said.

People with specific questions, she said, are encouraged to send a private message to the page, for a response from her or another board member.

"I keep hoping that Duke's Mayo will pick up on what we're attempting here," Bolyard said. "That's a great thing they're doing."

Huddling up, for The Food-on-Ice Bowl

She's been repeatedly tagging the "New Heights" podcast hosted by NFL siblings Travis Kelce of the Kansas Chiefs and Jason Kelce, who is on the team of Bloom's Eagles, to keep the drive alive, as it were.

"We're trying to get some matching sponsors, too," she said, "because we want to see this happen."

Meanwhile, what will happen Saturday at Pantry Plus More's Westover headquarters at 9 Rousch Drive, Bloom said, is right in the offensive scheme of things.

Just like an NFL playoff game with Mother Nature showing blitz, a truck from the Mountaineer Food Bank Mobile Food Pantry in Gassaway, Braxton County, is scheduled to roll into the lot — in defiance of those 18-degree temperatures and snow forecasters are predicting for the day.

The giveaway, while supplies last, is set for 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Bloom said.

"Our volunteers will be out there no matter what," he said, "because if they aren't, people don't eat."

CVB

FROM PAGE A-4

■ Mountain Mama Tasting Series, 6 p.m. Jan. 26.

Indulge yourself at the Mountain Mama Tasting Series — A Cupcakerie Event at Monongalia County Community Center, where a variety of dishes await you. Chef Donnie Orr has created a menu that pays homage to Appalachian culture, and you will want to taste them all. The menu includes chestnuts, ramps, bone marrow, short ribs and more unique ingredients. Get ready for an Appalachian culinary journey like no other.

■ Launch Pad Family Fun Day, 3-9 p.m. Jan. 26.

Get ready for nonstop family fun at Launch Pad Trampoline Park. For just $20 you get a one-hour, all-access pass to the trampoline attractions. Your pass also includes face painting, family fun games, prizes and dinner with pizza and drinks after your jump session. Spaces are filling up fast so be sure to purchase passes for your family and friends today.

Details for each of these events and others can be found at VisitMountaineerCountry.com/Events.

Stay connected to Mountaineer Country

For the latest updates and tourism information in Mountaineer Country, sign up for our e-newsletter at VisitMountaineerCountry.com, and follow @VisitMountaineerCountry on social media. Use the hashtag, #VisitMountaineerCountry in your posts for a chance to be featured on our social media.

VISIT MOUNTAINEER COUNTRY CVB strives to increase the tourism economy by marketing and selling the destination to our guests by "wowing" them and encouraging them to stay one more night and spend one more dollar.

WVU

FROM PAGE A-4

WVU's complaint, the university is now paying the debt service and utilities for the retail premises from their collected funds.

The joint operating agreement requires all gross revenues from UPlace, including those from WVU and WVCH, to be deposited into an operating account. WVU is then reimbursed monthly for operating expenses and a yearly management fee no higher than 4% of the facilities' gross revenues.

"While WVU does not have access to the operating account, WVCH warranted under the UPlace Agreements that all disbursements from the operating account would be used exclusively for UPlace and the parking facility project expenses," the suit states.

WVU claims in the suit that by 2017, WVCH, DCPA and Ryan Lynch "had stopped paying operating expenses, management fees, and other amounts owed to WVU and advised WVU there were insufficient funds to make these payments to WVU."

WVU agreed to work with Lynch's companies and Bank of America to restructure the project loan, which included WVU's agreement to close Arnold Hall, another residence hall, in order to convert 400 beds to UPlace's Seneca Hall.

In conjunction with the loan restructuring, amendments were made to the UPlace Agreements, which are collectively referred to in the suit as the "April 1, 2017 Amendments."

One of these amendments restated that WVCH would use funds in the operating account solely for expenses related to the operation of UPlace and the parking garage.

Another was the establishment of a "waterfall" system that dictated the order in which operating account funds are to be disbursed — first the debt service to Bank of America was to be paid for the project loan, then WVU was to be paid current operating expenses, followed by payment of past due amounts to WVU if funds are available in the account.

WVU claims that Lynch and his companies "had no intention" of using the operating funds solely for UPlace or of disbursing the funds in accordance with the waterfall.

"WVCH, DCPA, and Ryan Lynch made these false promises regarding the Operating Account funds to induce WVU to assist them with the restructuring of the Bank of America loan. This included WVU's agreement to close Arnold Hall, and though WVU has not paid additional residential rents, it agreed to potentially pay additional rents, and to enter into the April 1, 2017 Amendments."

According to WVU, unbeknownst to it, Lynch and WVCH began improperly transferring money into and out of the operating account to other entities owned by Lynch and possibly others. The lawsuit alleges that Lynch and company took active measures and made multiple misrepresentations to WVU in order to conceal the improper transfers.

WVU states Lynch gave a "variety of false and misleading administrative reasons for why payments were delayed."

Upon receiving a payment in June 2022 for less than the amount owed, WVU noticed that WVCH and Lynch had wired the money to WVU from accounts other than the Operating Account.

At that time, WVU states it demanded that WVCH and Lynch pay all amounts currently owed under the agreements within 30 days. The university said Lynch did not respond but did send another partial payment that did not come from the Operating Account.

An audit report for fiscal year 2022 found further evidence that WVCH was owed $3,633,688 from "related parties," which suggested that at least that amount of money had been improperly transferred to undefined parties.

Because of the diversion of funds for non-UPlace purposes, the Operating Account was left with a cash balance of only $22,000 on June 30, 2022. The balance the previous year was $2.2 million.

The audit report led to WVU discovering WVCH has also failed to collect over $785,000 in rent from one of UPlace's commercial tenants, which the suit states is owned by one of Lynch's family members.

According to WVU, the report also showed that Lynch and the Lynch entities repaid the over $3 million missing from the Operating Account, but it believes as soon as the audit was completed that money was immediately diverted back to Lynch.

The remaining defendant, BDO USA, prepared the annual audit reports of WVCH.

WVU alleges that BDO knew or should have known that WVCH, DCPA and Lynch were diverting funds from the Operating Account to the other Lynch companies and failed to report the improper and suspicious nature of the multiple, unexplained transfers of substantial amounts of money from the Operating Account in their audit reports.

WVU claims to have suffered significant damages and requests all damages allowed by law, including compensatory, punitive and specific performance under the contracts as well as interest, court costs and attorney fees.

The Dominion Post was unable to reach Lynch for comment.

DominionPost.com

Smith Funeral & Cremation Care
~ Lives & Legacies Honored ~

OBITUARIES

Hilda Ralston

Hilda Elwanda Ralston passed away peacefully on Jan. 17, 2024, at the age of 96, surrounded by her loving family.

Hilda was born on Jan. 25, 1927, in Junior, a daughter of the late Otis and Pearl Shahan.

Hilda Ralston

Family was the cornerstone of Hilda's life, and she is fondly remembered by her loving daughters, Elwanda (Ed) McCartney and Robin (John) Masters; her adoring grandchildren, Marc (Kimber) McCartney, and daughter, Rylee, Clint Masters, and Rebecca Masters; and her last surviving sister, Evelyn Phyilliaere.

A short two weeks after returning from his deployment in World War II, Hilda and Robert married in 1946. Hilda spent the early years of their 52-year marriage tending to the home and caring for their two daughters. Later, Hilda worked for American Vending at the WVU Coliseum until her retirement. Hilda and Robert loved to travel and would often winter in various cities in Florida.

The family would like to extend a special thanks to all of Hilda's caregivers and to those friends who offered her their love and support through to her final days.

Family and friends are invited to gather at Fred L. Jenkins Funeral Home from 4-8 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 19, and again on Saturday, Jan. 20, from 10 a.m. until the time of funeral service at 11 a.m. with Pastor Dan Meadows officiating. Following the service, Hilda will be laid to rest next to her husband at Beverly Hills Memorial Gardens.

Condolences:
fredjenkinsfuneralhome.com

William Stevens

William F. Stevens, 66, of Morgantown, went to be with the Lord, Jan. 15, 2024, in the comfort of his own home surrounded by his loved ones.

William was born Dec. 2, 1957, the son of George and Virginia Mae Stevens.

William Stevens

William enjoyed watching sports, especially the Steelers and the Mountaineers. He loved bowling, golfing, and he loved nature and adored his furry baby Molly.

William is survived by his loving wife of 25 years, Ruth; his mother, Virginia Mae Stevens; his children, Brooke Brownley, (Adam); Joebed Carpena, (Chan); Rene Carpena, (Dana), Iricel Wyatt (Richard); grandchildren, Ethan, Trae, Lymari, Adrian, Adriana, Breana, Elijah, Emalyse, Brandon, Seth and Nova; great-grandchildren, James, Easton, Gianna and Aiyanna; his sister, Sharon Cuppett; and nephews, Stephen, (Andrea), Michael, (Kayla); Douglas, (Annamarie).

William is preceded by his father, George Stevens.

Friends and family will be received at Hastings Funeral Home, 153 Spruce St., Morgantown, from 1 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 19, until the time of the funeral service with Chaplin Dennis Lusin officiating. Following the funeral service cremation services will be provided by Hastings Funeral Home.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations may be made to WV Caring Hospice, PO Box 760, Arthurdale, WV 26520, for their excellent care during a difficult process.

Condolences:
hastingsfuneralhome.com

Hastings

The Dominion Post publishes obituaries Wednesday-Sunday. They can now be viewed for free at dominionpost.com. To sumbit an obituary, email obits@dominionpost.com

"No snowflake ever falls in the wrong place."
- Zen Proverb
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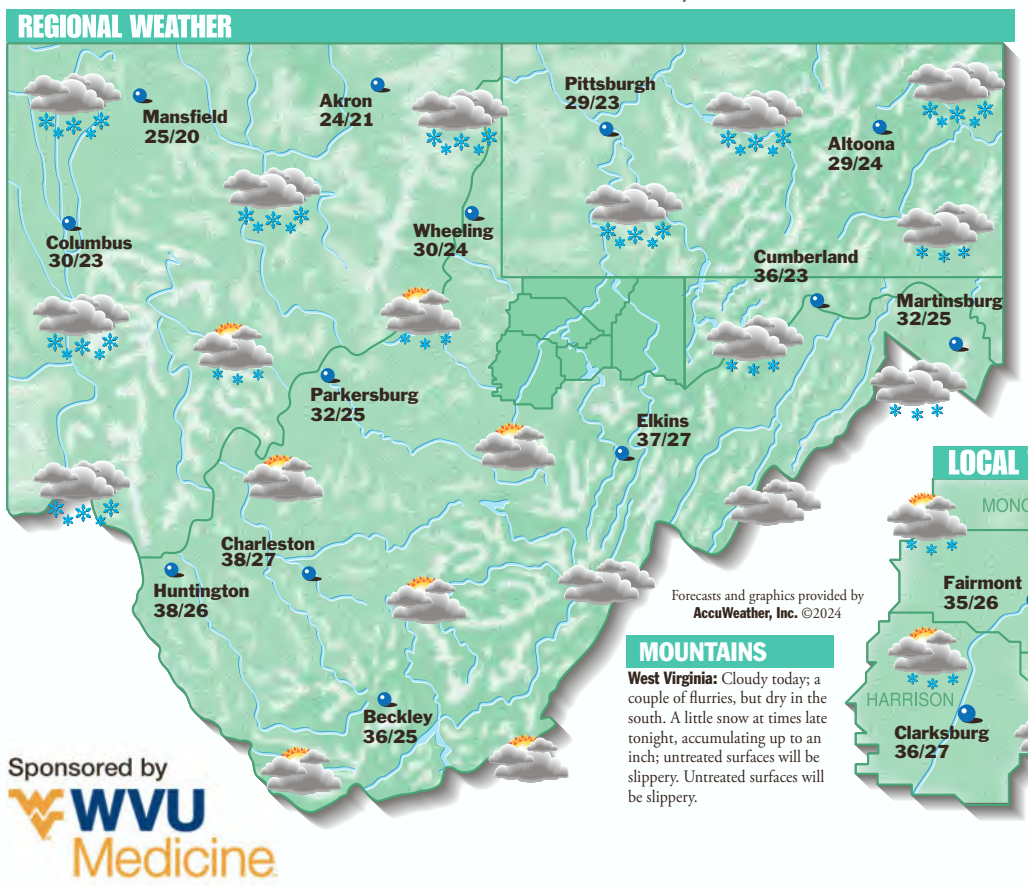
FIVE-DAY FORECAST FOR MORGANTOWN

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
34° / 26°	29° / 11°	18° / 13°	23° / 13° COLD	40° / 33°
Turning cloudy, flurries; not as cold	Cold with a little snow	Cloudy, flurries; brisk and bitterly cold	Mostly sunny and very cold	Not as cold with some sun

REGIONAL WEATHER



Forecasts and graphics provided by AccuWeather, Inc. ©2024

MOUNTAINS

West Virginia: Cloudy today; a couple of flurries, but dry in the south. A little snow at times late tonight, accumulating up to an inch; untreated surfaces will be slippery. Untreated surfaces will be slippery.

ALMANAC

Morgantown through 4 p.m. Wednesday

Temperature

High/low	20°/9°
Normal high/low	38°/21°
Record high	67° in 1932
Record low	-16° in 1982

Precipitation

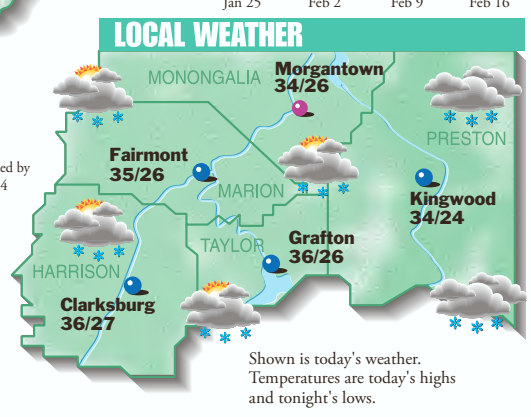
24 hrs ending 4 p.m. Wednesday	Trace
Month to date	2.65"
Year to date	2.65"

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	7:38 a.m.
Sunset tonight	5:23 p.m.
Moonrise today	11:50 a.m.
Moonset today	12:56 a.m.

Full	Last	New	First
Jan 25	Feb 2	Feb 9	Feb 16

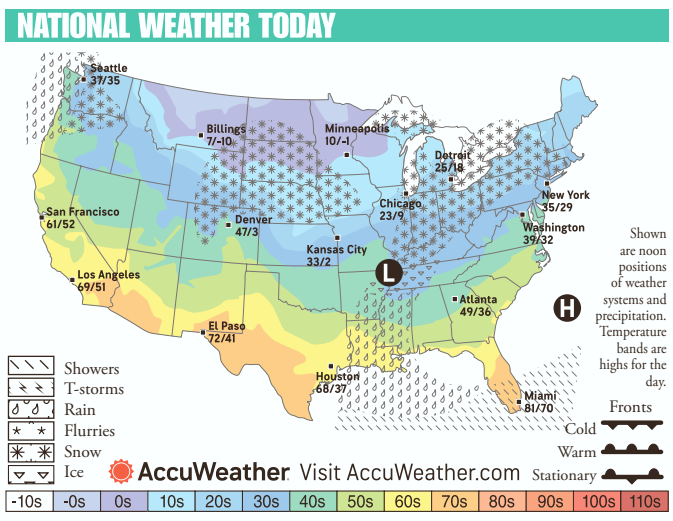
LOCAL WEATHER



Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.

Sponsored by WVU Medicine

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day.

Fronts: Cold, Warm, Stationary

SKI CONDITIONS

Ski Area	New snow (in)	Base (in)	Trails Open
Canaan Valley	5	40-64	16
Seven Springs, PA	4	18-18	24
Snowshoe/Silver Creek	1	48-48	45
Timberline Four Seasons	3	30-70	20
Wisp, MD	3	20-22	24

Snow reports provided by OnTheSnow.com

REGIONAL CITIES

City	Thu. Hi/Lo/W	Fri. Hi/Lo/W
Beckley, WV	36/25/pc	28/7/sn
Charleston, WV	38/27/pc	28/13/sn
Columbus, OH	30/23/sn	26/10/sn
Cumberland, MD	36/23/sf	31/18/sn
Fairmont, WV	35/26/sf	29/13/sn
Grafton, WV	36/26/sf	29/11/sn
Huntington, WV	38/26/pc	28/13/sn
Kingwood, WV	34/24/sf	26/8/sn
Pittsburgh, PA	29/23/sn	27/12/sn
Wheeling, WV	30/24/sn	26/9/sn

Weather (W): **s**-sunny, **pc**-partly cloudy, **c**-cloudy, **sh**-showers, **t**-thunderstorms, **r**-rain, **sf**-snow flurries, **sn**-snow, **i**-ice.

SOLUNAR TABLES

Five-day forecast indicates peak feeding times for fish and game.

	Major	Minor	Major	Minor
Thu.:	5:27 a.m.	11:39 a.m.	5:51 p.m.	----
Fri.:	6:14 a.m.	12:04 a.m.	6:40 p.m.	12:27 p.m.
Sat.:	7:02 a.m.	12:49 a.m.	7:28 p.m.	1:15 p.m.
Sun.:	7:50 a.m.	1:36 a.m.	8:17 p.m.	2:03 p.m.
Mon.:	8:39 a.m.	2:25 a.m.	9:06 p.m.	2:52 p.m.

LAKES AND RIVERS

Lake	7 a.m. Yest.	24-hour Change
Cheat Lake	866.23	-2.01
Deep Creek, MD	2457.51	-0.13
Jennings Randolph	1442.36	+0.48
Stonewall Jackson	1069.00	-0.33
Tygart	1052.32	-5.51
Youghiogheny	1418.37	+0.57

River Stages

Fld: flood stage. **Prs:** stage in feet at 7 a.m. yesterday. **Chg:** change in previous 24 hours. **M:** missing.

	Fld.	Prs.	Chg.
Monongahela			
Morgantown	22	10.35	+0.01

ALMANAC

Associated Press

Today is Thursday, Jan. 18, the 18th day of 2024. There are 348 days left in the year.

Highlight:

In 1778, English navigator Captain James Cook reached the present-day Hawaiian Islands, which he named the "Sandwich Islands."

On this date:

In 1975, the situation comedy "The Jeffersons," a spin-off from "All in the Family," premiered on CBS-TV.

In 1993, the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday was observed in all 50 states for the first time.

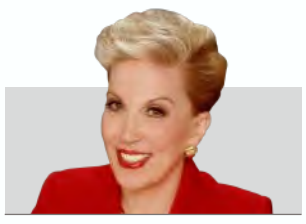
In 2005, the world's largest commercial jet, the Airbus A380 "superjumbo" capable of flying up to 800 passengers, was unveiled in Toulouse, France.

In 2012, President Barack Obama rejected the Keystone XL project, a Canadian company's plan to build a 1,700-mile pipeline to carry oil across six U.S. states to Texas refineries.

In 2023, a helicopter carrying Ukraine's interior minister crashed into a kindergarten in a foggy residential suburb of Kyiv, killing him and about a dozen other people, including a child on the ground.

Today's birthdays: Movie director John Boorman is 91. Actor-director Kevin Costner is 69. Country singer-actor Mark Collie is 68. Actor Mark Rylance is 64. Actor Alison Arngrim (TV: "Little House on the Prairie") is 62. Former Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley is 61. Actor Jane Horrocks is 60.

Family fails to be there when needed most



JEANNE PHILLIPS

DEAR ABBY: Somehow I became the go-to person for everyone in my family — siblings as well as parents. I have the means, and for decades, I have been happy to help. I recently lost a brother, and I assumed the people I've been there for would be there to support me.

Abby, they all failed. Two didn't show up at all, and two came and left so fast my head spun. It was a two-part ceremony. My gathering was the first. I was so hurt I didn't want to go to the second gathering, but I wanted to honor my brother, so I went. Bad decision. My deceased brother had one enemy, and that person was invited to speak and ruined it all for me.

My husband was so upset he told my family off and said that I had been crying for days. No one cared enough to contact me to clear things up. Instead, they doubled down and called me selfish for needing them to be there for me.

Now I'm hurt and upset, and I have no family to turn to. Honestly, it's nothing new, but I think I'm so hurt because I feel this is the end of family functions forever. What do you think? — FULL OF EMOTION

DEAR FULL: I am sorry for your loss. Because you have been the family rescuer and in return were treated with disrespect and indifference, you have every right to be upset. I hope that in the future you will begin to develop relationships with people who show some reciprocity. Because you appear to come from a family of "takers," enlarging your circle will give you a better chance of having healthier (not to mention more rewarding) relationships. please consider it.

JEANNE 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

1/18/24	▶ 6 PM	▶ 6:30	▶ 7 PM	▶ 7:30	▶ 8 PM	▶ 8:30	▶ 9 PM	▶ 9:30	▶ 10 PM	▶ 10:30	▶ 11 PM	▶ 11:30
BROADCAST CHANNELS												
2 KDKA	KDKA-TV News at Six (N)	KDKA-TV News at 6:30pm (N)	CBS Evening News (N)	KDKA-TV News at 7:30PM (N)	Young Sheldon	Ghosts "Ghost Father of the Bride"	SEAL Team Clay and Sonny take certain matters into their own hands. (N)		SEAL Team A massive mission to end the Venezuelan nuclear program. (N)		KDKA-TV News at Eleven (N)	Late Show-Colbert (N) ▸
4 WTAE	Pittsburg-h's Action News 4 (N)	ABC World News (N)	Inside Edition (N)	Enterta-inment Tonight (N)	Press Your Luck "The Whammy Strikes Back" The Whammy is ready to spoil all the fun. (N)		The New Hampshire Primary Debate -- Your Voice Your Vote 2024: An ABC News Special (L) (N)				Pittsburg-h's Action News 4 (N)	Jimmy Kimmel Live! (N) ▸
5 WDTV	First News	CBS News	ET (N)	Inside Ed.	Sheldon	Ghosts	SEAL Team (N)		SEAL Team (N)		5 News	Colbert ▸
7 WTRF	7News at	CBS News	ET (N)	Inside Ed.	Sheldon	Ghosts	SEAL Team (N)		SEAL Team (N)		7News at	Colbert ▸
9 WTOV	News 9 at Six (L) (N)	NBC Nightly News (N)	Jeopardy! (N)	Wheel of Fortune (N)	Law & Order The line between free speech and hate speech is examined. (N)		Law & Order: SVU The team looks for a child gone missing in broad daylight. (N)		Law & Order Stabler faces changes after returning from an assignment. (N)		News 9 Tonight (L) (N)	Tonight Show (N) ▸
11 WPXI	Channel 11	NBC News	Wheel (N)	Jeopardy!	Law & Order (N)		Law & Order: SVU (N)		Law & Order (N)		News (N)	J. Fallon ▸
12 WBOY	News (N)	NBC News	Jeopardy!	Wheel (N)	Law & Order (N)		Law & Order: SVU (N)		Law & Order (N)		News (N)	J. Fallon ▸
13 WQED	PBS NewsHour (N)		BBC News America (N)	Tell Me More	Childhood Lost-Girls	Visible	American Experience "Voice of Freedom"				Amanpour and Company (N)	
22 WCWB	Two Half Men "My Tongue Is Meat"	Two and a Half Men	Modern Family	Modern Family "See You Next Fall"	Son of a Critch (N)	The Conners	The Conners "Hold the Salt"	Children Ruin "Consequ-ences" (N)	Court Cam	iCRIME With Elizabeth Vargas	The National Desk (L) (N)	
24 WNPB	Legis.	America	PBS NewsHour (N)		Celebrity Trip		Yacht Rock Revue 70s			Design	Legis.	Energy
46 WVFX	News (N)	Investig.	Last Man	Last Man	Hell's Kitchen (N)		Gordon Ramsay's (N)		WVFX 10	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Housewife
53 WPGH	The Big Bang Theory	Channel 11 News on Fox 53 at 6:30 (N)	The Big Bang Theory	Young Sheldon	Hell's Kitchen The chefs' attention to detail is tested; Kevin Meehan. (N)		Gordon Ramsay's The trio enjoy the best culture and cuisine of Spain. (N)		Channel 11 News on FOX 53 at 10 (N)		Seinfeld "The Couch"	Seinfeld "The English Patient"
CABLE CHANNELS			▶ 7 PM		▶ 8 PM		▶ 9 PM		▶ 10 PM		▶ 11 PM	
A&E	The First 48		The First 48		The First 48 (N)		Taking the Stand (N)		Undercover (N)		The First 48 ▸	
AMC	◂ ★★ Armageddon		★★★ Gladiator (2000, History) Joaquin Phoenix, Connie Nielsen, Russell Crowe.							★★ Battle: Los Angeles ▸		
AT&TSP	◂ Penguins				Mario-Lemieux's Rise		World Poker Tour		World Poker Tour		Wm. Basketball ▸	
BET	As. Living	Payne	Payne	Payne	Neighbor	Neighbor	Tyler Perry's Sistas		Tyler Perry's The Oval		Martin	Martin
CNN	Situation Room (L) (N)		E. B. OutFront (L) (N)		Cooper 360 (N)		The Source With (N)		CNN Special Program		CNN Special Program	
DISC	Sinkholes		Sinkholes		Caught!	Caught!	Caught!	Caught!	Caught!	Caught!	Caught!	Caught!
DISN	Kiff	Kiff	Big City	Big City	Hailey	Hailey	Marvel's	Ladybug	Ladybug	Ladybug	Jessie	Jessie
ESPN	SportsCenter		College Basketball Teams TBA (L) (N)				2024 Australian Open Tennis (L) (N) ▸					
ESPN2	The Point		College Basketball Teams TBA (L) (N)				College Basketball Oregon State at Utah (L) (N)				SportsCenter (L) (N)	
FOOD	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby
FNC	Special Report (L) (N)		Ingraham (N)		Jesse Watters (L) (N)		Hannity (L) (N)		Gutfeld! (N)		Fox News at Night (N)	
FREE	★★★ Free Guy ('21) Jodie Comer, Ryan Reynolds.					★★ Central Intelligence ('16) Kevin Hart, Dwayne Johnson.					The 700 Club	
HIST	Swamp People		Swamp People		Swamp People "Hot as Hell" (N)			Swamp Mysteries (N)		Swamp People "Cruel Summer" ▸		
LIFE	Castle "47 Seconds"		Castle "The Limey"		Castle "Headhunters"		Castle		Castle "Always"		Castle ▸	
NEWSN	Vargas Report (N)		On Balance (N)		Cuomo (N)		Dan Abrams Live (N)		Banfield (N)		Cuomo	
NICK	Loud House	Loud House	SpongeBob	SpongeBob	SpongeBob	SpongeBob	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends
PARMT	Two Men	Two Men	Two Men	Two Men	Movie							Movie ▸
TNT	◂ ★★★ Transformers		Tip-Off (N)	NBA Basketball Chicago Bulls at Toronto Raptors (N)					NBA Basketball ▸			
TVLAND	A. Griffith	A. Griffith	Raymond	Raymond	Raymond	Raymond	Raymond	Raymond	Raymond	Raymond	King	King
USA	Law & Order: SVU		Law & Order: SVU		★★ The Proposal ('09) Ryan Reynolds, Sandra Bullock.					★★ Sweet Home Alabama ▸		
WE	9-1-1 "Broken"		To Be Announced		To Be Announced		To Be Announced		To Be Announced		To Be Announced	
WTBS	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	★ Grown Ups ▸	
MOVIE CHANNELS			▶ 7 PM		▶ 8 PM		▶ 9 PM		▶ 10 PM		▶ 11 PM	
HBO	★★ Lawless ('12) Tom Hardy, Shia La Beouf. (P)				True Detective		★★★ Avatar: The Way of Water ('22) Sam Worthington. ▸					
MAX	★★ 3 Days to Kill ('14) Kevin Costner.				★★★ Knocked Up ('07) Seth Rogen.				★★★ I Love You, Man ('09) Paul Rudd.			
SHOW	◂ Love & Basketball		Warrior Strong ('23) Andrew Dice Clay.				★★★ Seabiscuit ('03) Jeff Bridges, Tobey Maguire.					Jules ▸
TMC	◂ The Collective		★★★ Arrival ('16) Amy Adams. (P)				★★★★ Titanic ('97) Kate Winslet, Billy Zane, Leonardo DiCaprio. (P) ▸					

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MEN'S BASKETBALL

No. 15 Oklahoma dominates in the second half to keep WVU's road woes in full gear

BY JUSTIN JACKSON
JJackson@Dominion Post.com

Having thrown everything at Oklahoma except the Sooners' covered wagon, West Virginia found life on the road in the Big 12 to be taxing once again.

The 15th-ranked Sooners had every answer in the second half, even as the Mountaineers threw multiple defensive looks their way, and Oklahoma ran away with a 77-63 victory Wednesday inside the Lloyd Noble Center.

WVU fell to 2-10 all-time at Oklahoma and has lost both of its true road games in the Big 12 this season by a combined 48 points.

"We weren't there tonight," WVU head coach Josh Eilert said on his radio postgame show. "We were a step slow. Our minds were a step slow. Our bodies were a step slow. We couldn't get the 50-50 balls."

West Virginia threw a pack line defense, a 2-3 zone as well as some full-court trapping at Oklahoma in the second half.

The Sooners countered by making nearly 64% of its shots over the final 20 minutes and won convincingly despite committing a season-high 19 turnovers.

"They've got a really good team and they play their roles really well," Eilert said. "If you don't bring your A game, you're not going to beat a team like that on the road."

The first half was just plain ugly, as both schools combined for 19 turnovers and a combined 6 of 21 (28.6%) from 3-point range.

The good news for West Virginia was forward Pat Suemnick was able to fight through his flu-like symptoms — he was isolated on the trip to Norman, Okla. and then had his own hotel room — and was able to remain in the starting lineup.

He played well at the start,

SEE **OKLAHOMA**, B-2

AP photo

West Virginia guard Kerr Kriisa (3) is defended by Oklahoma guard Javian McCollum (2) and others during the second half of an NCAA college basketball game Wednesday, in Norman, Okla.

ONE FOR THE BOOKS

Mountaineers have historic defensive outing in rout of Houston

BY CODY NESPOR
CNespor@DominionPost.com

As frigid as the weather in Morgantown, the Houston women's basketball team's offense might have been even colder Wednesday evening.

The West Virginia women (15-2, 4-2 Big 12) put forth a historic defensive performance as they routed the visiting Cougars (11-6, 2-4) 80-39 inside the Coliseum.

WVU's defensive dominance was apparent from the tip, as the Mountaineers pitched a shutout in the first quarter. It was the first time in the program's 50-year history that the Mountaineers held an opponent scoreless for an entire period.

"I don't know why," WVU coach Mark Kellogg said. "I guess they missed some shots, we played pretty hard and turned them over a little bit."

WVU led 17-0 after the first quarter as Houston missed all 13 of its shots from the field and turned the ball over seven times.

"And we rebounded the ball fairly well tonight," Kellogg said. "When they got the one shot, I felt like we limited them to the one-and-out."

WVU out-rebounded Houston 12-7 in the opening frame. The Cougars had just one offensive rebound.

"I don't think I realized it really until the second quarter," WVU senior Lauren Fields said of the shutout.

"Once we get going, we're not really worried about the score," offered teammate Jayla Hemingway. "We just know that once we go out there, if we play to our standard the scoreboard won't matter in the end."

Part of the Cougars' struggles was the absence of leading scorer Laila Blair, who picked up two fouls in the first four minutes of the game and spent the rest of the period on the bench.

"She's our go-to player and then you're looking around and just trying to figure it out for a second," UH coach Ronald Hughey said. "If you can get on a run and get a few baskets and then you can get here back in the game and hopefully she can add to that. You don't want her to come in with the fouls and still try to force the issue."

Blair averages over 19 points per game this season and was

SEE **WOMEN**, B-3

William Wotring/The Dominion Post

West Virginia Mountaineers guard Lauren Fields (23) protects the ball from Houston Cougars forward Kamryn Jones (34) on Wednesday.

BOYS' HOOPS

Morgantown comes out on top in heavyweight battle at Wheeling Park

BY NICK HENTHORN
The Intelligencer

WHEELING — The Morgantown Mohigans came out with the final blow in a heavyweight fight against the Wheeling Park Patriots on Wednesday, emerging with a 62-59 road victory inside the Palace on the Hill.

"Heck of a high school game," Wheeling Park head coach Michael Jebbia said. "Weren't many games played around the state tonight, so I'm grateful both school systems allowed us to play.

Aiden Davis scored a game-high 33 points for Park, making five 3-pointers and also grabbing eight rebounds, while Morgantown's Sharron Young scored 29 points, going 11-12 at the foul line, along with seven rebounds, six assists and four steals.

Young scored 14 in the fourth quarter and went 6-6 at the line to keep Park at a distance late.

"Sharron Young made his free throws," Jebbia said. "There's good players all over West Virginia but I think you watched the two best in this gym tonight, Sharron Young and Aiden Davis going back and forth there."

Though there were 11 lead changes through the night, Morgantown managed to hold the advantage at the end of each quarter, 13-10 after the first, 27-26 at halftime, and 40-37 after three.

Despite the victory, Mohigans head coach David Tallman evoked the language you'd expect from the losing side after the game.

"Wheeling Park just wanted it more than us tonight," Tallman said. "They were way tougher than us. Their guys played way harder than us, they were hungrier than us, and I give their kids credit."

Morgantown made a game-defining scoring run to start the fourth quarter, though their pull-away burst was perhaps sparked by a wing 3-pointer from Jacob King– assisted by Young– in the closing seconds of the third quarter.

The shot put Morgantown back ahead after Park had knot-

SEE **MHS**, B-2

PREP SPORTS

Kehler, UHS wrestling enter OVAC tournament with confidence

BY MICHAEL GRIFFITH
Sports@DominionPost.com

The University High School wrestling team had just about the best week a program could ask for last week, earning two duel victories over a pair of defending state champions, Parkersburg South and Northern Garrett (Md.).

The Hawks are now rolling into one of the tougher and more important stretches of their schedule with the OVAC conference tournament beginning this evening at WesBanco Arena in Wheeling and with the bigger tournaments of the year still to come such as the WSAZ, regional, and state tournaments.

As of last week, 11 of the 14 starting varsity wrestlers for UHS were ranked in the top 10 for their weight class in the state, with senior Luca Felix (165) and Brock Kehler (285) coming in ranked No. 1.

Kehler entered his junior season after an undefeated, 53-0 state title-winning sophomore year in the 215-pound weight class. With an unscathed record of 33-0 so far this year, Brock is entering the OVAC tournament with a streak of 88 straight victories dating back to the beginning of last season but is doing it in the 285-pound weight class after moving up on the roster for the Hawks for his junior year.

"I'm happy with my performances this year so far and am

SEE **UHS**, B-2

William Wotring/The Dominion Post

University's Brock Kehler wrestles Nate Brenneman of Northern Garrett on Friday.

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THE DOMINION Post

SCOREBOARD

CALENDAR

THURSDAY, JANUARY 18

BOYS BASKETBALL

Trinity Christian at Notre Dame, 7:30 p.m.

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Trinity Christian at Notre Dame, 5:45 p.m.
Fairmont Senior at Preston, 7 p.m.

HIGH SCHOOL WRESTLING

Ron Muack OVAC Tournament at WesBanco Arena, 5 p.m.

ON TV

Due to issues with the Associated Press website, the information for today's TV schedule was unavailable at the time of publishing.

PRO FOOTBALL

NFL Playoff Glance

All Times EST
Wild-card Playoffs
Saturday, Jan. 13
Houston 45, Cleveland 14
Kansas City 26, Miami 7
Sunday, Jan. 14
Green Bay 48, Dallas 32
Detroit 24, L.A. Rams 23
Pittsburgh at Buffalo, ppd. to Jan. 15
Monday, Jan. 15
Buffalo 31, Pittsburgh 17
Tampa Bay 32, Philadelphia 9
Divisional Playoffs
Saturday, Jan. 20
Houston at Baltimore, 4:30 p.m. (ESPN/ABC)
Green Bay at San Francisco, 8:15 p.m. (FOX)
Sunday, Jan. 21
Tampa Bay at Detroit, 3 p.m. (NBC/Peacock)
Kansas City at Buffalo, 6:30 p.m. (CBS/Paramount)
Conference Championships
Sunday, Jan. 28
AFC
AFC lowest remaining seed at AFC highest remaining seed, 3 p.m. (CBS)
NFC
NFC lowest remaining seed at NFC highest remaining seed, 6:30 p.m. (FOX)
Super Bowl
Sunday, Feb. 11
At Las Vegas
TBD, 6:30 p.m. (CBS)

PRO HOCKEY

NHL

EASTERN CONFERENCE

ATLANTIC DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Boston	43	26	8	9	61	144	114
Florida	44	27	13	4	58	138	114
Detroit	44	23	16	5	51	158	146
Toronto	42	21	13	8	50	150	138
Tampa Bay	44	22	17	5	49	146	149
Montreal	44	19	18	7	45	123	150
Buffalo	44	19	21	4	42	130	143
Ottawa	39	15	24	0	30	131	147

METROPOLITAN DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
N.Y. Rangers	43	28	13	2	58	143	123
Philadelphia	44	24	14	6	54	130	120
Carolina	43	24	14	5	53	148	132
Pittsburgh	42	21	15	6	48	129	113
Washington	42	21	15	6	48	101	125
N.Y. Islanders	44	19	15	10	48	130	150
New Jersey	42	22	17	3	47	144	147
Columbus	44	14	21	9	37	134	165

WESTERN CONFERENCE

CENTRAL DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Winnipeg	43	29	10	4	62	143	99
Colorado	45	29	13	3	61	170	141
Dallas	43	26	12	5	57	160	130
Nashville	44	24	19	1	49	139	138
Arizona	42	21	18	3	45	128	126
St. Louis	42	21	19	2	44	120	135
Minnesota	43	18	20	5	41	126	144
Chicago	44	13	29	2	28	99	159

PACIFIC DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Vancouver	44	29	11	4	62	168	114
Vegas	44	25	14	5	55	140	120
Los Angeles	41	21	12	8	50	135	109
Edmonton	40	24	15	1	49	142	119
Calgary	44	21	18	5	47	139	139
Seattle	44	19	16	9	47	124	130
Anaheim	44	15	28	1	31	111	150
San Jose	45	10	31	4	24	89	183

NOTE: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.

TUESDAY'S GAMES
N.Y. Rangers 5, Seattle 2
Washington 2, Anaheim 0
Colorado 7, Ottawa 4
Dallas 5, Los Angeles 1
Winnipeg 4, N.Y. Islanders 2
Chicago 2, San Jose 1, SO
Edmonton 4, Toronto 2
Calgary 3, Arizona 2, OT

WEDNESDAY'S GAMES
Montreal 3, New Jersey 2
Detroit 3, Florida 2, OT
Chicago at Buffalo, ppd

TODAY'S GAMES
Chicago at Buffalo, 7 p.m.
Colorado at Boston, 7 p.m.
Dallas at Philadelphia, 7 p.m.
Minnesota at Tampa Bay, 7 p.m.
Montreal at Ottawa, 7 p.m.
St. Louis at Washington, 7 p.m.
Seattle at Edmonton, 9 p.m.
Toronto at Calgary, 9 p.m.
Arizona at Vancouver, 10 p.m.
N.Y. Rangers at Vegas, 10 p.m.
Nashville at Los Angeles, 10 p.m.

FRIDAY'S GAMES
Detroit at Carolina, 7 p.m.
Minnesota at Florida, 7 p.m.
New Jersey at Columbus, 7 p.m.
N.Y. Islanders at Chicago, 8:30 p.m.

SATURDAY'S GAMES
Tampa Bay at Buffalo, 12:30 p.m.
Colorado at Philadelphia, 1 p.m.
Nashville at Arizona, 3 p.m.
Winnipeg at Ottawa, 3 p.m.
Dallas at New Jersey, 7 p.m.
Montreal at Boston, 7 p.m.
Toronto at Vancouver, 7 p.m.
Washington at St. Louis, 8 p.m.
Anaheim at San Jose, 10 p.m.
Edmonton at Calgary, 10 p.m.
Pittsburgh at Vegas, 10 p.m.
N.Y. Rangers at Los Angeles, 10:30 p.m.

PRO BASKETBALL

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

ATLANTIC DIVISION

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	32	9	.780	—
Philadelphia	26	13	.667	5
New York	24	17	.585	8
Brooklyn	16	23	.410	15
Toronto	16	25	.390	16

SOUTHEAST DIVISION

	W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	24	17	.585	—
Orlando	22	19	.537	2
Atlanta	17	23	.425	6½
Charlotte	8	30	.211	14½
Washington	7	32	.179	16

CENTRAL DIVISION

	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	28	13	.683	—
Cleveland	24	15	.615	3
Indiana	23	17	.575	4½
Chicago	19	23	.452	9½
Detroit	4	37	.098	24

WESTERN CONFERENCE

SOUTHWEST DIVISION

	W	L	Pct	GB
New Orleans	25	17	.595	—
Dallas	24	17	.585	½
Houston	19	21	.475	5
Memphis	15	25	.375	9
San Antonio	7	33	.175	17

NORTHWEST DIVISION

	W	L	Pct	GB
Minnesota	29	11	.725	—
Oklahoma City	27	13	.675	2
Denver	28	14	.667	2
Utah	22	20	.524	8
Portland	10	29	.256	18½

PACIFIC DIVISION

	W	L	Pct	GB
L.A. Clippers	26	14	.650	—
Sacramento	23	17	.575	3
Phoenix	22	18	.550	4
L.A. Lakers	20	21	.488	6½
Golden State	18	22	.450	8

TUESDAY'S GAMES
Philadelphia 126, Denver 121
Phoenix 119, Sacramento 117
L.A. Clippers 128, Oklahoma City 117

WEDNESDAY'S GAMES
Minnesota 124, Detroit 117
Boston 117, San Antonio 98
Toronto 121, Miami 97
Cleveland 135, Milwaukee 95
Atlanta 106, Orlando 104
New York 109, Houston 94
New Orleans 132, Charlotte 112
Dallas at L.A. Lakers, night
Golden State at Utah, ppd
Brooklyn at Portland, night

TODAY'S GAMES
Chicago at Toronto, 7:30 p.m.
Washington at New York, 7:30 p.m.
Oklahoma City at Utah, 9 p.m.
Indiana at Sacramento, 10 p.m.
Memphis at Minnesota, 10 p.m.

FRIDAY'S GAMES
Philadelphia at Orlando, 7 p.m.
San Antonio at Charlotte, 7 p.m.
Denver at Boston, 7:30 p.m.
Atlanta at Miami, 8 p.m.
Phoenix at New Orleans, 8 p.m.
Dallas at Golden State, 10 p.m.
Indiana at Portland, 10 p.m.
Brooklyn at L.A. Lakers, 10:30 p.m.

SATURDAY'S GAMES
Milwaukee at Detroit, 3 p.m.
Philadelphia at Charlotte, 7 p.m.
San Antonio at Washington, 7 p.m.
Cleveland at Atlanta, 7:30 p.m.
Toronto at New York, 7:30 p.m.
Memphis at Chicago, 8 p.m.
Oklahoma City at Minnesota, 8 p.m.
Utah at Houston, 8 p.m.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Wednesday, Jan. 17
EAST
Bucknell 73, Boston U. 57
Colgate 64, Army 56
Davidson 79, Fordham 69
Lafayette 72, Holy Cross 68
Navy 71, Lehigh 69
Robert Morris 102, Detroit 99, 2OT
Rutgers 87, Nebraska 82, OT
St. Bonaventure 99, Rhode Island 64
UConn 62, Creighton 48
SOUTH
Appalachian St. 76, Georgia St. 68
Chattanooga 74, Mercer 60
Florida St. 84, Miami 75
Furman 100, VMI 60
Gardner-Webb 74, Radford 68
High Point 86, Presbyterian 83
Kentucky 90, Mississippi St. 77
LSU 89, Mississippi 80
North Texas 60, East Carolina 59
SC-Upstate 73, Longwood 71
Southern Miss. 69, Arkansas St. 66
UAB 83, Tulane 69
UNC-Greensboro 73, The Citadel 67
Virginia 65, Virginia Tech 57
Wofford 75, ETSU 73
MIDWEST
Bradley 70, S. Illinois 69
Drake 77, Illinois St. 56
Evansville 78, Valparaiso 75
IUPUI 85, Fort Wayne 79
Loyola Chicago 79, UMass 78
Murray St. 73, Ill.-Chicago 58
Oakland 70, Youngstown St. 67
SOUTHWEST
Louisiana-Lafayette 86, Texas St. 68
Oklahoma 77, West Virginia 63
Tulsa 107, UTSA 78
UCF 77, Texas 71

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The Dominion Post

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

TCU women cancel 2 games against ranked opponents because of run of injuries on the team

Associated Press

FORT WORTH, Texas — Two TCU games have been canceled because the team does not have enough available players, the Big 12 announced Wednesday.

The Horned Frogs (14-4, 1-4 Big 12) were scheduled to host No. 7 Kansas State on Wednesday night and visit No. 24 Iowa State on Saturday.

In a post on X, formerly Twitter, the TCU athletic department said the games were canceled "due to injuries within the program and in the interest of the health and safety of our student-athletes."

The women's basketball program announced it would hold open tryouts Thursday and Friday for women interested in walking on for the remainder of the season.

TCU announced Tuesday that point guard Jaden Owens tore her anterior cruciate ligament and meniscus in her right knee against Houston on Saturday and would miss the rest of the season. Ten players saw action in that game.

Under conference rules, a school unable to field a team will forfeit the contest if no extraordinary circumstances exist.

As a result, Kansas State and Iowa State each will be credited with a win in the league standings and TCU will pick up two losses. Overall records will not be impacted, per NCAA policy.

The Horned Frogs' next game is scheduled for Jan. 23 at home against UCF.

MHS

FROM PAGE B-1

ted up the score, 37-37, the possession prior.

"Two-time defending state champ, you've got to be able to knock them out," Jebbia said. "And I thought King's three at the end of the third quarter was huge, then they got a bucket or two to start the fourth. It was right there, tied, up one, down one, then they got a little bit of separation up to six or eight points. To our guys' credit, we fought and got it back to two. Just ran out of steam there."

An 8-2 run to start the fourth put Morgantown ahead 48-39, and the rest of the game went the way of Park nearly breaking through to even things, only for the Mohigans to stuff them back down, largely coming from Young scoring inside or at the free-throw line.

"We played harder," Tallman said of his team's fourth. "But we were still losing guys, we were just kind of running around, doing what we want to do. We're not playing the way that we work every day in practice as far as team defense, team offense. Last few games we've had 20-plus assists, tonight I would be surprised if we had more than five. Very individual tonight and if we keep doing that we're going to get beat multiple times."

Aiden Davis made a deep 3-pointer to bring Park within six, 50-44 with 3:00 to play.

Later, Park's point guard forced a live-ball turnover, triggering a double-team at the top of the key and forcing an errant pass which Mykel Davis picked off and dribbled down the court, finishing with a thunderous slam dunk which brought Park within two, 54-52 with 1:20 to play.

Nick Henthorn/The Intelligencer

Morgantown's Sharron Young drives past Wheeling Park's Aiden Davis Wednesday night.

With the Palace rocking after the jam, Morgantown did not call a timeout, instead quickly inbounding and moving the ball down the court, fast-breaking after a make and getting an easy basket under the hoop from Brody Savage.

An acrobatic and-one from Aiden Davis moved the pendulum back to Park's side a few possessions later, the ensuing free-throw making it a three-point game, 58-55, but another pair of Young free throws and a basket from Izzy Everett kept Park from ever being in a position to tie the game or take a lead.

Morgantown's defense had Park working for every basket. Besides Aiden Davis' 33, Mykel Davis scored 17, and the next highest scorer for the Patriots was Josh Huffman with five, both of his baskets coming in the fourth quarter.

"Their ball pressure on defense, getting after you, making every pass tough, that's the biggest thing– and it's no secret, so we tried to spread them out and keep the number of possessions a little bit lower," Jebbia said. "If Morgantown scores their average of 80 points, we're going to be beaten 80-60 or 80-65.

"We had to try and keep it in that realm, we just haven't been able to get over the hump these last few years. I thought Aiden and Mykel carried us there with their offense," Jebbia said. "It's just not easy to score on them."

There were a couple of close calls late – in one Mohigan possession with under a minute to go, the home Park crowd wanted a held ball where there was a foul call in the backfield against the Patriots. Later, on what would end up as the last possession of the game, Morgantown elected to take a foul once Aiden Davis crossed half-court. The junior flung up a 3-pointer at the whistle, one which miraculously went in, but the foul was called on the floor.

A Mykel Davis putback at the buzzer brought the score to its final resting place.

"We've got to get a lot better," Tallman said. "I'm just being honest, these guys have big goals, they say they do, but if they do then they've got to buy in and do what we're trying to teach them every day and get better. Honestly, credit to Wheeling Park, Aiden Davis is a heck of a player, he put on a heck of a show tonight, and we didn't execute anything."

Following Young's 29, King finished with eight points, and each of Savage, Marty Johnson and Waylon Colistra had six. Seven Mohigans scored on the night.

"Our kids' effort was great, it just was not quite enough," Jebbia said. "The margin of error against Morgantown in very minimal and they made some key plays."

BOX SCORE

MORGANTOWN 62, WHEELING PARK 59

MORGANTOWN (62) – Frey 0 0-0 0; Everett 1 0-0 2; King 3 0-1 8; Young 9 11-12 29; Shrewsberry 2 0-0 5; Johnson 2 2-2 6; Colistra 3 0-0 6; Savage 3 0-0 6; Totals 23 13-15 62.

WHEELING PARK (59) – A. Davis 10 8-11 33. M. Davis 7 2-2 17; Johnson 0 1-2 1; K. Davis 0 0-0 0; Williams 1 0-0 3; Lewis 0 0-0 0; Huffman 2 0-0 5; Totals 20 11-15 59.

Three-point goals: Morgantown 3 (King 2, Shrewsberry). Wheeling Park 8 (A. Davis 5, M. Davis, Williams, Huffman).

OKLAHOMA

FROM PAGE B-1

scoring six-straight points in the early moments, including a dunk and another basket came from an offensive putback.

Suemnick finished with nine points and seven rebounds. He was the only WVU player to grab an offensive rebound in the game.

The Mountaineers (6-11, 1-3 Big 12) generated little else on the offensive end, though.

RaeQuan Battle, who entered the game averaging 20 points per game, missed his first six shots before finishing the half with a baseline drive and then a 3-pointer.

He never quite found a rhythm in the game and finished with 12 points on just 4 of 13 shooting.

"He digressed from the previous game," Eilert said. "He's trying to help in any way he can, but we've got to get the ball out of his hands.

"He's got to understand that we have the advantage on the backside if we can get it out of his hands. He's got to make the right pass."

Meanwhile, WVU's defense kept the clamps early on against Oklahoma guards Javian McCollum and Otega Oweh, who came in averaging a combined 30 points.

McCollum was held to five points — he added eight more in the second half — and Oweh missed all eight shots he attempted in the first half.

That changed in the second half, as Oweh got himself inside and started doing the dirty work.

He scored twice on offensive rebounds, including an and-one three-point play that gave the Sooners (14-3, 2-2) a 61-42 lead with 7:49 remaining.

Oweh finished with 12 points, all coming in the second half. He added a double-double with 10 rebounds, just nine less than the Mountaineers had the entire game. The Sooners finished with a 33-19 rebounding advantage.

Odd thing about that stat is the last time WVU played at Oklahoma, the Mountaineers also had just 19 rebounds.

"We didn't rebound it whatsoever," Eilert said.

Jalon Moore got Oklahoma going in the second half with a lob dunk, after he got behind WVU's zone and stuffed it.

Moore finished with 16 points to lead four Oklahoma players in double figures.

Noah Farrakhan led WVU with 14 points, but missed part of the second half after injuring his knee. He did return to action minutes later.

Quinn Slazinski had 10 points and five rebounds for the Mountaineers.

Box score

NO. 15 OKLAHOMA 77, WEST VIRGINIA 63

WEST VIRGINIA (6-11)

Harris 3-4 0-1 8, Suemnick 2-2 5-6 9, Battle 4-13 2-4 12, Johnson 2-4 0-0 6, Kriisa 1-5 2-2 4, Slazinski 3-6 4-6 10, Farrakhan 6-11 1-1 14, Akok 0-1 0-0 0, Wilson 0-0 0-0 0, Naveh 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 21-46 14-20 63.

OKLAHOMA (14-3)

Godwin 1-2 0-0 2, Moore 7-11 2-3 16, McCollum 2-4 8-8 13, Oweh 5-16 2-5 12, Uzan 3-7 1-2 8, Soares 3-4 5-6 13, Hugley 2-3 4-6 8, Darthard 1-3 0-0 3, Northweather 1-1 0-0 2. Totals 25-51 22-30 77.

Halftime—Oklahoma 29-25. 3-Point Goals—West Virginia 7-23 (Johnson 2-2, Harris 2-3, Battle 2-8, Farrakhan 1-2, Akok 0-1, Slazinski 0-3, Kriisa 0-4), Oklahoma 5-15 (Soares 2-3, McCollum 1-2, Darthard 1-3, Uzan 1-4, Moore 0-1, Oweh 0-2). Rebounds—West Virginia 19 (Suemnick 7), Oklahoma 33 (Oweh 10). Assists—West Virginia 10 (Kriisa 4), Oklahoma 16 (McCollum, Uzan 5). Total Fouls—West Virginia 19, Oklahoma 13.

UHS

FROM PAGE B-1

feeling very confident at this point in the season," Kehler said. "The biggest difference this year has just been adjusting to the size of my opponents. Bigger guys mean it's harder to move them or lift them but I can use my speed against those opponents to give me an advantage. Usually, I'm giving up some weight but I'm training hard in the weight room to make up for that."

The work Kehler has put in to better his performance on the mat has certainly been reflected in his results, saying that intensity has remained on the top of his list all season.

"I'm trying to constantly push the pace of my matches," Kehler said. "I've been working on my conditioning a lot to be able to score as many points as I can and then ultimately get the falls that I want. I think I've been able to do that well this year to get my work in and then go for the pin to help the team."

Not only has he faced the challenge of moving to a new weight class, but Kehler is also diving into his college recruitment trail, saying he has visits scheduled for the coming spring.

"The recruiting process has been fun already," he said. "I've met so many great coaches and being able to see what kind of opportunities are out there for me is fun. I'm getting everything lined up to take some visits in the spring once the season is over."

One thing that doesn't show up on paper when it comes to Kehler is his leadership, something UHS head coach Ken Maisel said he has been doing even before this year.

"He certainly is that guy for us, but I would even expand it to last season," Maisel said. "He started taking on that leadership role last year. Sometimes when you're at a big tournament and you have coaches on every mat already, it's nice to have a guy who can say that they will go over to another mat and help out one of their teammates or support them in our place. He leads by example in the wrestling room and by the way he lives his life outside of the wrestling room. His teammates love him and truly look up to him."

After the big week that UHS had, Maisel says he hopes his team can keep that focus with their most difficult matches of the season yet to come.

"It becomes a little more individually focused with the non-duel meets coming up," he said. "When you have so many teams like you do in the OVAC, you're bound to hit an opponent at some point that is a strong wrestler, maybe even in the first round, and maybe someone who you've never seen before. You can't afford to take any rounds off and that's what we are trying to get our team to focus on."

The Hawks will begin the 70th annual Ron Mauck OVAC conference tournament tonight in Wheeling inside WesBanco Arena. Matches will begin at 6:30 p.m.

NFL

Browns coach Stefanski shakes up offensive staff, coordinator Alex Van Pelt, 2 other assistants gone

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — For the second straight year, Browns coach Kevin Stefanski has made a major offseason change to his staff.

Offensive coordinator Alex Van Pelt has parted ways with the team, leaving just days after Cleveland was blown out in the wild-card round by Houston and following a season in which the Browns were ravaged by injuries.

A team spokesman confirmed Wednesday that Van Pelt is no longer with the Browns. Also, Stefanski fired running backs coach Stump Mitchell and tight ends coach T.C. McCartney was not retained after his contract expired.

The shakeup might not be over as the Browns continue to hold staff evaluations.

They've quickly moved on from Mitchell and are interviewing Duce Staley to be his replacement. The 48-year-old Staley was most recently an assistant head coach and running backs coach with Carolina before being fired.

Following a 7-10 season in 2022, Stefanski fired defensive coordinator Joe Woods and special teams coordinator Mike Priefer. Those moves led to the hiring of Jim Schwartz, who turned Cleveland's defense into one of the NFL's best this season, and Bubba Ventrone, who dramatically improved special teams.

AP photo

Cleveland Browns head coach Kevin Stefanski speaks during a news conference after their 45-14 loss against the Houston Texans in an NFL wild-card playoff football game Jan. 13, in Houston.

Van Pelt's departure is a surprise. It was immediately known if he was fired or resigned.

He and Stefanski appeared to have a strong relationship, and just last week Van Pelt praised his boss for the job he did during a challenging season.

"He's awesome," Van Pelt said of Stefanski, who has led the Browns to the playoffs twice in four seasons. "I've enjoyed every second with him. He's coached a lot of football, different schemes. His ability to change on a dime based on who this player, his starter is at quarterback I thought has been really remarkable.

"But the message, the culture he's built here over the last four years, I'm really proud to be on his staff."

However, while Van Pelt helped in putting game plans together, Stefanski handled all play-calling duties on game day. Van Pelt may have wanted an increased role and wasn't going to get it with the Browns.

It's also possible Stefanski is looking for someone to help him better suit Cleveland's offense to quarterback Deshaun Watson, who made just six starts before suffering a season-ending shoulder injury and undergoing surgery.

All three assistants had been with Stefanski since he was hired in 2020.

The Browns went 11-6 and made the playoffs this season despite a wave of injuries and having to start five quarterbacks. However, they were abruptly bounced from the playoffs on Saturday, losing 45-14 to the Houston Texans.

Stefanski said Sunday that some of his assistants would be leaving for other opportunities in the coming weeks.

Mitchell, a former NFL running back, just completed his fourth season with the Browns. He spent much of the season trying to help the team cope with the loss of star Nick Chubb, who suffered a season-ending knee injury in Week 2.

Mitchell has coached in the league for more than two decades.

McCartney helped develop David Njoku into one of the league's best tight ends. Njoku finished with career highs in catches (81), yards (882) and touchdowns (6) this season.

Cleveland's offense was in constant flux from the opener.

The Browns lost Watson to a shoulder injury in November, and the team signed free agent Joe Flacco, who went 4-1 as a starter and surpassed expectations before he threw two pick-6s against the Texans. Cleveland also played much of the season with backups at both starting tackle spots.

NBA

Murray hits jumper at buzzer to lift Hawks to 106–104 win over Magic

Associated Press

Dejounte Murray hit a 17-foot jumper as time expired to give the Atlanta Hawks a 106-104 victory over the Orlando Magic on Wednesday night.

Murray finished with 26 points, and Trae Young scored 18 points on 5-for-14 shooting for Atlanta. Onyeka Okongwu had 15 points, and Bogdan Bogdanovic and Clint Capela each added 12. The Hawks shot 51.3% but had a season-high 23 turnovers

Paolo Banchero scored 26 points to lead the Magic. Wendell Carter Jr. had 18 and Jalen Suggs added 16.

After Banchero made a 3-pointer from a couple of feet beyond the arc to tie it at 104 with 8.4 seconds left, Murray dribbled down the left wing with Markelle Fultz, pulled up and swished the jumper for the win.

KNICKS 109
ROCKETS 94

NEW YORK — Julius Randle scored 31 points, Jalen Brunson added 30 in his return from a two-game absence and New York beat Houston.

Brunson missed two games because of bruised left calf and Randle struggled without his point guard in a loss to Orlando on Monday, shooting 5 for 18 for 15 points. But the offense was flowing nicely again in the second half as the Knicks pulled away after leading by two at halftime.

OG Anunoby had 15 points for the Knicks, who reached the halfway point of their schedule at 24-17. Josh Hart finished with 10 points and 13 rebounds.

Fred VanVleet had 24 points and 12 assists for the Rockets, who finished 1-5 on a six-game trip. Alperen Sengun added 18 points and 10 rebounds in Houston's eighth straight loss to New York.

TIMBERWOLVES 124
PISTONS 117

DETROIT — Anthony Edwards had 27 points and eight assists to lead Minnesota.

The Pistons, who beat the Wizards on Monday, are 2-35 after winning two of their first three games, including a 28-game losing streak that matched the NBA record.

WOMEN

FROM PAGE B-1

coming off of a career-high 33-point performance against TCU on Saturday.

"She's the go-to scorer for them and she's a super-talented offensive player," Kellogg said. "We put some attention on her for sure and wanted to go at her on the offensive end. Even if we didn't get her into foul trouble, maybe we could tire her out."

Following the nightmare first quarter, UH made three of its next six shots to open the second. UH's first point came on a Maliyah Johnson and-one layup at the 9:06 park of the quarter.

UH made three of its next six shots including Johnson's, then missed its next seven to finish the first half 2-26 from the field, trailing WVU 35-8 at the break.

"We got off to the great start in the first quarter and that probably set the tone for the entire game," Kellogg said. "We wanted the quick start. We knew that if we could prevent them from scoring, they couldn't pressure us as much as they wanted to. Obviously, you don't set out to hold them to no points in a quarter, but we certainly wanted to punch first."

WVU's lead built to 30 in the third quarter and the Cougars were only able to get it back into the 20s one time as the Mountaineers cruised to the 40-point win.

Houston finished 17-61 from the floor with 22 turnovers. Johnson led the Cougars in scoring with nine points.

JJ Quinerly led the Mountaineers with 18 points and four steals. Kylie Blacksten was next with 14 points while Jordan Harrison had 10. Fields finished with a double-double with 10 points and a career-high 10 rebounds.

The Mountaineers pay a visit to Cincinnati on Saturday and then enjoy a welcomed week off.

Box score

WEST VIRGINIA 80, HOUSTON 39

HOUSTON (11-6)
Jones 2-5 0-2 4, McFarland 0-3 0-0 0, Patterson 2-10 1-2 5, Blair 1-5 1-2 3, Boyd 2-13 0-0 4, Diawara 1-2 0-0 2, Johnson 3-11 2-2 9, McNeil 1-1 0-0 2, Aaron 4-6 0-1 8, Merchant 0-1 0-0 0, Onyeje 0-3 0-2 0, Thompson 1-1 0-0 2, Totals 17-61 4-11 39

WEST VIRGINIA (15-2)
Blacksten 5-10 2-3 14, Fields 4-7 0-0 10, Harrison 4-6 3-4 12, Quinerly 5-14 7-8 18, Watson 2-6 2-2 6, Arigbabu 0-0 0-0 0, Diggs 4-4 0-1 8, Hunter 2-2 0-1 4, Hemingway 3-6 2-2 8, Totals 29-55 16-21 80

Houston081417—39
West Virginia17182421—80

3-Point Goals_Houston 1-22 (Patterson 0-4, Blair 0-3, Boyd 0-5, Johnson 1-7, Aaron 0-1, Onyeje 0-2), West Virginia 6-15 (Blacksten 2-2, Fields 2-3, Harrison 1-3, Quinerly 1-3, Watson 0-2, Hemingway 0-2). Assists_Houston 6 (Boyd 2), West Virginia 17 (Harrison 7). Fouled Out_Houston Blair. Rebounds_Houston 29 (Jones 8), West Virginia 40 (Fields 10, Watson 10). Total Fouls_Houston 21, West Virginia 9. Technical Fouls_None. A_2,251.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Alabama's Proctor announces plans to enter transfer portal; Downs reportedly makes same decision

Associated Press

Alabama left tackle Kadyn Proctor plans to enter the transfer portal after starting as a freshman and All-America safety Caleb Downs might join him.

Proctor announced his intentions Wednesday on social media. Downs' plans to enter the portal were announced on social media by Deuce Recruiting, where his father Gary, a former NFL running back, is national recruiting director. Gary Downs did not immediately respond to an email from The Associated Press.

If Downs and Proctor decide not to return to the Crimson Tide, it would be the biggest blows yet for new coach Kalen DeBoer.

They would be the top two players to have entered the transfer portal and already departed receiver Isaiah Bond is No. 4, according to 247Sports' composite rankings.

Downs became the first Alabama freshman dating back to at least 1970 to lead the team in tackles. He earned second-team All-America and Southeastern Conference newcomer of the year honors from The Associated Press after making 107 tackles.

Proctor started every game at left tackle for Alabama. They were two of Alabama's top recruits in the 2023 class, with Downs ranking No. 6 in the 247Sports composite and Proctor No. 9.

AP photo

Alabama defensive back Caleb Downs (2) and linebacker Chris Braswell (41) celebrate a fumble recovery during the first half of an NCAA college football game against Kentucky in Lexington, Ky., Saturday, Nov. 11, 2023. Braswell joined fellow linebacker Dallas Turner and offensive tackle JC Latham in announcing plans to leave the Crimson Tide for the NFL He announced his decision in a post Thursday, Jan. 4, 2024, on Instagram.

Downs was the SEC's fourth-leading tackler. He also forced a fumble, recovered a fumble and made two interceptions. Downs scored a touchdown on one of his four punt returns.

Former Alabama secondary coach Travaris Robinson has left to become Georgia's co-defensive coordinator and safeties coach.

A number of Alabama players have already transferred or entered the portal since the retirement of coach Nick Saban.

Bond left for Texas while starting center Seth McLaughlin headed to Ohio State. Several players landed at Florida State, including No. 2 rusher Roydell Williams, wide receiver Malik Benson and offensive lineman Terrence Ferguson.

Cornerbacks Dezz Ricks and Antonio Kite have also entered the portal, among others. Rival Auburn announced Wednesday that Kite has signed to play for the Tigers.

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TENNIS

Say that to my face: Djokovic challenges a heckler in testy 2nd-round win at Australian Open

Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Already sick and tired in another early round slog, Novak Djokovic unloaded on a heckler who crossed the line at the Australian Open.

Defending champion Djokovic angrily challenged the spectator to "say that to my face" and gestured to the man to come down onto the Rod Laver Arena court, the venue for 10 of his record 24 Grand Slam titles.

He then went on a roll, winning three straight games from 2-2 in the fourth set before finishing off Alexei Popyrin 6-3, 4-6, 7-6 (4) 6-3.

The 36-year-old Serb then turned to the crowd again and yelled, pumping his fist to celebrate the victory.

Asked later what triggered his rage, Djokovic responded: "I mean, you don't want to know."

"I was tolerating it for most of the match. At one point I had enough," he said. "He didn't have the courage to come down. That's what I was asking him: 'If you have courage, if you're such a tough man, tough guy, come down and tell it to my face.'"

That didn't happen. Djokovic didn't ask for the man to be removed. Stadium security didn't intervene.

Djokovic moved on to the third round, still simmering a little bit about the episode.

"I'm not going to sit and say 'it's all good.' It's not good," he said. "Of course, it upsets me. I'm frustrated. I don't want to be experiencing that, but I have to accept it as it is.

"Sometimes I don't tolerate when somebody crosses the line. That's it."

Djokovic has been dealing with a sore wrist and said after his opening match — a four-hour, four-set win over 18-year-old qualifier Dino Prizmic — that he hasn't been well. He was struggling against Popyrin, who is ranked 43rd.

So, was it the kind of spark that he needed?

"Look, I don't want to be in those types of situations. Yeah, I was flat I guess emotionally. Game-wise I was quite flat," he said. "Maybe that was needed for me to be shaken up a bit and start to find the kind of intensity that I needed to have all match."

AP photo

Novak Djokovic of Serbia points to a spectator during his second round match against Alexei Popyrin of Australia at the Australian Open tennis championships at Melbourne Park, Melbourne, Australia, Wednesday.

Last year's losing finalist, Stefanos Tsitsipas, also had a tough time against an Aussie with the crowd behind him on an adjacent court.

Tsitsipas wasted match points in the 10th game of the fourth set and then had to save four set points to force a tiebreaker, which he clinched for a 4-6, 7-6 (6), 6-2, 7-6 (4) win over Jordan Thompson.

Women's champion Aryna Sabalenka and U.S. Open winner Coco Gauff avoided the early Day 4 upsets in their draw to advance to the third round, along with 16-year-old Mirra Andreeva.

Three-time major finalist Ons Jabeur lost 6-0, 6-2 in 54 minutes to Andreeva on Rod Laver, and then 2018 champion Caroline Wozniacki also lost to a young Russian on the No. 3 show court.

Two other 16-year-old players lost on center court to highly-ranked players: No. 10 Beatriz Haddad Maia accounted for Alina Korneeva 6-1, 6-2 and Sabalenka overpowered Brenda Fruhvirtova 6-3, 6-2.

Gauff, still a teenager herself, extended her winning streak to nine matches at Grand Slams with a 7-6 (2), 6-2 win over fellow American Caroline Dolehide.

She'll next play Alycia Parks, who beat 2021 U.S. Open runner-up Leylah Fernandez 7-5, 6-4.

Sixth-seeded Jabeur went out in 54 minutes against the up-and-coming Andreeva.

"I was really nervous before the match because I'm really inspired by Ons and the way she plays," said Andreeva, who lost in the junior final here last year. "Before I started on the WTA Tour, I always watched her matches and was always so inspired."

Wozniacki, who had two children before returning to the tour late last year after 3 1-2 years away, led by a set and a break before losing 1-6, 6-4, 6-1 to 20-year-old Maria Timofeeva.

Amanda Anisimova, coming back from a seven-month mental health break, beat Nadia Podoroska to move onto a match against Paula Badosa.

No. 8 Maria Sakkari, No. 16 Caroline Garcia and No. 25 Elise Mertens didn't make it past the second round.

On the men's side, No. 4 Jannick Sinner, No. 5 Andrey Rublev and No. 10 Alex de Minaur — Australia's highest-ranked player — advanced in straight sets and progressed along with No. 12 Taylor Fritz, No. 15 Karen Khachanov and U.S. Open semifinalist Ben Shelton, the No. 16 seed, who had a 6-4, 6-1, 3-6, 7-6 (5) over local hope Chris O'Connell.

A quarterfinalist on debut here last year, Shelton said he enjoyed the atmosphere and the support that the home crowd gave O'Connell and said he could still hear "Aussie, Aussie, Aussie, Oi, Oi, Oi" in his sleep.

NBA

Warriors assistant coach Dejan Milojevi, 46, dies in Salt Lake City after heart attack

Associated Press

Golden State Warriors assistant coach Dejan Milojevi, a mentor to two-time NBA MVP Nikola Jokic and a former star player in his native Serbia, died Wednesday in Utah after suffering a heart attack, the team announced. Milojevi, part of the staff that helped the Warriors win the 2022 NBA championship, was 46.

Milojevi died in Salt Lake City, where he was hospitalized Tuesday night after the medical emergency happened during a private team dinner. The Warriors had been scheduled to play the Utah Jazz on Wednesday night, a game the NBA postponed.

"We are absolutely devastated by Dejan's sudden passing," coach Steve Kerr said in a statement released by the team. "This is a shocking and tragic blow for everyone associated with the Warriors and an incredibly difficult time for his family, friends, and all of us who had the incredible pleasure to work with him."

Milojevi's death elicited a massive and immediate outpouring of sympathy from the basketball community, and moments of silence were held Wednesday before NBA games. Miami Heat coach Erik Spoelstra called the news "horrific." Atlanta forward Bogdan Bogdanovic — a Serbian, like Milojevi — politely declined comment Wednesday before the Hawks' game, saying "I'm sorry. I can't talk about it right now. I feel so bad," while tapping his chest. San Antonio coach Gregg Popovich raved about how good a coach Milojevi was.

"You changed my life in such a short time," Warriors rookie Brandin Podziemski wrote on social media. "The most important thing you ever told me was to just smile! Your joy and laughs will forever be missed. Shine down on us from heaven."

AP file photo

Golden State Warriors assistant coach Dejan Milojevic passes the ball before an NBA basketball game against the New Orleans Pelicans March 28, 2023, in San Francisco.

Milojevi was in his third season with the Warriors. He previously coached in Serbia — where he once worked with a young Jokic before the now-Denver Nuggets star came to the United States — along with Montenegro, plus had been an assistant coach for the Serbian national team alongside current Atlanta assistant Igor Koskoskov.

"The NBA mourns the sudden passing of Golden State assistant coach Dejan Milojevi, a beloved colleague and dear friend to so many in the global basketball community," NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said.

Milojevi worked closely with Jokic, Los Angeles Clippers center Ivica Zubac, Orlando center Goga Bitadze and Houston center Boban Marjanovic, among others, during his time as a coach in Europe. With the Warriors, he worked primarily with the big men like Kevon Looney, who raved about Milojevi's attention to detail.

"Rest in peace, Deki," Dallas Mavericks star Luka Doncic wrote on social media.

Kerr said he originally learned of Milojevi from Kent Lacob, the son of Golden State owner Joe Lacob. And when the Warriors went through some staffing changes in 2021, Kerr decided to pursue Milojevi. It took some convincing, but Milojevi finally agreed to take the offer. Kerr was thrilled.

"I immediately saw what Kent was talking about," Kerr said in a video produced by the Warriors last year. "He was so great to be around. At the same time, he had this amazing basketball background both as a player and a coach. It made so much sense for us to bring Deki in."

Milojevi won three consecutive MVP awards in the Adriatic League, taking those trophies in 2004, 2005 and 2006 when the 6-foot-7, 240-pound power forward was at the peak of his playing career. Jokic was MVP of that league in 2015, a year after current Golden State forward Dario Saric was MVP.

His potential in the game came early: Shortly after he began playing, Milojevi scored 141 points in a game as a 14-year-old in 1991.

"I teach all my players that basketball is not a job, but that they should enjoy the game," Milojevi told Bosnian radio-television outlet RTV in a 2018 interview. "Because if you want to do something for the next 20 years, then you have to love it a lot. It's not easy to endure all these efforts if you don't like something. Only those who have a sincere love for the game can handle everything with great success."

Before joining the Warriors, Milojevi had NBA experience through Summer League assistant coach stints with Atlanta, San Antonio and Houston.

Toronto coach Darko Rajakovi said he had known Milojevi since he was a teenager.

"He was a role model as a player, as a man, as a husband, as a coach — somebody that I really admired and have a lot of respect for," Rajakovi said. "Unfortunately, last night, his heart stopped working and he left his wife and two kids behind and a big, big legacy."

Added former Golden State assistant and current Sacramento head coach Mike Brown: "Not only was he an extremely talented coach, he was an even better person."

A rescheduled date for the Warriors-Jazz game was not immediately announced. The Jazz said tickets for Wednesday night would be honored at the rescheduled game. Golden State is next scheduled to play at home Friday against Dallas.

Milojevi is survived by his wife, Natasa, and their children, Nikola and Masa.

"Their loss is unfathomable," Kerr said.

GOLF

Scheffler, Cantlay ready to shoot low as PGA Tour returns to the mainland at The American Express

Associated Press

LA QUINTA, Calif. — The PGA Tour is back on the mainland in the Palm Springs area, where the mandate is always to go low.

Three relatively straightforward desert courses greet the field each year at The American Express, where tidy scores abound and shotmaking mettle gets another early season after similar standards in Hawaii. The weather forecast is looking ideal at PGA West La Quinta, with little wind and no rain predicted to get in the way of birdies and eagles by the bunch.

An increasingly large chunk of the world's top players are making their way to the event in recent years, unintimidated by the high standards necessary for contention and eager to get aggressive.

"I feel like the easier courses on tour, you can't really get behind, just because it's so much harder to catch up," top-ranked Scottie Scheffler said Wednesday. "If you look at a U.S. Open golf course ... if the average scores are low 70s, you can still get those crazy-low numbers every now and then, so there's hope. Here, you can't get caught too far behind. You've got to hit the ground running and start making birdies early."

Relative simplicity is the new standard at the 65th edition of The American Express, a tournament once known for its complexity — at least between shots.

The former Bob Hope Desert Classic spent a half-century as a five-round pro-am affair in which golf stars mingled with politicians, millionaires and Hollywood royalty for long, languorous rounds. That style of tournament fell out of favor as pro golf generally got more serious in the 21st century — Tiger Woods stayed away, for instance — and the pro-am format was dropped in 2012.

The tournament still has some distinct features, including the three-course rotation before the 54-hole cut. Aggressive play also remains vital.

Patrick Cantlay knows all about what to do: He set the Stadium Course scoring record with a 61 in the final round in 2021, only to lose by one stroke to Si Woo Kim.

"It's important really to be patient around these tracks," said Cantlay, who was born in Long Beach and played at UCLA. "You can make two, three, four, five birdies in a row out here, but when you're making pars, you're feeling like you're falling behind. Sometimes you just have to wait for your stretch of holes. They're courses where you feel like you've got to shoot 3, 4 under a side. I know that, but at the same time, play my normal golf and stay patient."

FAMOUS FACES

The field is impressive at the top, with Scheffler flanked by Southern Californians Cantlay and Xander Schauffele, who returns to the desert after a five-year absence. Defending champion and Kapalua winner Jon Rahm isn't here after joining LIV Golf, but Justin Thomas is making his 2024 debut with his first trip to the event since 2015.

HOMETOWN GUY

All 30 players who earned their cards on the Korn Ferry Tour are here, but the most prominent is Tom Whitney, the 34-year-old Air Force veteran who attended La Quinta High School. Whitney, who made his first PGA Tour cut at this event in 2018, is starting his first full year on tour.

"There was more pressure coming here in 2018 on a sponsor's invite," Whitney said. "Now, I was chatting with my caddie earlier today, and it feels like I belong out here. I've earned my way to hold this card."

Tell us about your team

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BROADCAST

CNN's new chief says the network needs to recapture 'swagger and innovation' of its youth

Associated Press

NEW YORK — CNN's new chief executive says the company needs to recapture the "swagger and innovation" of its early days — and that, he says, increasingly means embracing a future outside of television.

Mark Thompson, appointed CNN's chief executive last fall after stints at The New York Times and BBC, outlined a strategy to his staff Wednesday that included a corporate restructuring but few external specifics on how that transformation will take place.

Once a "scrappy outsider," CNN has been slow to respond to the reality of its primary television business shrinking, Thompson said in his memo. He was not made available for an on-the-record interview with The Associated Press.

"There's currently too little innovation and risk-taking," Thompson said in the memo. "Like so many other news players with a broadcast heritage, CNN's linear services and even its website can sometimes have an old-fashioned and unadventurous feel as if the world has changed and they haven't."

CNN needs to follow the audience, and smartphones are where most people under 40 first turn for news, he said.

To change the thinking,

AP file photo

CNN's new chief executive, Mark Thompson, arrives at Portcullis House in London on Sept. 9, 2013.

Thompson said the current national, international and digital teams need to be combined into one unit, under the leadership of Virginia Moseley as executive editor. Mike McCarthy will become CNN's managing editor.

Atlanta-based CNN is also hiring Alex MacCallum, currently chief revenue officer at The Washington Post, as an executive in charge of digital projects and services.

That's where Thompson, known for establishing the digital subscription service that transformed the Times as a business the past decade, will look for sustained revenue at CNN. It's not clear whether this will mean a paid subscription service or other products.

In the past, CNN hasn't always "gone the extra mile to squeeze every bit of value from the outstanding news and other intellectual property we create," he wrote. "No longer."

He said the CNN.com website needs "drastic modernization." The network also needs multiple digital projects to complement the CNN Max streaming service, he said.

With cord-cutting, the audience for cable television in the U.S. has fallen by one-fifth in the past two years, he said. CNN's full-day ratings averaged 479,000 in 2023, down 15% from a year earlier. Fox News Channel's 1.22 million was down 18% and MSNBC's 780,000 was up 6%, according to the Nielsen company.

Thompson said CNN's television personalities must find multiplatform audiences, and praised Anderson Cooper's "All There Is" podcast about grief.

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The Morgantown Utility Board (MUB) will receive sealed Bids until 2:00 p.m., Thursday, February 1st, 2024, at the MUB Office, 278 Greenbag Road, P.O. Box 852, Morgantown, West Virginia 26507-0852, for tree removal services within the proposed limits of disturbance of the Upper Popenoe Run Sanitary Sewer Replacement and Stream Restoration project in Morgantown, West Virginia. Bids will be publicly opened shortly thereafter and read aloud.

Prospective Bidders must register with MUB by submitting a written Expression of Interest (EOI), which must be received by MUB no later than 4:00pm, January 19, 2024. Once the EOI is received, MUB will provide the project specifications and bid documents. A mandatory Pre-Bid Meeting will be held on January 29, 2024 at 2:00 p.m. The EOI may be sent as an email to the contact person below.

EOI should be sent to:

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Bids are to be addressed to the Morgantown Utility Board, 278 Greenbag Road, P.O. Box 852, Morgantown, West Virginia 26507-0852, and shall be marked "Sealed Bid – Tree Removal Services, Upper Popenoe Run Sanitary Sewer and Stream Restoration Project." Specifications and Conditions may be obtained digitally or at the office of the Morgantown Utility Board upon request.

Morgantown Utility Board reserves the right to reject any or all Bids and to waive any informality in bids.

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Family member reticent to take ownership of store

DEAR HARRIETTE: My great-aunt and great-uncle recently shared their intention to leave me their cherished small jewelry store when they pass away. This business holds sentimental value, as it was established and nurtured by them, becoming a local staple. While my cousins or siblings would gladly inherit this legacy, I'm uncertain about taking on the role of a business owner, particularly as I approach middle age. The stress and responsibility associated with running the store are daunting to me. How can I address this situation delicately without disappointing my relatives or feeling overwhelmed by this unexpected inheritance? — INHERITANCE WOES

DEAR INHERITANCE WOES: Be grateful that your aunt and uncle gave you the heads-up about their plans. Instead of freaking out, spend time with them learning about the ins and outs of the business. Start by asking them as many clarifying questions as you can. Learn absolutely everything that you can so that you are ready when they pass — or so that you can respectfully and clearly tell them you cannot accept their generous gift.

DEAR HARRIETTE: I recently went on a first date with a nice guy I met online, but during our time together, I noticed his attention often wandered to other women around us. He's asked me for a second date, and I'm conflicted about whether to accept. Should I give it another chance and go on a second date, or is it a cue to reassess our connection and expectations moving forward? — WANDERING EYES

DEAR WANDERING EYES: If you find the guy interesting, you have a couple of options. You can talk to him before accepting his invitation and tell him that while you enjoyed his company, you are a bit surprised that he called you for another date because you noticed that he was distracted by other women the whole time you were together. If he can't focus on you during your date, you will pass on going out again. That may seem abrupt, but it addresses your concern directly and gives him an opportunity to see his behavior and react to it.

Thursday, Jan. 18, 2024

EUGENIA LAST

Express yourself. Be adventurous and make changes that push you to follow your heart and dreams. Opportunity comes to those willing to embrace change. Share your thoughts, and the right people will tag along. Your progress this year will help build a foundation that won't disappoint you. Live your life to the fullest and take responsibility for your happiness.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) — Don't hesitate. Act and make things happen. Embrace new beginnings and bask in what life offers.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 19) — Reach out to people with something to offer. Be willing to adjust to meet your demands, and you'll discover a comfortable path.

PISCES (Feb. 20-March 20) — Get involved in campaigns you believe in, and share your concerns and suggestions with well-connected people.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) — Updating your image will encourage you to get out and showcase what you have to offer.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) — You've got more going for you than you realize. Second-guessing yourself will lead to regret.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) — Set boundaries to protect yourself from those trying to mislead you or damage your reputation.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) — Your contacts will help you reach your objective. Be brave and make your voice heard.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) — Deviating from your plan because someone wants you to go big or go home will lead to disaster.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) — Stay out of harm's way when it comes to relationships, and seek out things that will improve your life.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23) — Stay focused on doing your best. Don't let someone push you into projects that don't interest you.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 22) — An emotional incident will lead to an opportunity to make a positive change.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23-Dec. 21) — Confusion will surface due to misleading gestures.

CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Name for a bystander
4 Do a housecleaning chore
8 Food fish
12 Campfire remnant
13 Home goods giant
14 Cornbread
15 "Give — — rest!"
16 Gridiron players
17 Recent
18 Flour and water mixture
20 Magical drink
22 Opponent
23 Country bordering Ger.
24 Tendered
28 "— — of Two Cities"
32 Rests
33 Look at books
35 Actress — Farrow
36 Antelope
37 "Diamonds Are a Girl's — Friend"
38 Copycat
39 Eagle's nest
41 Sauce for a burger and fries
43 Polished stone
45 "— — my brother's keeper?"
46 Nevertheless (2 wds.)
49 Picture puzzle
52 Make over
53 "Puttin' on the —"
56 Anger
57 Commotion
58 Thomas — Edison
59 Turkish chief
60 Punta del —
61 Not fatty
62 Earn

DOWN
1 Hotel employee
2 About (2 wds.)
3 Driver in uniform
4 Confused state
5 Guitar cousin
6 Main
7 Made more manageable
8 Piece of kindling
9 Deception
10 Standing against
11 Buck
19 "How — it?"
21 Heavy metal
24 Gymnast — Korbut
25 Superior
26 Before, poetically
27 Escritoire
29 Frog or toad
30 In — of
31 Lawman Wyatt —
34 Dined
37 Hive occupants
38 Top
40 Pay no attention to
42 "— the Ape Man"
44 Fable's lesson
46 Gaelic
47 Retired GIs
48 Make textual changes
50 Compulsion
51 Chair
54 — -de-France
55 New Deal org.

Answer to Previous Puzzle

J	U	G			F	A	N		S	P	U	R
A	B	E		K	I	L	O		T	I	N	E
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			S	O	R	T		S	E	C		
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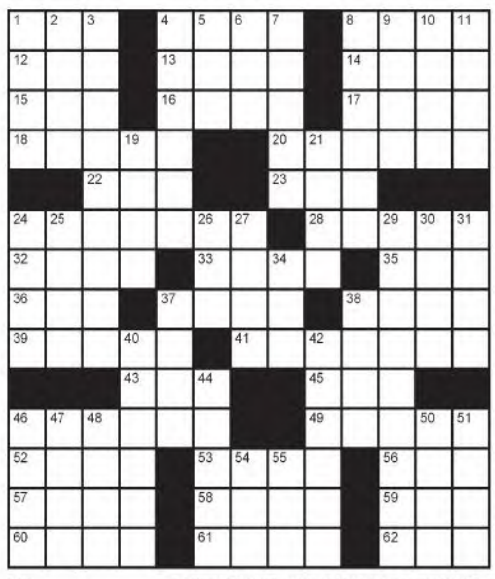

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CURTIS — BY RAY BILLINGSLEY

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"I'm sorry, we don't have any bones on the menu."

SCRABBLE GRAMS

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E1	I1	I1	L1	R1	F4	T1	1st Letter Triple — RACK 1
E1	O1	T1	M3	R1	H4	B3	RACK 2
E1	O1	U1	R1	R1	D2	P3	RACK 3
O1	U1	N1	N1	W4	R1	D2	Double Word Score — RACK 4

PAR SCORE 150-160 FOUR RACK TOTAL ____
BEST SCORE 213 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. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All the words are in the Official SCRABBLE® Players Dictionary, 5th Edition.

For more information on tournaments and clubs, email NASPA - North American SCRABBLE Players Association info@scrabbleplayers.org. Visit our website - www.scrabbleplayers.org. For puzzle inquiries contact scrgrams@gmail.com

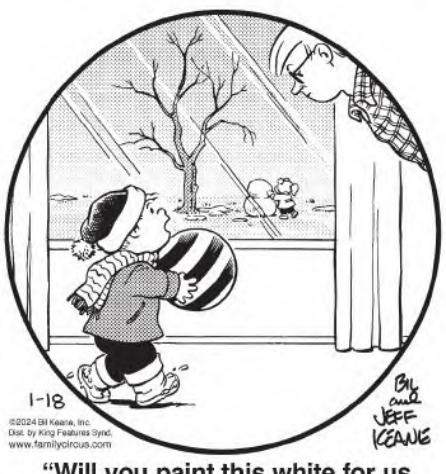
01-18

Solutions — B-5

THE GRIZZWELLS — BY BILL SCHORR

GARFIELD — BY JIM DAVIS

FAMILY CIRCUS — BY BIL KEANE



"Will you paint this white for us, Daddy? There isn't enough snow for our snowman's head."

BEETLE BAILEY — BY GREG, BRIAN & NEAL WALKER

BLONDIE — BY DEAN YOUNG & JOHN MARSHALL

FRANK & ERNEST — BY BOB THAVES

RHYMES WITH ORANGE — BY HILARY PRICE

BORN LOSER — BY ART & CHIP SANSOM

MUTTS — BY PATRICK MCDONNELL

HAGAR THE HORRIBLE — BY DIK BROWNE