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PROJECTS

Mon County, Longview extend PILT agreement deadlines

BY BEN CONLEY

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In December 2020, the Monongalia County Commission finalized 30-year payment in lieu of taxes (PILT) agreements with subsidiaries of Longview Power anticipated to generate \$60.7 million for use

within the county.

The agreements were tied to the construction of two projects – a 1,200 MW combined cycle gas-powered plant and 500-kilovolt transmission line on roughly 54 acres near Longview’s existing coal-fired power plant, in Madsville; and

a 70 megawatt solar array split between 127 acres near the existing plant and 50 acres in Pennsylvania.

Neither project has been built or even financed to this point and it sounds as if the details of the solar project remain very much in flux.

This week, the commission extended the deadline on its agreements with Mountain State Clean Energy (natural gas) and Mountain State Renewables (solar). Under the extensions, the agreements

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OBITUARIES

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McDonald, Carl Wayne
Gibson, Wilma
Hamill, Mary Lou

ELECTION

Local band to perform ‘Babydog’ hit song

BY TABITHA JOHNSTON

tjohnston@shepherdstownchronicle.com

SHEPHERDSTOWN – Three years ago, a group of friends in Shepherdstown founded the band, Eastern Regional Jam, out of one of their garages along the Potomac River.

“We sit along the river around a fire nonstop after work and on weekends. We go snorkeling in the Potomac. We spend a lot of time on the river,” said Todd Cotgreave, mentioning the weather is what caused the friend group to go from only hanging out to making music together. “It got very, very cold one December and we knew that everyone played an instrument, so we said, ‘Instead of standing around in the cold, why don’t we just go up and play music in the garage?’ That’s how it all came to be!”

The group of six friends – Cotgreave (vocals and baritone saxophone), Aaron Collins (vocals and rhythm guitar), Will Wooton (lead guitar), Mike Winters (rhythm guitar), David Billmyer (bass) and Creighton Workman (percussion) – found they enjoyed playing together so much, that they should form a band.

“We’re all just dudes that play music,” Cotgreave said.

Cotgreave noted that the band takes a lighthearted approach to music, both in the choice of its name – inspired by the name of the Eastern Regional Jail – and by the kinds of original songs it creates. The punk rock songs have covered a wide variety of subject matter, from lime truckers to

SEE BABYDOG, A-2

BROOKHAVEN HALLOWEEN



Brookhaven Elementary School, along with several others in the area, hosted a Halloween Parade to let kids show off their creative costumes on Thursday. The fall holiday came with summer-like temperatures, as the mercury shot into the mid-80s, making for a balmy night for trick-or-treating.

Ron Rittenhouse/
The Dominion Post photos



STATE

Justice holds ceremonial bill signing for 2% personal income tax cut

BY STEVEN ALLEN ADAMS

For The Dominion Post

CHARLESTON – In what could be his last major piece of legislation, Gov. Jim Justice signed the bill cutting personal income tax rates by 2%, bringing the total number of tax cuts and eliminations since

taking office in 2017 to more than \$1 billion.

Justice – joined by Senate President Craig Blair, R-Berkeley, and several lawmakers – signed Senate Bill 2033 Thursday afternoon outside of the west entrance to the State Capitol Building on an unseason-

ably warm and breezy fall day.

“It is another remarkable day in this unbelievable state,” Justice said. “Just look around. I mean, for crying out loud. If you can’t see the beauty and you can’t see God’s miracles, you’re just not looking.”

SEE BILL, A-2

COMMUNITY

Making a Mohawk effort for victims of Helene

BY JIM BISSETT

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Casey English sounded tired when she talked to The Dominion Post three weeks ago from her hometown in Greenville, S.C.

She and her colleagues from the hospital where she works had spent the past seven days collecting medical supplies and other needed items for North Carolina families swamped by Hurricane Helene.

More than 200 people died in the onslaught, which also caused more than \$250 billion in damages throughout the Southeast, as beach towns and other inland communities were virtually swept away.

If you, too, have been looking for a way to help Helene’s victims in the Tar Heel State, tonight is your chance.

All you have to do is find your seat at the Mohawk Bowl.

The Mohigans of Morgantown High and Hawks of University High are lining up for the 2024 renewal of the annual football rivalry.

Kickoff is 7 p.m. at Pony Lewis Field on the campus of MHS.

While the players will go at it on the turf, the respective student councils from both schools teamed up in advance this week for a “Dollar Days” fundraiser for Helene’s victims in North Carolina.

Donations may be made at the Pony Lewis gate or online at the Facebook page of Monongalia County Schools.

All money raised goes to the American Red Cross, which will then direct those dollars to various aspects of the North Carolina relief effort.

Numbers on the scoreboard at the end of the game are one thing, student leaders from both schools said.

What they really want,

SEE MOHAWK, A-2



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NEWS IN BRIEF

Associated Press

Lawyers allowed into Giuliani's apartment

A moving company representative and lawyers were expected to be given access to Rudy Giuliani's Manhattan apartment after he missed a deadline to turn over belongings to two former Georgia election workers who won a \$148 million defamation lawsuit against him. Giuliani was ordered by a federal judge last week to turn over the apartment as well as sports memorabilia, luxury watches and a 1980 Mercedes. The deadline was Tuesday, but no property has

exchanged hands yet. A court document says a moving company representative and lawyers for the election workers were to be let into the apartment Thursday to assess what was there and the moving costs.

Lebanon rocket fire kills 7 in Israel

TEL AVIV, Israel — Israeli authorities say rocket barrages fired from Lebanon have killed four foreign workers and three Israelis in northern Israel in the deadliest cross-border strikes from the country since Israel launched its ground invasion. Israel was pressing on with its

deadly aerial attacks on Hezbollah across Lebanon, where health authorities on Thursday reported 24 people killed. In northern Gaza, Israeli forces struck one of the last functioning hospitals, the World Health Organization said, destroying much-needed supplies that agency had delivered to the facility. The latest violence in Lebanon and Gaza came as top U.S. diplomats were in the region to push for cease-fires, hoping to wind down the wars in the Middle East in the Biden administration's final months.

EXTEND

FROM PAGE A-1

become void if financing for the projects is not finalized by Jan. 1, 2030, or five years after the West Virginia Public Service Commission issues final orders approving the projects – whichever comes first.

"It was anticipated that the financing would be completed in a five-year period. Well, we're running up on that date. We have been in conversations with Mountain State; I have on behalf of the commission, and they are anticipating that financing is eminent and would be completed sometime shortly. Hopefully within the next year or so," Commission President Sean Sikora said, adding, "Just to avoid any misunderstanding, it was agreed we should extend those just in case."

Earlier this month, Longview's daughter companies asked the West Virginia Public Service Commission for four-year extensions on the citing certificates granted for the projects.

The companies cited several reasons for the delays in those filings, including weak capacity prices, volatile energy prices following COVID and the instability brought on by the Ukraine war.

The companies also pointed to procurement and supply chain issues,

inflation and uncertainty about environmental regulations for gas-fired projects.

"As you can imagine, the current administration was very much against fossil energy and as a result of that, with a lot more of the coal-fired power plants being closed, this gas-fired power plant is more needed than ever. The gas is definitely going through. The solar, there may be better credits on the Pennsylvania side, so that's always been a football going back and forth," Sikora said. "The gas-fired power plant is what they're planning on going forward with. It looks like there is need and the outlook is a lot more positive."

The agreements signed in 2020 were the result of more than 18 months of negotiations between the commission, Longview and the Monongalia County Board of Education.

The result of those negotiations was \$60.7 million to the county paid out over 30 years, including \$3.1 million in PILT payments and \$58,222,516 in lease payments.

The PILT/lease ratio was structured to get around the state holding PILT payments against school districts when calculating school aid formula.

This was a lesson learned the hard way.

The 40-year agreement

signed in 2003 that resulted in Longview's \$2.2 billion coal-fired power plant is worth \$106 million – \$103 million in PILT payments and \$3 million in lease payments.

It quickly became clear that about 85% of the PILT dollars going toward the school district's general levy was counting against the district's state aid.

"So the way we did it this time, we flipped that ratio. We did about 3% on the PILT and the rest is on the lease," Sikora said at the time. "So, by flipping those ratios, that leaves about \$20 million more that's going to be staying in the county, big C, so that we can use it here locally rather than pay it into the state."

Included in the original approvals was a resolution stating a material portion of any lease payments generated would be allocated "to a vehicle that will seek to ensure the BOE's needs and projects receive all due consideration for use of such funds." It also states, "The BOE will have a significant voice in any ultimate choices."

On Thursday, Sikora told The Dominion Post it remains to be seen if and how the solar project will play out, but noted it's feasible Mountain State Renewables could seek to renegotiate its agreements with the county if the scope of the project is altered.

MOHAWK

FROM PAGE A-1

though, they said, is for North Carolina to be the ultimate victor.

"We all win when we help others," they said.

The storm exacted a terrible toll in the state, Gov. Roy Cooper reported

this week.

At least 96 residents have died – and one can't put a price on those losses, he said.

Helene, however, did run up a big bill in property losses, as evidenced by the aforementioned \$250 billion.

Some \$53 billion of that, the governor said, can be assessed to North Carolina.

"It is no exaggeration to describe Helene as the deadliest and most damaging storm ever to hit North Carolina," he told the General Assembly.

BILL

FROM PAGE A-1

SB 2033 cuts personal income tax rates by 2% effective this coming January, returning approximately \$46 million to taxpayers when fully implemented. Justice originally proposed a 5% personal income tax cut, but the governor and lawmakers compromised on 2% during a special session earlier in October.

The 2% cut joins a 4% personal income tax cut also going into effect in two months, returning an additional \$92 million to taxpayers. Justice and lawmakers also passed a tax reform package in 2023 that cut the personal income tax by 21.25%, returning \$488 million to taxpayers.

"What could we do in the State of West Virginia that would drive more growth to West Virginia than cut our personal income tax? What could we possibly do? And if anybody says there's something that could drive more growth to West Virginia than that, you're out of your mind," Justice said.

Single filers, heads of households, and married couples filing jointly or separately will see their tax rates decrease from 2.36% to 2.22% if earning less than \$9,000 in taxable income. Those earning between \$10,000 and \$24,999 will see rates reduce from 3.15% to 2.96%. Those earning between \$25,000 and \$39,000 will see rates reduce from 3.54% to 3.33%. Those earning between \$40,000 and \$59,000 will see rates reduce from 4.72% to 4.44%. And those earning more than \$60,000 will see rates reduce from 5.12% to 4.82%.

"This isn't the end-all-be-all for Toby and Edith. Out there, I always refer to Toby and Edith as our voters and everything," Justice said. "But we are sending a message to the world that West Virginia is on a pathway of getting rid of their personal income tax. What's that worth? It's worth so

West Virginia Income Tax Rates

Senate Bill 2033

Single Filers/Head of Households
Married Filing Jointly- Separately

Taxable Income	Current Rate	Rate Beginning Jan.1
\$0 to \$9,000	2.36%	2.22%
\$10,000 to \$24,999	3.15%	2.96%
\$25,000 to \$39,999	3.54%	3.33%
\$40,000 to \$59,999	4.72%	4.44%
\$60,000 +	5.12%	4.82%

Information Courtesy/West Virginia Legislature
(Graphic/Steven Allen Adams, Ogden Newspapers)

much, it's off the chart."

Justice, who was first elected as a Democrat in 2016 before switching to Republican in 2017, is in the remaining two months of his second and final four-year term as governor. Justice is on the 2024 ballot as the Republican nominee for U.S. Senate, facing former Democratic Wheeling mayor Glenn Elliott.

In the first months of his first term in 2017, Justice inherited a nearly \$500 million hole in the fiscal year 2018 general revenue budget and butting heads with the Republican-led Legislature on how to fix the issue. Justice famously vetoed the Legislature's version of the budget, presented on a silver platter with cow dung. The Legislature passed a different budget bill in a special session later that year that Justice allowed to become law without his signature.

But since 2017, tax revenue in the state has improved. Justice and the Legislature instituted flat general revenue budgets, resulting in larger and larger tax revenue surpluses at the end of each fiscal year. At the end of fiscal year 2023, the state recorded a record-breaking \$1.8 billion surplus.

"Who could have ever thought that this would've really happened and everything? I believed it, and the reason I believed it is just simply just this: we have the greatest people, the greatest seasons, the greatest natural resources, and we're located so close to population... We have so much and absolutely we just had

to believe," Justice said following Thursday's bill signing. "We had to believe in ourselves and then we took off. And boy, it's been a real ride. It's been something that I'll cherish and honor...for the rest of my life."

Harkening back to his 2017 silver platter veto, Justice unveiled another silver platter Thursday. But instead of cow dung, the platter had gold bars, representing the state's fiscal recovery.

"Today in this great state on this incredible day today, look what we got here today...The cow dupe went away, and today we've got gold bars," Justice said.

Thursday's ceremonial bill signing of the 2% personal income tax cut brought the total dollar amount returned to taxpayers to more than \$1 billion since Justice took office in 2017. According to a report from the Senate President's Office, the amount returned to taxpayers from various tax reductions and eliminations since 2013 is more than \$1.5 billion.

"We've done a really, really good job of being able to manage our state government," said Blair, who is finishing his second four-year term in the Senate after losing his May primary. "You can see that it's accelerating. In an eight-year time period, we've been able to do \$1 billion dollars and as long as the national and global economy keeps going right, we're going to exceed expectations."

Steven Allen Adams can be reached at sadams@newsandsentinel.com

BABYDOG

FROM PAGE A-1

food to, most recently, Gov. Jim Justice's English bulldog, Babydog Justice.

"The song's not political. It had nothing to do about a political agenda," Cotgreave said. "We're a West Virginia band and thinking about things in West Virginia that catch people's attention. Babydog certainly does that! The dog is like the state's mascot."

Cotgreave, who wrote the song lyrics, did extensive research to ensure its accuracy.

"Fifty percent or so of that song's lyrics are direct quotes from Justice," Cotgreave said. "It was just about finding the quotes that I liked. The song easily wrote itself."

Earlier this month, a recording of "Babydog" was released on all music streaming platforms. Then on Oct. 13, a music video of the band per-

forming "Babydog" was published on the band's YouTube page. This was the first time the band has recorded any of its songs, but it will not be the last, as they are currently working on producing an album of their original music.

In the meantime, the band has been excited to see its single gain attention from all across the state. As of press time, the music video had been played over 5,000 times, including by Babydog's owner.

"You guys are really talented! Great work. I cannot believe you put in that much work for Babydog," Justice said in a message to the band. "She is my buddy, but she is also a great celebrity for all the state of West Virginia. I want us all to feel like she is all of ours."

Over the past year, Babydog has been seen at many of the campaign

stops, during Justice's race for the open seat on the U.S. Senate. The significance of the dog to Justice and his campaign has led to an exciting development for the band.

"The governor has invited us to perform at The Greenbrier and to play 'Babydog' after the election results are announced at his election headquarters on Tuesday night," Cotgreave said. "It's crazy big for us."

Previously, the band had only performed at events, bars and house parties in the Shepherdstown area. But with this statewide exposure, they are now hoping to begin touring around the state.

In the meantime, they are looking forward to meeting the subject of their song on election night.

"We really want to meet Babydog in-person!" Cotgreave said.

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- 5000 Green Bag Road, Unit D-20, Morgantown, WV 26505
- On the front side of the mall next to Anybody Fitness. There is no entrance from inside the mall.

Mason-Dixon Historical Park


- 79 Buckeye Road, Core, WV 26541
- In the red barn

Suncrest Towne Centre

- 525 Suncrest Towne Center Drive, Suite 101, Morgantown, WV 26505
- Stewartstown Road entrance next to First United Bank & Trust


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CLARIFY

The Dominion Post strives to publish accurate information. If a factual error does occur, notify Managing Editor Katie McDowell by emailing editor@dominionpost.com

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OBITUARIES

Mary Lou Hamill

Mary Lou Hamill, 85, of Daybrook, died Wednesday, October 30, 2024, in her residence.

She was born September 18, 1939, in Rayne Township, Pa., a daughter of the late Ernest Houser and Mabel Kinter Houser.

Mrs. Hamill was a homemaker.

Surviving are her children: Karen Getty and husband Jim of Marion Center, Pa.; Charles Frederick Hamill, Jr. and wife Terri of Creekside, Pa.; David Hamill and wife Dollie of Spraggs, Pa.; Terri Luke and husband Bob of Morgantown; Becky Williamson and husband Lonnie of Colorado; and Lisa Bennett of Morgantown; 11 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren; and

one sister, Sarah "Sally" Roth of Indiana, Pa.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Charles "Fred" Hamill; and her siblings, Eleanor Bingham, Donald Houser, Jean Rising, Paul Houser, Charles Houser, and Deloris Evans.

Friends may call from 3 to 4 p.m. Saturday, November 2, in the Owen-Neely Funeral Home, 5894 Mason-Dixon Highway, Blackville. Funeral services will immediately follow at 4, with the Rev. Freddie Eddy, II officiating. A graveside service will be held at 4 p.m. Sunday, November 3, at the Gilgal Cemetery located at Marion Center, Pa.

Carl Wayne McDonald

It is with a gentle heart and fond memories that the family of Carl Wayne McDonald, a cherished husband, father, grandfather, and friend, announce his passing Wednesday, October 30, 2024. He was born December 3, 1966, in the close-knit community of Morgantown, where he also concluded his life's journey.

Carl's life story is one of familial bonds and unwavering love. The pride and joy of his late parents, Delmar and Wanda Hamrick McDonald, Carl also held a special place in the hearts of his late biological parents, William "Woody" Austin and Carolyn Murray Carrico.

On April 6, 1985, he embraced an eternal partnership with his beloved wife, Debbie Cain McDonald. Together, they were preparing to celebrate an admirable milestone of 40 years of marriage, anchored by their devotion and shared dreams.

The legacy of Carl's warmth extends through his proud sons, Justin Wayne McDonald (Jessica), and Carl Michael McDonald; and beams brightly in the lives of grandchildren, Ethan, Tucker and Andrew. Carl's love will also be carried on through his sister, Jackie Winters; cousin, Kathy Burns; and additional close-knit tapestry of cousins, nieces,



and nephews, all of whom treasured his presence dearly.

Carl's dedication to hard work and community engagement was evident through his various jobs in retail sales.

Beyond these contributions, Carl was an avid fan of the outdoors, cherishing moments spent hunting, savoring the thrill of live music at concerts, and rooting wholeheartedly for the WV Mountaineers.

McCulla Funeral home has been entrusted with the arrangements and a private graveside service will be held at Beverly Hills Cemetery at the convenience of the family.

Condolences may be extended to the family at www.mcculla.com



Wilma Gibson

Wilma Gibson, 65, of Morgantown, passed away Tuesday, October 29, 2024, in her home, after a long and courageous battle.

Friends and family will be received from 11 a.m. until the time of the funeral service at 1 p.m. Saturday, November 2, in the Nicholson Chapel, 1326 Summers School Road, Morgantown, with Pastor William Winston officiating. Interment will follow at Nicholson Cemetery.

Hastings Funeral Home has been entrusted with arrangements.



Condolences may be made to the family at www.hastingsfuneralhome.com



TRADITION

'Pan de muerto' a sweet way to mark Mexico's Day of the Dead, a Nov. 2 holiday to honor deceased loved ones

BY MARÍA TERESA HERNÁNDEZ

Associated Press

MEXICO CITY — The first bite is an assault to the senses. A sugary, citric, fluffy delight.

"Pan de muerto" or "bread of the dead" is baked in Mexico every year, from early October to mid-November, amid Day of the Dead celebrations.

Shaped like a bun, decorated with bone-like bread pieces and sugar on top, pan de muerto can be seen at coffee shops, dinner tables or home-made altars, which Mexicans build to remember their deceased loved ones and welcome them back for a night on Nov. 2.

Its date of origin can't be specified, but pan de muerto can be thought of as a fusion of Mesoamerican and Spanish traditions, said Andrés Medina, a researcher at the Anthropological Research Institute of the National Autonomous University of Mexico.

Mexicans have remembered the dead with festivities and food for centuries.

Since pre-Hispanic times, festivities for the dead have existed and skull-shaped products have been made. But in the 1500s, when the Spaniards arrived, new elements such as sugar and bread were incorporated into Indigenous offerings.

Those early celebrations, Medina said, coincided with the crop season, which provides pan de muerto a spiritual, symbolic meaning. If its decorations resemble bones, it's because Mesoamerican worldviews regarded them as the origin of life.

According to an ancient myth, Quetzalcóatl created humankind out of bones. Details vary from one source to another, but soon after the god apparently stole them from the underworld, he fell. And from his blood, the seed of life was born.

"Under this worldview, the human body's bones,



AP Photo/Fernando Llano

Pan de muerto, or "bread of the dead," traditional for Mexico's Day of the Dead, sits for sale at a bakery in the San Rafael neighborhood of Mexico City on Thursday.

just like the fruit's insides, are seeds," Medina said. "So, in a way, altars are offerings to fertility. And Day of the Dead is a celebration of the life contained in each seed."

Pan de muerto's shape, ingredients and preparations differ from one Mexican state to another, but is enjoyed all over the country.

100 and counting: One man's quest to try every variation of "pan de muerto"

In Mexico City, hundreds of bakeries make their own version. Rodrigo Delgado has spent years trying to taste them all.

For fun, he challenges himself to try as many as possible and review them on his Instagram account. On his first quest, a decade ago, he tried 15. In 2023, he had a bite of 100. This year, he expects to taste at least 110.

"I like pan de muerto because of what it means during Day of the Dead season," said Delgado, who also reviews local restaurants on his blog, Godínez Gourmet. "The mix of flavors of the bread, as much as its texture, are very comforting."

He can't remember the first time he tried pan de muerto, but he trea-

tures the memories of his mother baking it at home. He and his brother used to knead the dough, he said, and shape the bone-like decorations of its top.

Baking pan de muerto is not an easy task. At Panadería Dos Veinte, in Mexico City's San Rafael neighborhood, owner Manu Tovar said that having these sweet buns ready for sale takes three days of work: one to extract the infusions that will provide the bread with its flavor; another to incorporate them into the dough and one more day to knead and shape the buns.

There's no secret in his recipe, Tovar said. The ingredients — although seasonal — are simple: orange blossom, tangerine zest, anise and butter.

His special touch, what makes his bread unique, is the sourdough. "It's an ancestral process," Tovar said. "A millenary way to make bread."

The sourdough that he and four assistants use is 20 years old. He incorporates water and flour daily, to keep it alive, and mixes part of it with new dough. This gives the bread a better taste, he said, and makes it easier to digest.

Pan de muertos' seasonal flavors help make it

special.

For years, said Tovar, he resisted the temptation of baking pan de muerto in early October. The quality of the ingredients improves as November gets closer, but customers kept asking when the buns would be ready, so he caved.

This season, aside from baking 90 pan de muertos per day, he came up with two new creations: a croissant roll filled with marigold cream and a bun — locally known as "concha" — shaped like a marigold flower and prepared with tangerine instead of vanilla or chocolate.

"If you bake it in a traditional way, you can only have pan de muerto now, because that's when the fruit is available," Tovar said. "That's what I think makes it so special."

The ambience of the Day of the Dead season, he added, also plays a role. Nightfall comes earlier during this time of year and there's certain mysticism, a particular feeling in the air.

"It probably has to do with the melancholy of what this festivity means," he said. "For one day a year, you can feel closer to those who are no longer with you."

DEATHS IN THE NEWS

TEPCO ex-chair at time of Fukushima nuclear disaster dies at 84 while on trial over responsibility

Associated Press

TOKYO — Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings' former chairperson, who led the emergency response after a meltdown at its Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant and was accused of being responsible for failing to prevent the disaster as top management, has died, with his trials still pending. He was 84.

Tsunehisa Katsumata died on Oct. 21, TEPCO said Thursday, without providing further details including the cause of his death.

Katsumata was TEPCO chair when Fukushima Daiichi was hit by a magnitude 9.0 earthquake and tsunami in March 2011 and suffered triple meltdowns. He led the emergency response after the company's then-president stepped down due to health problems and served until mid-2012.

He later became one of the defendants in high-profile criminal and civil lawsuits seeking TEPCO management's responsibility over their alleged failure to anticipate the massive quake and tsunami and to take preventive measures.

Nearly 6,000 Fukushima residents in 2012 filed the criminal complaint, accusing several former TEPCO executives, including Katsumata, of professional negligence in the death of more than 40 elderly patients during or after forced evacuations in the aftermath of the meltdown, which released large amounts of radiation to the surroundings.

After prosecutors dropped the case, Katsumata and two other former executives were indicted in 2016 by a citizens' inquest of prosecution and forced to stand

trial in the only criminal case related to the Fukushima disaster.

Katsumata and two co-defendants pleaded not guilty, saying predicting the tsunami was impossible, and were acquitted in the district and high court rulings. The case is now pending at the Supreme Court.

Katsumata also faced a civil trial filed by a group of TEPCO shareholders and was ordered by the Tokyo District Court in 2022 to pay damages exceeding 13 trillion yen (\$85 trillion) with three other former executives. The case is pending at Tokyo High Court.

Katsumata, who was president of TEPCO from 2002 to 2008, was also in charge of damage control and pushing corporate governance following the utility's earlier data coverup scandal. He joined TEPCO in 1963.

As head of the powerful utility, Katsumata also served key posts in business organizations, such as Keidanren, and had major influence over Japanese politics and industry.

Today, more than 13 years after the accident, Fukushima Daiichi is being decommissioned — a decades-long process that is still at an early stage.

In recent months, TEPCO has struggled to get a first tiny amount of melted fuel debris from one of the three damaged reactors using a remote-controlled robot. If successful, the sample's return would be a milestone that could contribute to further research into analyzing the melted fuel and developing necessary technology to remove the 880 tons of melted fuel debris that remain inside the three reactors.

Ronald F. Hamrick
1951-2024



Gathering

Saturday, 11:00 am – 1:00pm

Private inurnment will take place at a later date.

Fred L. Jenkins
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EDITORIAL

Helping W.Va. schools serve our state's youth

Most West Virginia public schools are making slow improvement in the categories that put 49 of 55 counties "on watch" last year. Despite that, there are still 41 "on watch" for not meeting one or more in a long list of standards

"We're charged as a state with providing a thorough and efficient education to our West Virginia children," said Alexandra Criner, director of the Office of Accountability.

But meeting that charge has been an excruciatingly slow process in a state dogged by chronic attendance problems, challenges to operational effectiveness, staffing shortages, pandemics, natural disasters and a tendency to devalue formal education.

Our schools are being asked to fill gaps for students that could not have been imagined a few decades ago. For some, the solution is simple: more money. Referring to some of the money used to help fund a 2% personal income tax rate reduction, Micky Blackwell, executive director of the West Virginia Association of Principals, said "If they take that \$20 million and put it into schools, put it into administrators, put it into counselors, we would be serving the children of West Virginia who are going to grow up to be our future taxpayers. So please, let's all get together."

Lawmakers must also be focusing on doing the work to lift our communities. To bring jobs and hope to families who dorely on the schools for much more than educating their children. Focus on making the changes that could give a hand up to the 285,780 Mountain State residents the U.S. Census Bureau says were living in poverty last year.

Create an attractive, diversified and expanding, forward-looking economy. And then, support the schools in providing an education that lifts us out of the bottom.

On their own, they're making progress, but it seems to be despite the efforts of some lawmakers, rather than with their help. On that front, anyway, Blackwell has the right idea. Imagine the possibilities if all lawmakers took a holistic approach to serving our children's best interests, rather than their own agendas.

Is Trump a fascist? Close enough

By CLARENCE PAGE

Donald Trump and MAGA loyalists may scoff at the charge that he's a fascist, but let's face it, he at least offers a good imitation.

The F-word came up prominently as radio host Charlamagne Tha God interviewed Vice President Kamala Harris in mid-October about her vision compared to that of her Republican rival.

"The other is about fascism," Charlamagne interjected regarding Trump. "Why can't we just say it?" "Yes," Harris responded. "We can say that."

It's not just Charlamagne and Harris who say it. Gen. Mark A. Milley is quoted in a new book by journalist Bob Woodward (of Watergate fame) describing the former president as "fascist to the core."

That mention of the F-word struck me as a startling violation of the unofficial but widely embraced political etiquette that sees the word as too volatile for public use.

Using the word to describe one's rivals can come with a political

risk. Just as the Anti-Defamation League has discouraged the practice of calling anyone "Hitler" except Adolf Hitler, Democrats have long avoided "fascist" as possible linguistic overkill.

But in this year's campaign Trump has considered no epithet too vile to be off limits. He has persisted in ratcheting up his own rhetorical overkill, stirring up nativist fear and racial resentment, and making threats to use the military against "the enemy from within."

In our democracy, we need leaders who are willing to hold themselves accountable. It is Trump's unmistakable efforts to dodge accountability, to undermine the rule of law and the Constitution to do so, and his promises to double-down on that disposition if he wins reelection, that have inspired a long list of Republicans to refuse to endorse him. They include his own vice president; Sen. Mitt Romney; former President George W. Bush and former Vice President Dick Cheney; and more.

At this point, I offer my apologies to any Trump supporter who feels unnecessarily offended by my candor on this touchy topic. Fascism does not always announce itself with drums and trumpets.

Besides, in my experience, everyone defends free speech as long as it is their own. The greatest value of the First Amendment is in protecting the rights of others and views that are not the most popular.

Already we see reports that Milley fears being recalled to uniform and court-martialed. Although Milley does not appear to have broken any laws, a president with the near-imperial powers today's conservative Supreme Court has granted shouldn't have much trouble finding something. Of course, we voters have the power to avert this threat to our democracy.

Clarence Page is a syndicated columnist and Washington-based member of Chicago Tribune's editorial board. Among other awards, he won the Pulitzer Prize for Commentary in 1989.



Nobel economists put partisanship over common sense

You may have heard that last week 24 Nobel economists wrote that Vice President Kamala Harris' economic plan would be better for America than the Trump agenda. The joint letter was spearheaded by the hyperpolitical Joseph Stiglitz. Yes, the same Joe Stiglitz who infamously flew to Caracas to endorse Hugo Chavez's economic policies in 2007.

The letter claims the Trump economic plan would "lead to higher prices, larger deficits, and greater inequality." They also warn of the risk of a worldwide recession if former President Donald Trump wins. All that was missing was the prediction of dead puppies.

If these apocalyptic claims sound vaguely familiar, you have a good memory. Turns out this is exactly what many in this gang of leftist economists

warned of in 2016. Here are a few examples:

Nobel laureate Paul Krugman fumed in The New York Times the morning after the 2016 election: "It really does now look like President Donald J. Trump (has won), and markets are plunging. When might we expect them to recover? ... We are very probably looking at a global recession, with no end in sight."

Larry Summers, former President Bill Clinton's treasury secretary and former President Barack Obama's National Economic Council director, warned: "Under Trump, I would expect a protracted recession to begin within 18 months. The damage would be felt far beyond the United States."

There were many more of these end-of-the-world prophecies laid out.

They were all spectacularly wrong. The economy boomed under Trump, as did the stock market.

Then in 2021 many on this same list of Nobel economists signed a similar open letter assuring us that President Joe Biden's policies wouldn't cause inflation. Oops. Ten months later the inflation rate surged to its highest level (9.1%) since the Carter administration.

I too have skepticism on some of Trump's positions.

I'm not a fan of high tariffs or special interest tax carveouts.

But what is undeniable is that the 2016 economic agenda worked like a charm — as measured by the record-break-

ing \$4,000 to \$5,000 gain in real incomes for average families. Conversely, incomes are down in real terms under Biden-Harris.

Oh, and someone tell these ivory-towered economists that inflation and income inequality went DOWN, not up, under Trump.

It's virtually impossible for anyone to bat 1,000 in their predictions, but what is remarkable is that when it comes to Trump and Biden, they have managed to record a perfect record with their crystal balls.

They have been wrong every time.

Their disregard for common sense may be due to a severe case of Trump Derangement Syndrome. As an example, they argue that Trump tariffs will cause inflation, then they worry that Trump tax cuts will cause inflation.

Excuse me, professors, but tax cuts and tax increases can't both cause inflation at the same time. And if supply-side tax cuts increase production and work, they lower prices — as happened under Reagan and Trump tax rate reductions.

As an economist who cares about our profession, I'd love for these Nobels to simply admit they have been wrong and steer clear of politics. They should acknowledge that the real world is very different from the diagrams they draw on the chalkboards — and then just shut up. Or, better yet, move to the workers' paradise of Venezuela.

Stephen Moore is a visiting fellow at the Heritage Foundation. He is also an economic advisor to the Trump campaign. His new book, coauthored with Arthur Laffer, is "The Trump Economic Miracle."



STEPHEN MOORE

In a struggling Pennsylvania town, Elon Musk discusses 'purpose'

McKEES ROCKS, Pennsylvania — At the freshly renovated Roxian Theatre along Chartiers Avenue, Loren Stephenson said she and her fiancé, Alex Ames, had been standing at the front of the line since 8 a.m. to hear Elon Musk speak at 2 p.m.

Stephenson, a Duquesne University professor, said she came to see Musk speak because she respects his brilliance as an entrepreneur and innovator.

"I love his ideas about our safety, less government spending, talking about purpose and getting the country back on track," she said.

The Pittsburgh native held a homemade sign declaring that she was an independent voter.

"I have been for over 20 years," Stephenson said.

"How many people do we, any of us, really agree with wholeheartedly 100%? So we all have things we agree and disagree (with). Both sides of the fence. But overall, the policies and the things that I feel line up with him," she said of Trump.

Behind Stephenson and her fiancé in line were Brian Bliss

and his wife, Lori Bliss, of Ross Township in the North Hills suburb of Pittsburgh. When asked if they had hopes of winning the million-dollar reward Musk was giving away at the event, they had no idea that was a thing.

"I never even heard that," said Brian Bliss. "We are just interested in hearing Musk speak."

Last week, Musk, for the second event in a row, gave away a million dollars to a Pennsylvanian, something he has pledged to do every day until Nov. 5. The money is awarded to registered voters in Pennsylvania, Georgia, Arizona, Michigan, Wisconsin and North Carolina who have signed the America PAC petition supporting the Constitution.

The choice of venue for Musk's Pennsylvania visit was meaningful for those in the area because place matters, particularly a place such as the Roxian, which has sat neglected for decades. These sentiments are common in areas outside of the super wealthy and powerful

ZIP codes of New York, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles and Silicon Valley.

The Roxian was off a step when it was built as an elaborate vaudeville venue in 1929 because, even then, the comical genre was already fading in popularity. So it became a movie theater and lasted as long as the prosperity of McKees Rocks did before closing in 1979.

The venue then had a couple of other lives as a banquet hall before closing and sitting shuttered for nearly 20 years. Just a couple of years ago, thanks to a developer, it came back to life.

On Oct. 20, there was plenty of life as thousands of young and not-so-young people clamored to see Musk live onstage. The CEO talked about the importance of preserving the First and Second amendments, exercising the right to vote, and striving for a purpose-filled life.

Musk, standing with a Terri-

ble Towel slung over his shoulder after waving it when he took the stage, addressed the matter of indifference toward politics among people who feel unheard.

"We have an issue of apathy," he said. "Some people think their vote doesn't count, and for whatever reason, they have not registered to vote. It's important to get out there and explain the importance of this election and how democracy is on the line."

Musk, the innovative and entrepreneurial owner of companies such as Tesla and SpaceX, began a swing across Pennsylvania earlier this month. The itinerary included stops in Folsom, suburban Philadelphia, Harrisburg and western Pennsylvania.

Borough President Archie Brinza told the local NBC affiliate, WPXI, this spring that, on the question of crime, "Twenty years ago when you asked the question, I would say I'm proud to be from McKees Rocks. A lot of people now would answer that differently."

Locals who watched the hundreds of people lined up to see

Musk said they were thrilled to see their town viewed in a positive light.

On Oct. 18, Musk hit on a very important point for voters in Harrisburg who have found their skills and purpose outside the world of college campuses and have found their way working with their hands and intellect.

"I think the value of a college education is somewhat overweighted," he said.

"Too many people spend four years, accumulate a ton of debt, and often don't have useful skills that they can apply afterward."

"You cannot run a business like Tesla or SpaceX without the best plumbers, HVAC workers, carpenters, and welders to make your business work. It shows that he sees us and values us by calling out our skills by name," said one woman, whose son is a welder in the energy industry, as she left the event.

Salena Zito is a CNN political analyst, and a staff reporter and columnist for the Washington Examiner.



SALENA ZITO

INNOVATION

WVU Rockefeller Neuroscience offers new implant to restore muscle associated with chronic lower back pain

BY DAVID BEARD

DBeard@DominionPost.com

MORGANTOWN – Some people with chronic, debilitating lower back pain find that it can't be treated with surgery. And such things as physical therapy, lifestyle changes and pain medications don't offer consistent or

long-term relief.

Dr. Manish Ranjan, with the Neurosurgery Department at WVU's Rockefeller Neuroscience Institute, said the problem may be linked to dysfunction or weakness of a muscle that stabilizes the spine: the multifidus muscle.

He recently completed RNI's first implant procedure featuring a novel device that offers restorative, rehabilitative relief. It's called the ReActiv8 System. And unlike other implants delivering neurostimulation, it acts on the muscle, not the spinal column.

Lower back pain is one of the leading causes of disability, causing people to miss work and seek medical help, Ranjan said. Much back pain stems from structural issues, he said – disk degeneration, joint mobility. It can cause instability or nerve compression. It can be correct-

ed surgically with decompression or spinal stabilization.

But many don't have a problem that can be fixed surgically and the approaches mentioned above don't offer adequate help. "They all have limitations and

SEE PAIN, A-6

PHOTO FRIDAY



Submitted photo

With temperatures in the high 70s, and even reaching into the low 80s on Thursday, late October has provided the area with a burst of late autumn warmth – and humans aren't the only ones feeling the heat. Ann Mayle submitted this Oct. 22 shot of a visitor she had recently, who stopped by for a bit of a cool down. "It was a very warm fall day, so this gray squirrel jumped on my bird bath for a drink," she writes. To submit a picture for Photo Friday, send a high-resolution digital image to DPNews@dominionpost.com. Include your name and information about the photo, including where and when it was taken.

EVENT

Explore indigenous knowledge at forum

DPNews@DominionPost.com

Understanding Native American culture – from the past and today – will be featured in the upcoming "Ways of Knowing" Indigenous Appalachia symposium. Everyone interested in Native connections to the region are invited to attend.

The day-long event on Nov. 9 at Davis and Elkins College is hosted by Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area (AFNHA). It will feature talks, performances and conversations showcasing indigenous history, culture and philosophy in Appalachia with a variety of presenters from several indigenous nations, government agencies and universities.

The symposium is titled "Ways of Knowing: Indigenous Connections to Landscape and Place in Central Appalachia," and will explore the many ways Indigenous people's presence in our

region has been understood over time. The five speakers, plus cultural presentations and a panel discussion, will share their experiences and thoughts on sources and varieties of knowledge. Keynote speaker Dr. Joe Stahlman, Tuscarora, who helped organize the symposium, discusses his approach: "In this talk, I will discuss my journey in how I employ different forms of knowledge in my understanding of the past, present, and future of Indigenous Peoples."

Presenters will draw from Native culture and stories, living traditions, archaeology, history, western sciences and more, discussing how these types of knowledge interact and help illuminate Indigenous experience in central Appalachia, sense of place in the landscape and impact on Appalachian culture. After the presentations,

a reception will follow at the Appalachian Forest Discovery Center in the Darden Mill in Elkins, as closing for the 2024 indigenous exhibit "Creating Home."

The symposium will be held from 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. in the Senate Commons in the Myles Center for the Arts on the campus of Davis & Elkins College (535 Campus Drive, Elkins). Admission is \$30 which covers the cost of lunch and refreshments. Scholarships for free attendance are available for students, AmeriCorps members, indigenous people or needs-based applicants. Registration and scholarship applications are available at afnha.org/news-archives/indigenous-symposium. A livestream of the symposium presentations may be viewed for free, but registration is required. This program is supported with funding from the National Park

Foundation and the West Virginia Humanities Council.

Schedule of events:

9:30 a.m.: Larry Dent – Welcome and Introductions
 9:45 a.m.: Joe Stahlman – Keynote Address: "Ways of Knowing"
 10:30 a.m.: Leon Briggs – cultural presentation of the Haudenosaunee
 10:45 a.m.: Gavin Hale, Monongahela National Forest Tribal Liaison – Nation to Nation Communications
 11:45 a.m.: Joshua Garcia, Wyandotte Nation Communications Associate - "Preserving the Future of Our Past"
 12:30 p.m.: Lunch
 1:30 p.m.: Kenneth Branham, Chief Emeritus Monacan Nation - "My Lifelong Learning Journey: Resurrecting our Culture"
 2:15 p.m.: Joe Stahlman
 SEE FORUM, A-6

MOM'S CORNER

Make your own Thanksgiving decor

WITH HALLOWEEN OVER, I CAN NOW DECORATE FOR THANKSGIVING. I don't go overboard for Thanksgiving because I have had most of my fall decorations out since September, but there are a few things I will add around the house for the holiday. I have always thought scarecrows are a cute decoration for outside your house – near the door or in the garden – and when I found an easy DIY for kids, I knew we had to try it.

Materials you will need include rubber bands, a shirt, a pair of pants, a lot of safety pins, straw (or plastic bags) to fill the scarecrow, random objects to make a face, a bandana and a glue gun.

The size of your scarecrow will determine what size clothes you'll use. A little hack would be to use clothes your kids have outgrown and don't wear anymore. Then you don't have to buy anything, you can reuse something you already have, and it makes a cute child-size scarecrow.

First, safety-pin the shirt to the pants. Then, tie a rubber band around each arm and leg to keep



ANN BURNS

the stuffing in. Next, you stuff the scarecrow. I love the look of a straw-filled scarecrow, but I am allergic to it – so for our little scarecrow, plastic bags were a better idea. Whatever you choose to fill it with, just make sure to stuff it really well so that it has a nice firm shape.

When you're done stuffing, cut out a square shape of fabric for the head. You will then stuff the head and use a rubber band to keep the stuffing inside. You can use a ball to estimate the size for the piece of fabric. Then, use safety pins to attach the head to the body. All that's left are the finishing touches. Tie a bandana around its neck, hot glue random household items to create a face and you're done!

If you are putting your
SEE DECOR, A-6

UNITED WAY

United We Rise Campaign reaches 50% of \$1.2M goal

I'M THRILLED TO SHARE THAT WE'VE REACHED A SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE: WE ARE OFFICIALLY HALFWAY TO OUR AMBITIOUS \$1.2 MILLION GOAL CAMPAIGN GOAL. This achievement is not only a testament to the generosity of our community but also to the leadership and dedication of our campaign co-chairs, Dr. Clay Marsh and Major General James Hoyer.

Together, Dr. Marsh and Major General Hoyer have created a balance of expertise and inspiration, uniting people from all walks of life toward a common goal. Their commitment is contagious

and their vision has made our campaign not just about reaching a financial target but about building a brighter, more supportive community for all.

The United Way of Monongalia and Preston Counties plays a critical role in supporting 34 local programs and initiatives that provide essential services to the community. From food pantries and emergency shelters to youth mentoring programs and educational services, the funds raised during this campaign di-

SEE GOAL, A-6

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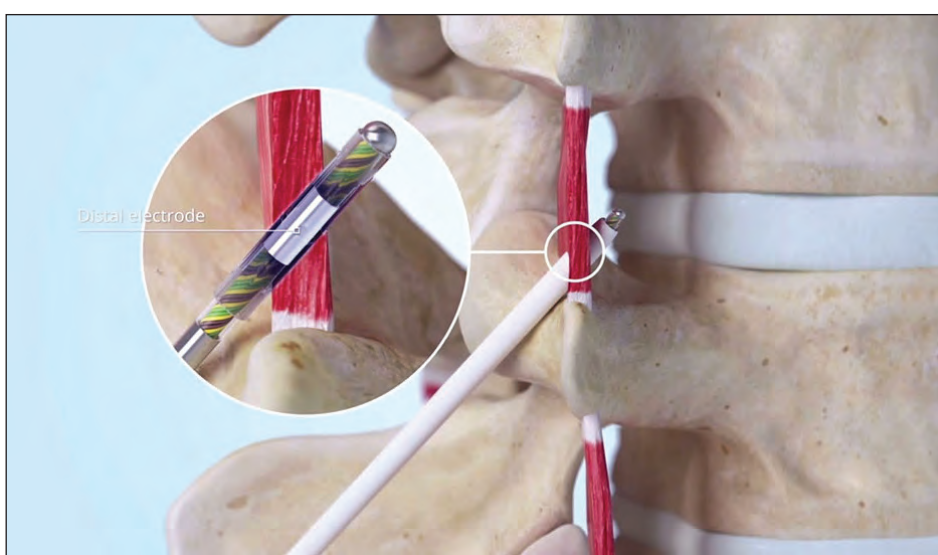
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David Beard/The Dominion Post photos

Clockwise from top left: Dr. Manish Ranjan and the ReActiv8 System. A close-up of the ReActiv8 System and the wire leads going to the muscle. Two shots of the implant going to the muscle, courtesy Mainstay Medical.



PAIN

FROM PAGE A-5

challenges,” he said. So many people live with chronic pain.

The problem could stem from the multifidus muscle. “The multifidus muscle is one of the strongest muscles in the body,” he said.

Verywell Health explains that the “multifidus muscle is a series of long, narrow muscles located on either side of the spinal column that help stabilize the lower portion of the spine, called the lumbar spine.”

Over time, Ranjan said, it can cease to function properly causing functional instability – not spinal instability. A person can feel unstable

bending or picking up something or doing other activities.

Traditional spinal cord stimulation features an electrode in the spinal canal that modulates the pain network – addressing the processing or perception of pain, but not what’s generating the pain.

The ReActiv8 System has the usual battery pack – about 2 x 1 inches – implanted under the skin. But the wire leads don’t go into the spinal column. The wire leads sit outside the spine next to the nerves that control the multifidus muscle and act on the muscle.

“It’s kind of restorative, rehabilitative therapy,” he said.

The patient controls

the system and performs two short treatments per day, up to an hour each. Ranjan offered the example of a 30-minute session before getting up in the morning and another one before going to bed.

The outpatient implant procedure takes an hour or two, depending on the patient, he said. Recovery is quicker than that with spinal surgery, and pain is less because the procedure doesn’t go very deep.

Follow-up comes a week or two later, he said, and they start stimulation after the area is healed, adjusting the stimulation until it reaches optimum performance.

Mainstay Medical makes the ReActiv8 System and follow up study data available on its

website shows that patients saw a pain reduction from 7.3 to 2.4 on the 10-point pain scale (called the visual analog scale but most of us know it from the charts with the smiley and frowny faces).

And 71.8% of patients had pain reduction of 50% or more, while 70% voluntarily reduced or eliminated their opioid intake.

Ranjan said addressing chronic back pain is not a quick fix. “We have to be with them in their journey,” and have a good rapport and relationship with the patient. But they should know they are not alone – many suffer similar challenges. “We are here to help.”

STATE

Candidates for W.Va. governor vary on abortion bans

Associated Press

CHARLESTON — The closest West Virginia voters could come to having their say at the ballot box on whether abortion should be legal in the post-Roe v. Wade era might be in this year’s governor’s race.

State Attorney General Patrick Morrisey and Huntington Mayor Steve Williams have been leaders and occasional allies in the fight against drug abuse in West Virginia, both working to stem the flow of pharmaceuticals into the state with the highest opioid death rate in the nation.

But when it comes to reproductive rights, the two could hardly be further apart.

Morrisey, the Republican nominee, has been a vigorous defender of West Virginia’s comprehensive ban on abortion, which includes few exceptions. Williams, his Democratic opponent, tried but failed to get an abortion referendum on the November ballot.

Now he is betting that the divide over the issue is larger than Republicans think, even in a GOP-dominated state that voted in support of Trump in every single county in 2016 and 2020.

“As I see it, freedom will be on the ballot one way or another,” said Williams, who has been meeting with independent, Republican and Democratic women unhappy with lawmakers’ restrictions.

Unlike some other states that have taken a vote on abortion following the end of federal protections, West Virginia has no citizen-led ballot initiative process. The only way to get a ballot question is with a vote of the legislature, which has Republican supermajorities in both chambers and ignored a petition Williams

submitted with thousands of West Virginians’ signatures.

Amendments to preserve abortion rights have gotten traction even in GOP-leaning states like Kansas and Kentucky, where residents voted in favor of access to the procedure. As governor, Williams said he would continue to pressure lawmakers to put abortion on the ballot or to lessen restrictions. If they continued to refuse to do either, he said he’d restore access through executive order.

Morrisey says West Virginia is a “pro-life state” and has cited a 2018 vote in which just under 52% of voters supported a constitutional amendment saying there is no right to abortion access in West Virginia. But that vote — during a low-turnout midterm election — took place four years before the U.S. Supreme Court determined that there is no constitutional right to abortion, handing the matter back to the states.

The 2018 vote also had to do with state funding of abortion, which some voters might oppose without wanting access completely eliminated, advocates say.

Not long after that, West Virginia passed its ban — becoming one of 13 states to make abortion illegal.

Morrisey argued that voters can turn lawmakers out if they don’t like what they do.

“My opponent is part of the Biden-Harris far-left movement,” he said. “And that’s not what West Virginians are looking for.”

But Margaret Chapman Pomponio, executive director of the abortion rights and reproductive health advocacy nonprofit WV FREE, said she has “zero doubt” that West Virginians would vote for abortion rights if they had the chance.

DECOR

FROM PAGE A-5

creation outside in your yard or garden, you could tie him to a wooden post. Or sit him on a porch chair to greet visitors.

Either way, this is bound to be a lot of fun to make with your kiddos

and a cute decoration for Thanksgiving.

Ann Burns is a Morgantown native, raising two young children with her husband, Drake. She writes weekly columns for The Dominion Post. Contact her at Columns@DominionPost.com.

GOAL

FROM PAGE A-5

services, the funds raised during this campaign directly contribute to improving the lives of local residents.

While we celebrate this halfway milestone, there’s still work to be done to reach that \$1.2 million. But with leaders like Dr. Marsh and Major General Hoyer at the helm, I’m confident we’ll cross that finish line stronger than ever. To everyone who has donated so far—thank you. Your support is helping make a lasting impact. And for those who haven’t donated yet, now is the

perfect time to join us. To donate text WERISE2025 to 41444 or visit <https://www.unitedwaympc.org/give>. Together, united, we will rise!

To learn more about how to get involved with the 2025 United Way campaign, follow the United Way of Monongalia and Preston Counties on social media or visit our website.

Jenna Russell is the Director of Development for the United Way of Monongalia and Preston Counties. She can be reached at Jenna@unitedwaympc.org.

FORUM

FROM PAGE A-5

and Larry Jent – cultural presentation

2:30 p.m.: Francis Day, president, Future Generations University, Eastern Band of Cherokee – “Wisdom of Local Communities”

3:30 p.m.: Panel discussion facilitated by Bonnie Brown

4:30 p.m.: Leon Briggs – event close

4:45-6:30 p.m.: Reception and final showing of “Coming Home” exhibit at Appalachian Forest Discovery Center, with

additional cultural presentation by Leon Briggs at about 5:30 p.m.

The Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area conserves, interprets and promotes forest heritage to enhance landscapes and communities in the highlands of West Virginia and Maryland. AFNHA works with partners to accomplish this through community development, conservation, celebrating cultural heritage, and creating opportunities for transformational experiences. To learn more, see www.afnha.org.

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POLITICS

Kamala Harris says Trump's comments on women 'are offensive to everybody'

Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. — Kamala Harris said Thursday that Donald Trump's comment that he would protect women whether they "like it or not" shows that the Republican presidential nominee does not understand women's rights "to make decisions about their own lives, including their own bodies."

"I think it's offensive to everybody, by the way," Harris said before she set out to spend the day campaigning in the Western battleground states of Arizona and Nevada.

The remarks by Trump come as he has struggled to connect with women voters and as Harris courts women in both parties with a message centered on freedom. She's making the pitch that women should be free to make their own decisions about their bodies and that if Trump is elected, more restrictions will follow.

Trump appointed three of the justices to the U.S. Supreme Court who formed the conservative majority that overturned

federal abortion rights. As the fallout from the 2022 decision spreads, he has taken to claiming at public events and in social media posts that he would "protect women" and make sure they wouldn't be "thinking about abortion."

At a rally Wednesday evening near Green Bay, Wisconsin, Trump told his supporters that aides had urged him to stop using the phrase because it was "inappropriate."

Then he added a new bit to the protector line. He said he told his aides: "Well, I'm going to do it whether the women like it or not. I am going to protect them."

Harris said the remark was part of a pattern of troubling statements by Trump.

"This is just the latest on a long series of reveals by the former president of how he thinks about women and their agency," she said.

Trump and Republicans have struggled with how to talk about abortion rights, particularly as women around the nation are grappling with

obtaining proper medical care because of abortion restrictions that have had implications far beyond the ability to end an unwanted pregnancy.

Trump has given contradictory answers about his position on abortion, at some points saying that women should be punished for having abortions and showcasing the justices he appointed. During his successful 2016 campaign, he told voters that if he were elected, he would appoint justices to the Supreme Court to overturn Roe v. Wade and said he was "pro-life."

But in recent weeks he's promised to veto a national abortion ban, after repeatedly refusing to make such a pledge. He's said the states should regulate care and said some laws were "too tough."

Since 2022, the patchwork of state laws on abortion has created uneven medical care. Some women have died. Others have bled in emergency room parking lots or became critically ill from sepsis as doctors in states with strict abortion bans send

pregnant women away until they are sick enough to warrant medical care. That includes women who never intended to end pregnancies. Both infant and maternal mortality has risen.

Harris' campaign has seized on Trump's statements around women. In one campaign ad, a woman who became gravely ill with sepsis after a pregnancy complication stands in front of a mirror looking at a large scar on her abdomen, as audio plays of Trump's comments about protecting women.

Harris hopes abortion will be a strong motivator for women at the ballot box.

In early voting so far, 1.2 million more women than men have voted across the seven battleground states, according to data from analytics firm TargetSmart.

That doesn't necessarily translate into Democratic gains. But in the 2020 presidential election, there was a 9 percentage point difference between men and women in support for Joe Biden and Kamala Harris.

ELECTION

Donald Trump gambles with late-stage trips to New Mexico and Virginia

Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Donald Trump is traveling to New Mexico and Virginia in the campaign's final days, taking a risky detour from the seven battleground states to spend time in places where Republican presidential candidates have not won in decades.

The former president campaigned in Albuquerque, N.M., on Thursday and was scheduled to visit Salem, Va., on Saturday.

The Trump team is projecting optimism based in part on early voting numbers and thinks he can be competitive against Democrat Kamala Harris in both states — New Mexico in particular; if he sweeps swing states Nevada and Arizona. That hope comes even though neither New Mexico nor Virginia has been carried by a GOP nominee for the White House since George W. Bush in 2004.

Over the past few months in particular, the battleground states — Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin — have seen a constant stream of candidate visits, and residents have

been bombarded with political ads on billboards, televisions and smartphones. In the past two weeks alone, presidential and vice presidential candidates have made 21 appearances in Pennsylvania, 17 in Michigan and 13 in North Carolina.

In the 43 other states, a candidate visit is an exciting novelty.

Trump retains fervent pockets of support even in states that vote overwhelmingly against him, and he can easily fill his rallies with enthusiastic supporters.

He has made other recent detours from the states most at play, holding rallies at Madison Square Garden in New York and in Coachella, California — states that are even more solidly Democratic than New Mexico and Virginia. Those events satisfied Trump's long-shot claims that he can win both states, but were also aimed at earning maximum media attention as his campaign seeks to reach voters who do not follow political news closely.

Trump's strategy carries risk.

TECHNOLOGY

Google Maps adds AI features to help users explore and navigate the world

Associated Press

PALO ALTO, Calif. — Google Maps is heading down a new road steered by artificial intelligence.

The shift announced Thursday will bring more of the revolutionary AI technology that Google already has been baking into its dominant search engine to the digital maps service that the internet company launched nearly 20 years ago as part of its efforts to expand into new frontiers.

Google Maps recently surpassed 2 billion monthly users worldwide for the first time, a milestone that illustrates how dependent people have become on the service's directions during their daily commutes and excursions to new places. With the introduction of Google's AI-powered Gemini technology, the maps are now being set up to become entertainment guides in addition to navigational tools.

Starting this week in the U.S. only, users will be able to converse with Google Maps to ask for tips on things to do around specific spots in a neighborhood or city and receive lists of restaurants, bars and other nearby attractions that include reviews that have been compiled through the years. The new features will also provide more detailed information about parking options near a designated destination along with walking directions for a user to check after departing the car.

"We are entering a new



AP photo

One of the cars that Google uses to periodically to photograph the millions of destinations covered in its digital maps is shown during a pit stop at its "Street View Garage" in Palo Alto, Calif., on Wednesday.

era of maps," Miriam Daniel, general manager of Google Maps, told reporters Wednesday during a preview of the features presented in Palo Alto, Calif. "We are transforming how you navigate and explore the world."

Google Maps also is trying to address complaints by introducing more detailed imagery that will make it easier to see which lane of the road to be situated in well ahead of having to make a turn.

In another AI twist, Google Maps is going to allow outside developers to tap into the language models underlying its

Gemini technology to enable pose questions about specific destinations, such as apartments or restaurants, and get their queries answered within seconds. Google says this new feature, which initially will go through a testing phase, has undergone a fact-checking procedure that it calls "grounding."

Google's Waze maps, which focus exclusively on real-time driving directions, will use AI to offer a conversational way for its roughly 180 million monthly users to announce hazards in the road and other problems that could affect traveling times.

The decision to bring

AI into a service that so many rely upon to get from one point to the next reflects Google's growing confidence in its ability to prevent its Gemini technology from providing false or misleading information, also known as "hallucinations," to users. Google's AI has already been caught hallucinating in some of the summaries that began rolling in May, including advice to put glue on pizza and an assertion that the fourth U.S. president, James Madison, graduated from the University of Wisconsin, located in a city named after him.

STATE

Expansion of the Popular Paranormal Trail announced

Charleston — The West Virginia Department of Tourism has announced an expansion to the new West Virginia Paranormal Trail. The trail now has four new stops bringing the total number of spine-chilling locations to 18. Since its launch, the eerie expedition has already received nearly 5,000 participant sign-ups, with visitors checking in from 39 states and three countries.

To experience the haunts of West Virginia and uncover chilling tales, travelers can register to participate in The West Virginia Paranormal Trail online and instantly receive the digital passport via email or text. As exploration is underway, visitors check in to spooky spots around the state to earn points and unlock exclusive Paranormal Trail prizes — including an official sticker, beanie, and limited-edition print by West Virginia artist Liz Pavlovic.

New Stops

West Virginia Bigfoot Museum - Discover the undiscovered at the West Virginia Bigfoot Museum in Sutton, featuring the Mid-Atlantic's largest collection of Bigfoot casts,

hair samples, research and documented sightings.

Silver Run Tunnel (North Bend Rail Trail Mile Marker 22.8) - An unsettling stretch of the North Bend Rail Trail, the Silver Run Tunnel in Cairo is rumored to be haunted by the spectral figure of a woman in white, drawing in visitors intrigued by ghostly tales.

Cryptid Mountain Miniature Golf - Experience the creepy atmosphere of Cryptid Mountain Miniature Golf, an indoor course in Morgantown featuring 13 cryptid-themed holes designed to test your putting skills amidst mysterious creatures.

Hempfield Tunnel (Wheeling Heritage Trail) - Believed to be haunted by the souls of those buried beneath its tracks and those who met tragic ends within its walls, the Hempfield Tunnel in Wheeling serves as a chilling reminder of the area's dark history. The tunnel can be accessed via the Wheeling Dog Park on 17th Street in East Wheeling.

Accessing the Paranormal Trail Passport is easy. Navigate to wvtourism.com/paranormal.

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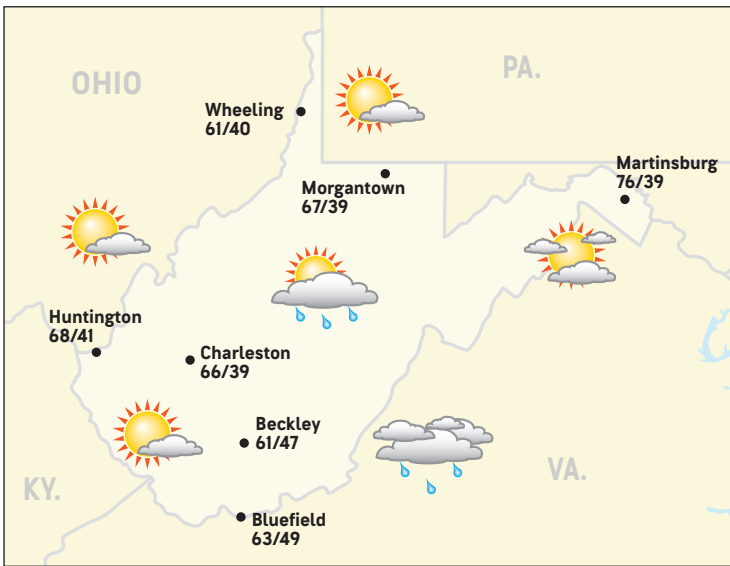
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Mountain State weather at a glance

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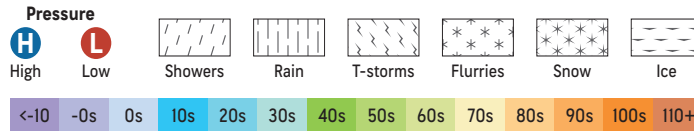
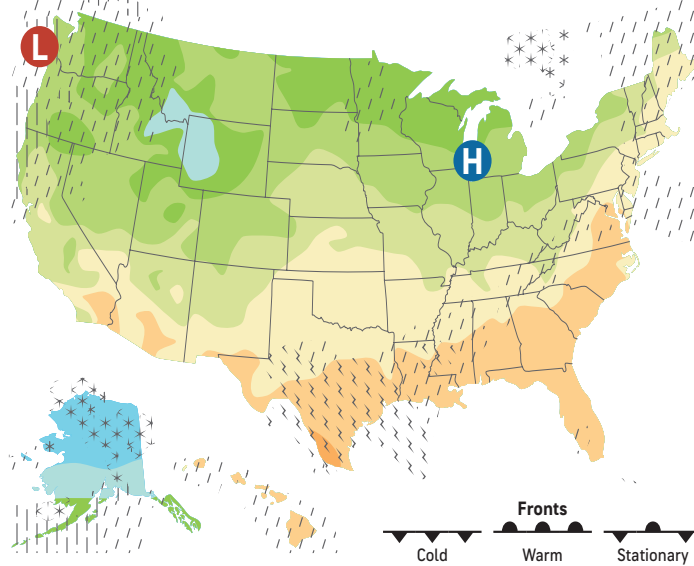
Forecast for Friday, November 1, 2024



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Forecast for Friday, November 1, 2024

Bands separate high temperature zones for the day.



NATIONAL SUMMARY: Thunderstorms will rumble from central Texas through Louisiana and southwestern Mississippi tomorrow. Morning showers will exit the New England and mid-Atlantic coasts in the afternoon. A moisture-laden storm will come ashore in the Northwest, with rain that can cause ponding on roadways at the coast and snow in the mountains.

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FORECAST

TODAY	SATURDAY
Partly Cloudy High: 65 Low: 39	Partly Cloudy High: 61 Low: 37
SUNDAY	MONDAY
Partly Cloudy High: 71 Low: 52	Mostly Cloudy High: 76 Low: 61
TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
Partly Cloudy High: 82 Low: 64	Mostly Cloudy High: 69 Low: 46

ALMANAC

Associated Press

Today is **Friday, Nov. 1**, the 306th day of 2024. There are 60 days left in the year.

Highlight:

In 1938, in a two-horse match race, Seabiscuit defeated the favored Triple Crown winner War Admiral by four lengths in what was dubbed the "Race of the Century" at Pimlico Race Course in Baltimore.

On this date:

In 1765, the Stamp Act, passed by the British Parliament, went into effect, prompting stiff resistance from American colonists.

In 1861, during the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln named Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan General-in-Chief of the Union armies, succeeding Lt. Gen. Winfield Scott.

In 1936, in a speech in Milan, Italy, Benito Mussolini described the alliance between his country and Nazi Germany as an "axis" running between Rome and Berlin.

In 1950, two Puerto Rican nationalists tried to force their way into Blair House in Washington, D.C., in a failed attempt to assassinate President Harry S. Truman.

In 1982, the first Japanese car produced in the U.S. rolled off the assembly line at the Honda manufacturing plant in Marysville, Ohio.

In 1989, East Germany reopened its border with Czechoslovakia, prompting tens of thousands of refugees to flee to the West.

In 1995, peace talks opened in Dayton, Ohio, with the leaders of Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia present.

DEAR ANNIE

Long-distance doubts

Dear Annie: I met a woman, "Alice," on a dating site. We have been emailing each other for 27 months. We have never met; she lives in Seattle, and I live outside of Atlanta. We are both 70 years old.

She told me she had a horrible divorce. I don't know if she is scared to commit. I really don't push it. I really enjoy her, and to be honest there have been times where I think I should break it off. I have thought of asking her if I can fly out there to meet, but I am a little nervous about asking.

You're probably going to tell me to let her go, but to be honest, it's really hard to find someone I like when I meet them off a dating site. No one can compare to her. I just wish I knew what to do.

Dear Stuck: After 27 months without meeting in person, I don't blame you for wondering what to do. Her hesitation to share her phone number might be an indication that she isn't ready for a relationship. The only way to know for sure is to ask her to meet up in person.

Dear Annie: I live in New York City and have had a solid group of friends for the last decade.

A few years ago, an

acquaintance joined our circle. Initially, he was a nice addition, and we welcomed him with open arms. However, over time, I've noticed some troubling behavior.

He has developed a habit of taking over social situations, often dismissing others' stories or making negative comments about people he barely knows. More recently, I've learned that he's been organizing vacations and social events without including me, often with people I introduced him to.

When I confronted him about this last summer, he brushed it off as a "miscommunication." I'm unsure if I want to continue building a friendship with him, but I'm also not sure how to navigate this situation within my tight-knit friend group. — **Left Out in NYC**

Dear Left Out: Ordinarily, I'd recommend direct, honest communication with this gentleman, sharing your feelings and attempting to iron things out. However, it sounds like you've already tried and have been dismissed. Another conversation is more than likely to fall on deaf ears. Focus on the other friendships in your group.

Send your questions for Annie Lane to dearnnie@creators.com.

TV LISTINGS

11/1/24	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-TV News at Six (N)	KDKA-TV News at 6:30pm (N)	CBS Evening News (N)	KDKA-TV News at 7:30PM (N)	S.W.A.T. "Life" (N)	Fire Country Bode and Gabriela consider confessing a huge secret. (N)	Blue Bloods "Bad to Worse" (N)	KDKA-TV News at Eleven (N)	The Late Show With Stephen Colbert			
4	WTAE Pittsburgh's Action News 4 (N)	ABC World News (N)	Inside Edition (N)	Entertainment Tonight (N)	Shark Tank Customizable ski poles; lip balms; oat-based doughnuts. (N)	20/20 (N)		Pittsburgh's Action News 4 (N)	Jimmy Kimmel Live!			
5	WDTV First News (N)	CBS News (N)	ET (N)	Inside Ed. (N)	S.W.A.T. "Life" (N)	Fire Country (N)	Blue Bloods (N)	5 News (N)	Colbert			
7	WTRF 7News at 7 (N)	CBS News (N)	ET (N)	Inside Ed. (N)	S.W.A.T. "Life" (N)	Fire Country (N)	Blue Bloods (N)	7News at 7 (N)	Colbert			
9	WTOV News 9 at Six (L) (N)	NBC Nightly News (N)	Jeopardy! (N)	Wheel of Fortune (N)	Happy's Place (N)	Lopez vs Lopez (N)	Dateline NBC	News 9 Tonight (N)/Sports Friday (N)	Tonight Show (N)			
11	WPXI Channel 11 (N)	NBC News (N)	Wheel (N)	Jeopardy! (N)	Happy (N)	Lopez vs Lopez (N)	Dateline NBC	News (N)	J. Fallon			
12	WBOY News (N)	NBC News (N)	Jeopardy! (N)	Wheel (N)	Happy (N)	Lopez vs Lopez (N)	Dateline NBC	News (N)	J. Fallon			
13	WQED PBS News Hour (N)	BBC News America (N)	GZERO World (N)	Washington Wk (N)	Firing- Hoover (N)	Great Performances "Land of Gold" (N)	American Anthems	Amanpour and Company				
22	WCWB Two and a Half Men (N)	Two Half Men "The Crazy Bitch Gazette" (N)	Modern Family (N)	Modern Family (N)	Whose Line Is It Anyway? (N)	Whose Line Is It Anyway? (N)	Joan Joan is determined to escape the wrath of the IRA. (N)	Channel 11 News on Fox 53 at 10 (L) (N)	The National News Desk			
24	WNPB Context (N)	America (N)	PBS News Hour (N)	Week (N)	Hoover (N)	Great Performances (N)	Anthems	Amanpour (N)				
46	WVFX News (N)	Investig. (N)	To Be Announced	To Be Announced	To Be Announced	To Be Announced	To Be Announced	WVFX 10 "Connors"				
53	WPGH The Big Bang Theory (N)	Channel 11 News on Fox 53 at 6:30 (N)	The Big Bang Theory (N)	Young Sheldon (N)	To Be Announced	To Be Announced	To Be Announced	To Be Announced				
CABLE CHANNELS												
A&E	The First 48	The First 48	The First 48	The First 48	The First 48	The First 48	The First 48	The First 48	The First 48	The First 48	The First 48	
AMC	* Friday the 13th, Part 2 (81) Amy Steel.			*** Beetlejuice (88) Michael Keaton.			*** The Lost Boys (87) Jason Patric.					
AT&TSP	Penguins	Steel City	College Hockey Lindenwood at Robert Morris (L) (N)	Hockey Air Force at Colorado College (N)	Steel City							
BET	Martin	Martin	Martin	Martin	Martin	** The Equalizer (14) Martin Csokas, Dierzel Washington.						
CNN	Situation Room (L) (N)	E. B. OutFront (L) (N)	Cooper 360 (N)	The Source With (N)	CNN NewsNight (N)	Laura Coates Live (N)						
DISC	Gold Rush	Gold Rush	Gold Rush (N)	Gold Rush (N)	Gold Rush-Res.	Gold Rush-Res.						
DISN	Bluey *** Brave (12) Kelly Macdonald.	Place	Place	Primos	Primos	ZOMBIES	ZOMBIES	ZOMBIES				
ESPN	SportCtr NBA (N)	NBA Basketball Orlando Magic at Cleveland Cavaliers (N)	Basketball Denver Nuggets at Minnesota Timberwolves									
ESPN2	ESPN BET Live (L) (N)	Countdown	College Football South Florida at Florida Atlantic (N)	SportsCenter (L) (N)								
FOOD	Diners	Diners	Diners	Diners	Diners	Diners (N)	Diners	Diners	Diners	Diners	Diners	
FNC	Special Report (L) (N)	Ingraham (N)	Jesse Watters (L) (N)	Hannity (L) (N)	Gutfeld (N)	Fox News at Night (N)						
FREE	Movie	*** Finding Dory (15) Ellen DeGeneres.	*** Coco (17) Anthony Gonzalez.									
HIST	The UnXplained	The UnXplained	The UnXplained	The UnXplained (N)	Proof-There (N)	The UnXplained						
LIFE	Castle "Always"	Castle	Castle	Castle								
NEWSN	The Hill (L) (N)	On Balance (L) (N)	Cuomo (L) (N)	Dan Abrams Live (N)	Banfield (L) (N)	Cuomo						
NICK	SpongeBob	SpongeBob	** The Boss Baby 2: Family Business	SpongeBob	TBA	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends			
PARTM	Two Men	Two Men	Two Men	*** Twister (96, Act) Bill Paxton, Cary Elwes, Helen Hunt.	*** Top Gun (86) Tom Cruise.							
TNT	Doctor Strange	*** Thor: Ragnarok (17) Tom Hiddleston, Chris Hemsworth.	All Elite Wrestling (N)	*** Aquaman								
TVLAND	A. Griffith	A. Griffith	Raymond	Raymond	Raymond	Raymond	Raymond	Raymond	Raymond	King	King	
USA	Horse Racing	WWE Friday Night SmackDown	Scare (N)	Hysterical (N)	Movie							
WE	* 9-1-1	Love After Lockup	Love After Lockup (N)	Tia Mowry: My (N)	Love After Lockup							
WTBS	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	*** Django Unchained (12) Christoph Waltz, Leonardo DiCaprio, Jamie Foxx.	Movie							
MOVIE CHANNELS												
HBO	*** Dune: Part Two (24) Zendaya, Timothee Chalamet.			The Penguin	Real, Bill Maher (N)	TBA	Real Time					
MAX	*** Forgetting Sarah Marshall Jason Segel.	*** 50/50 (P)		** Ted 2 (15) Mark Wahlberg	Movie							
SHOW	*** Looper (12) Bruce Willis. (P)	*** Goodfellas (90) Ray Liotta, Robert De Niro. (P)	** Last Man Standing (P)									
TMC	** Cloud Atlas (12) Halle Berry, Tom Hanks.	** Miss Potter Renie Zellweger.	*** Seabiscuit (03) Jeff Bridges, Tobey Maguire.									

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HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

THE MORE, THE MERRIER

Playing multiple quarterbacks a theme for both MHS, UHS this season

MORE COVERAGE

This week's games at a glance and predictions **Page B-2**

BY MATTHEW PEASLEE

Sports@DominionPost.com

Legendary football coach John Madden once said, "If you have two quarterbacks, you actually have none."

That's not the case for the 2024 Morgantown Mohigans and University Hawks.

Between the two teams, a total of five quarterbacks have played significant sets this season.

Some of those game plans were out of necessity because of injuries, but the schemes with various players under center helped advance the offenses for both University and Morgantown.

When the teams meet tonight for the annual Mohawk Bowl, don't be surprised if there are different signal callers on each drive.

"Some of it is planned out and some of it is how the game is going to decide which quarterback we're going to go with," said MHS head coach Sean Biser.

Of his quarterbacks, UHS head coach Eric Snyder said, "They're always up for the challenge. We have full confidence in what they each bring to the table."

The Hawks started the **SEE MOHAWK, B-2**



Benjamin Powell/The Dominion Post

Morgantown High quarterback Alex Himes is just one of several quarterbacks who may take snaps in the Mohawk Bowl tonight. Freshman Maddox Twigg will also play for the Mohigans, and the Hawks have used three starting quarterbacks this season.

GATES OPEN: 5:30 p.m. at Pony Lewis Field

KICKOFF: 7 p.m.

COST: Tickets can be purchased at the gate (cash or credit) for \$6.

PROHIBITED: No Halloween masks will be permitted inside the stadium.

SHUTTLE SERVICE: A free shuttle will run from Mountainview Elementary, South Middle and MTEC to Pony Lewis Field from 5-7 p.m. Shuttle service will also be provided following the game.

THE GAMES



vs University, 7 p.m.



at Morgantown, 7 p.m.



vs Buckhannon-Upshur, 7p.m.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Akir Johnson
MHS defensive tackle

Johnson tied a Morgantown High school record with five quarterback sacks in a game in last week's 45-7 victory against Hedgesville.

HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS

Hawks, Mohigans team up off of the field for a good cause

BY MICHAEL GRIFFITH

Sports@DominionPost.com

When the Morgantown Mohigans and University Hawks step foot on Pony Lewis Field on Friday night for the annual Mohawk Bowl, they will stand on opposite sides of the line of scrimmage, ready to prevent the other from being successful.

But off the field, the Mohigans and Hawks become a team in their efforts to give back to their community by using the Mohawk Bowl as a time to help those in need and show why the annual rivalry game is much more than just a game of football.

In recent years, the student bodies of both schools have come together to establish a collection of stuffed animals (e.g., teddy bears) every year at the Mohawk Bowl, which are then taken to the WVU Children's Hospital and donated to the patients there.

This year, the UHS and MHS students are adding another cause to their already impactful efforts. They will also collect cash donations at the entry gate on Friday night to help raise funds for the Hurricane Helene relief effort in Asheville, N.C.

"The donations will be made to the Red Cross and their efforts to support the communities that have been affected by this tragedy," MHS athletic director John Bowers said. "The way the stuffed animal drive started was a little personal for me. My wife's cousin started something called Kelsey's

Corner a long time ago, which was an outreach for collecting stuffed animals for hospitals. We loved the idea, and it's become an annual staple for our community."

Bowers and University athletic director Jeff Bailey both agree that seeing young students come together in an effort to help other children that may not have the opportunities other kids have is what truly shows the meaning behind the week of the Mohawk Bowl.

"The Mohawk Bowl brings out the best in our community," Bailey said. "The stuffed animal drive has worked so well for us and the kids and the hospital. It's something that the whole community takes part in, and being able to help those children in need is just a wonderful thing. Now, this year, the kids have come together to make a positive impact on those who have been affected by the hurricane. It shows the genuine caring nature of the students we have at both schools and the members of our community."

Bowers says the Hurricane Helene funds will be used to directly impact high schools in North Carolina that were damaged during the storm and after by flooding, etc.

"You're always looking for any way to help others who are truly in need," Bowers said. "There's nothing worse than a sick kid, especially when it's one of our own. That's when these children and families need help the

SEE CAUSE, B-2

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Special teams shining for WVU football

BY DEREK REDD

Sports@DominionPost.com

While living through the ups and downs on both offense and defense this season, the West Virginia University football team has one aspect of its game that has enjoyed more ups than downs – its special teams unit.

The Mountaineers have been able to rely on special teams for most of the season as a steady part of their game. And in some spots – most notably last week's win over Arizona – special teams has meant the difference between winning and losing.

In what eventually became a 31-26 victory over the Wildcats, a fake field goal run for a touchdown proved to be the difference. On fourth and 2 from Arizona's 14 with 37 seconds left in the first quarter, holder Leighton Bechtel snatched the long snap, then took off around the left side, slipping away from would-be tacklers for a touchdown that gave the Mountaineers a 10-0 lead.

WVU coach Neal Brown said this week that he was ready to run a fake field goal sometime during that game, and actually wanted to run in on the Mountaineers' first field goal attempt. That idea got scrapped after Nick Malone was called for a false start on third and 9. WVU then faced a third and 14, but got the penalty yards back on a short completion. Still, Brown considered fourth and 9 too much of a risk.

"I thought that was too long for the fake, so we just kicked that," Brown said. "I told our guys on



Ron Rittenhouse/The Dominion Post

WVU inside linebackers coach and special teams coordinator Jeff Koonz speaks to the media earlier this season.

the headsets, I said, 'hey, I still want to run this fake, so if we get another opportunity, let's use it.'"

The Mountaineers got their chance on their next drive. Brown credited a couple of people for that score. First was associate special teams coordinator Tony Thompson, who drew up the fake field goal play. The next was Bechtel, a punter by trade who has embraced the holder role as Oliver Straw has locked down the starting punter job.

Brown calls Bechtel the unit's "Swiss army

knife," someone who can handle multiple jobs on special teams. He considers Bechtel an outstanding overall athlete, pointing out that he was a two-time high school All-American in lacrosse. "He's been a great teammate, and we're very grateful for him hanging around," Brown said. "I think Ollie is one of the better punters in the country, and Bechtel has some talent at punter as well. So he could have easily left the program and went somewhere else, but he's attacked his role."

Bechtel also made a difference in that game at his usual spot, Brown said. The snap on the extra point following his touchdown went awry, but Bechtel corralled it and got it set just in time for Michael Hayes to boot a successful PAT.

"I've done that job," Brown said. "So I'm fully aware of how difficult that is. Kickers are finicky, getting them the stripes and all that stuff. So he's done a great job in that."

West Virginia's special **SEE TEAMS, B-3**

SCOREBOARD

CALENDAR

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1
HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL
 UNIVERSITY AT MORGANTOWN, 7 P.M.
 BUCKHANNON-UPSHUR AT PRESTON, 7 P.M.
MEN'S BASKETBALL
 ROBERT MORRIS AT WEST VIRGINIA, 7 P.M.

ON TV

AUTO RACING
 10:25 A.M. — ESPNU — FORMULA 1: PRACTICE, AUTÓDROMO JOSÉ CARLOS PACE, SÃO PAULO
 1:30 P.M. — FS1 — NASCAR CRAFTSMAN TRUCK SERIES: QUALIFYING, MARTINSVILLE SPEEDWAY, MARTINSVILLE, VA.
 2:25 P.M. — ESPN2 — FORMULA 1: SPRINT QUALIFYING, AUTÓDROMO JOSÉ CARLOS PACE, SÃO PAULO
 6 P.M. — FS1 — NASCAR CRAFTSMAN TRUCK SERIES: THE ZIP BUY NOW, PAY LATER 200, PLAYOFFS - ROUND OF 8, MARTINSVILLE SPEEDWAY, MARTINSVILLE, VA.
COLLEGE CROSS COUNTRY
 9:30 A.M. — ACCN — 2024 ATLANTIC COAST CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS: FROM CARY, N.C.
 10 A.M. — SECN — 2024 SOUTHEASTERN CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS: FROM COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS
 11:30 A.M. — BTN — 2024 BIG TEN MEN'S AND WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS: FROM CHAMPAIGN, ILL.
COLLEGE FIELD HOCKEY
 4 P.M. — BTN — OHIO ST. AT NORTHWESTERN
 6 P.M. — ACCN — NORTH CAROLINA AT DUKE

COLLEGE FOOTBALL
 7 P.M. — CBSSN — GEORGIA ST. AT UCONN
 ESPNU — YALE AT COLUMBIA
 7:30 P.M. — ESPN2 — SOUTH FLORIDA AT FAU
 8 P.M. — FS1 — SAN DIEGO ST. AT BOISE ST.
COLLEGE SOCCER (MEN'S)
 7:30 P.M. — ACCN — BOSTON COLLEGE AT NORTH CAROLINA
COLLEGE VOLLEYBALL (WOMEN'S)
 6:30 P.M. — BTN — PURDUE AT MARYLAND
 9 P.M. — BTN — NEBRASKA AT ILLINOIS
 SECN — MISSOURI AT TEXAS

GOLF
 7 A.M. — GOLF — DP WORLD TOUR: THE ROLEX CHALLENGE TOUR GRAND FINAL, SECOND ROUND, CLUB DE GOLF ALCANANDA, MALLORCA, SPAIN
 3 P.M. — GOLF — LADIES EUROPEAN TOUR: THE ARAMCO TEAM SERIES RIYADH, RIYADH GOLF CLUB, RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA (TAPED)
 11:30 P.M. — GOLF — LPGA TOUR: THE TOTO JAPAN CLASSIC, THIRD ROUND, TAIHEIYO CLUB MINORI COURSE, OMITAMA, JAPAN
 2:30 A.M. (SATURDAY) — GOLF — ASIAN TOUR: THE BNI INDOONESIAN MASTERS, THIRD ROUND, ROYALE JAKARTA GOLF CLUB, EAST JAKARTA, INDONESIA

NBA
 7:10 P.M. — ESPN — ORLANDO AT CLEVELAND
 9:35 P.M. — ESPN — DENVER AT MINNESOTA

NHL
 2 P.M. — NHLN — FLORIDA VS. DALLAS, TAMPERE, FINLAND
SOCCER (MEN'S)
 3:55 P.M. — CBSSN — ENGLISH LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP: WEST BROM AT LUTON TOWN

TENNIS
 6 A.M. — TENNIS — PARIS-ATP, HONG KONG-WTA QUARTERFINALS
 2 P.M. — TENNIS — PARIS-ATP, MERIDA-WTA QUARTERFINALS
 2 A.M. (SATURDAY) — TENNIS — HONG KONG-WTA QUARTERFINALS

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

WEEK 9 SSAC PLAYOFF RATINGS

CLASS AAAA	RECORD	PTS
1. MARTINSBURG	9-0	18.56
2. SPRING MILLS	7-1	17.56
3. WHEELING PARK	6-3	15.86
4. HUNTINGTON	7-1	14.94
5. JEFFERSON	5-3	14.63
6. MORGANTOWN	6-3	14.01
7. HURRICANE	6-2	13.63
8. GEORGE WASHINGTON	7-1	13.35
9. PARKERSBURG SOUTH	5-3	13.33
10. WASHINGTON	5-3	12.69
11. UNIVERSITY	4-4	12.08
12. WOODROW WILSON	5-3	11.31
13. MUSSELMAN	1-7	9.25
14. CABELL MIDLAND	3-5	8.38
15. HEDGESVILLE	2-6	8.31
16. PARKERSBURG	3-5	7.44

CLASS AAA	RECORD	PTS
1. FAIRMONT SENIOR	8-0	16.5
2. PRINCETON	8-0	15.88
3. BRIDGEPORT	8-0	15.5
4. HERBERT HOOVER	8-0	14.75
5. NITRO	7-1	12.6
6. NORTH MARION	6-2	12.5
7. OAK HILL	7-1	12.4
8. SPRING VALLEY	5-3	12.0
9. ELKINS	5-4	10.2
10. RIPLEY	6-2	9.95
11. POINT PLEASANT	3-4	9.84
12. SHADY SPRING	6-2	9.83
13. EAST FAIRMONT	4-3	9.69
14. LEWIS COUNTY	4-4	9.6
15. HAMPSHIRE	5-4	8.91
16. ROBERT C. BYRD	3-6	8.38

CLASS AA	RECORD	PTS
1. FRANKFORT	8-0	14.63
2. ROANE COUNTY	8-0	13.0
3. PHILIP BARBOUR	6-2	11.68
4. WILLIAMSTOWN	7-1	11.4
5. WHEELING CENTRAL	7-2	10.76
6. INDEPENDENCE	5-3	10.73
7. SOUTH HARRISON	6-2	9.45
8. BLUEFIELD	3-4	8.96
9. SCOTT	6-2	8.9
10. WAYNE	4-4	8.86
11. WESTSIDE	6-2	8.66
13. NICHOLAS COUNTY	5-3	8.66
13. CLAY COUNTY	5-3	8.04
14. MOOREFIELD	3-5	7.8
15. JAMES MONROE	6-3	7.73
16. LIBERTY HARRISON	4-5	7.28

CLASS A	RECORD	PTS
1. TUG VALLEY	8-0	12.13
2. WAHAMA	9-0	10.89
3. TUCKER COUNTY	8-0	10.0
4. DODDRIDGE COUNTY	7-1	9.43
5. CAMERON	8-1	9.0
6. PETERSBURG	5-3	8.76
7. VALLEY WETZEL	7-1	7.98
7. PENDLETON COUNTY	6-2	7.98
9. RIVER VIEW	6-2	7.68
10. WIRT COUNTY	7-2	7.24
11. SHERMAN	6-2	7.23
12. TYLER CONSOLIDATED	5-3	7.14
13. MEADOW BRIDGE	6-2	7.03
14. TOLSA	6-2	6.94
15. MADONNA	6-3	6.91
16. GREENBRIER WEST	5-4	6.28

GIRLS VOLLEYBALL

Trinity Christian volleyball complete loser's bracket run to capture sectional title

BY MICHAEL GRIFFITH
 Sports@DominionPost.com

BLACKSVILLE — After falling to No. 4 Madonna in five sets on Monday night in the Class A Region I, Section 2 volleyball tournament, the Trinity Christian Warriors fought through the loser's bracket with three consecutive victories to reach the championship Wednesday evening in Blacksville.

Awaiting them were the Blue Dons, who gave them the opening round loss, and the Warriors entered the Statler-Wilson Gymnasium at Clay-Battelle Middle-High School needing to earn two victories before dropping a match to capture the sectional title and secure home-court advantage in Tuesday's Region I co-final.

The Warriors defeated Madonna 3-0 (25-12, 25-21, 25-14) in the opening contest of the evening before continuing on and taking the second and final match 3-1 (19-25, 25-17, 26-16, 25-14).

With the victory, the Warriors earned the right to host one of two Region I co-finals on Tuesday night and will welcome St. Mary's to Sabraton as both clubs try and punch a ticket to the state tournament.

"Losing is never something you want to happen,



Michael Griffith/The Dominion Post

The Trinity Christian Volleyball team pose for a group photo after winning their sectionals Championship in Blacksville on Wednesday night.

but I think Monday night was just the right jolt of energy our team needed to turn around and beat a team that beat us two nights ago," TCS head coach Anna Witt said. "Our real team showed up tonight, not the team that was here two nights ago. I couldn't be more proud of the girls' effort and ability to stay together when facing adversity."

Trinity Christian opened the night well, using a 17-4 run in the first set of the first match to ride a wave of momentum to the 3-0 sweep that forced the decisive match.

"That team (Madonna) is much better than we probably expected," Witt said. "We didn't play them during the regular season and didn't know much about their game or style. They move the ball around well and have some heavy hitters on offense. I think it caught us a bit off guard on Monday, but we were able to adjust well and were ready to take away their strengths tonight."

The second and final match that would determine a sectional champion started off favorably for the Blue Dons. They

opened the first set with a swift 7-0 run that stifled the Warriors.

But they clawed their way back from down 8-1 to tie the set at 11 and force a Madonna timeout. But the Blue Dons wouldn't allow the comeback in the opening set and pulled ahead again 16-13, and eventually win the set 25-19.

The Warriors weren't ready to bow out yet and rallied in the following three sets to take home the sectional title. The Warriors won each of the final three sets by at least eight points and held leads in the opening stages.

With a senior class of six players (out of 11 on the roster), Witt says there was some extra motivation behind Wednesday's performances in both matches.

"These seniors really want to play one last time on their home court," she said. "They knew what we needed to accomplish today to have that happen, and they got it done. That's been on our minds heavily today. Now we know we will be at home, with our fans and community in the gym behind us. That means so much to our team to have such an important match being played at home."

GAMES AT A GLANCE

Class AAAA

University (4-4) at Morgantown (6-3)

The 2024 Mohawk Bowl has significant implications on the Class AAAA playoff standings as both sides look to improve their status before the postseason. The Mohigans have improved consistently over the last few weeks and earned a massive 28-14 win against Parkersburg South on the road last week. UHS is back to .500 after starting the year 1-3 and will use that momentum to give MHS a fight on Friday, but the Mohigans should win the battle up front and enjoy playmaking from its offense.

Prediction: MHS wins 31-17.

Class AAA

Buckhannon-Upshur (0-9) at Preston (2-6)

The Knights took a tough loss to University last week on a last-second touchdown with under a minute remaining. Preston has shown steady improvement every single week this season, and junior quarterback Slaton Manko is proving why he is a name to pay attention to going forward. I expect the Knights to battle hard and earn a huge win toward their playoff hopes as they are ranked 19th in the Class AAA playoff standings coming into Week 10.

Prediction: Preston wins 35-14.

— By Michael Griffith

MOHAWK

FROM PAGE B-1

year with junior Jack Byrer at quarterback. He fought through injuries in the first game, which led to sophomore Harrison Helbig getting substantial playing time.

When Byrer was healthier, he saw more action around Week 5, with both Helbig and him guiding the offense.

A new wrinkle for the Hawks (4-4) was added last week in a nail-biting 42-35 win against Preston. Junior Glenn Brown, who has played wide receiver for most of the season, lined up at quarterback and led University High to victory.

Brown completed 15 of 18 pass attempts for 285 yards and added 140 rushing yards on 18 carries.

"Glenn's got the hot hand," Snyder said. "Hopefully, he's going to continue riding with that hot hand."

Helbig will likely get some snaps at quarterback against Morgantown, too, though Byrer is still not 100% healthy heading into this week.

For the Mohigans (6-3), senior Alex Himes inher-

ited the starting quarterback role heading into this season following the graduation of Maddox Bowers.

Himes has performed admirably all season as both a prolific passer and a team leader. He was on board when a freshman, Maddox Twigg, arrived on the scene and pushed for more playing time.

In Week 5, Twigg made his debut for Morgantown in a 49-6 win at Buckhannon-Upshur. In Week 8, Himes and Twigg split time at quarterback in the first half and Twigg played most of the second half for a 28-14 win at Parkersburg South.

"They both have different skill sets and we just try to maximize both of those things," Biser said. "Alex has the most experience and that helps him in certain situations. Maddox has a lot of athleticism and he's a true dual-threat quarterback."

For any freshman to see the field in a varsity contest is something fairly rare. The big stage hasn't scared Twigg at all.

"He embraces it and welcomes the challenges that come with it," Biser said. "The schedule we play is pretty tough, but

he meets it head-on. The mechanics of running the offense slowed him down a bit when he was dinged up in spots, but he really works at it. He's got a lot of goals set for himself. He has some natural ability and works really hard on top of that.

"He came in and tried to learn as much as he could. Early on, it may have been a lot for him with everything we threw at him. We tried to go slow, but at the same time, we had expectations that he was going to play for us and potentially start for us."

The quarterbacks for both Morgantown and University don't see the situation as a competition, but rather a real cohesion of skills with the ultimate goal of winning football games.

"We joke that they share a brain," Biser said. "They are very close and hang with each other in practice. They have a really good relationship. They'll be the first one to congratulate the other when they make a big play. Alex does a great job in his role. He's been an excellent leader and an excellent role model for Maddox."

Now, the real test comes

when each team has to prepare for how their defense will handle the unique quarterback system on the other side of the ball.

"You have to prepare for them both," Snyder said. "We're seeing the other end of that. We can have a handle a little bit on how they're going to use their quarterbacks. They're athletic enough to change things up on the fly and that's something we'll have to be ready for."

Biser said, "Each of them have their own skill set, so you just have to see who is in the game and that's how you determine how you're going to play it. They have similar aspects in that they all throw the football, but one of them is a little more of a runner than the others, and that kind of changes what they do offensively. You just prepare for everything you think you're going to see."

In the Mohawk Bowl, anything can happen.

"When it comes to a rivalry game, it brings the best out of everyone," Snyder said. "We can be prepared for what they like to do, but also be prepared that they're going to pull out something new."

CAUSE

FROM PAGE B-1

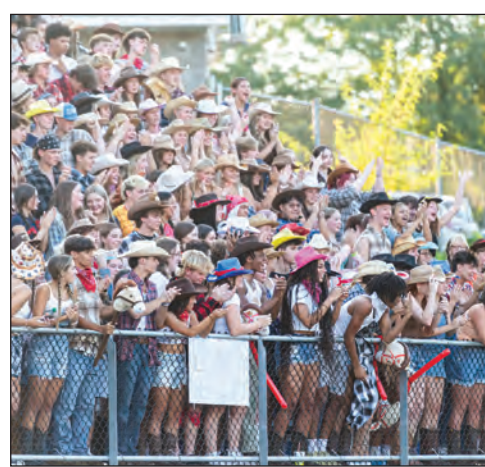
most, and being able to provide a smile or five minutes of happiness to someone struggling is what makes it all worth it.

"Both schools are always teaming up to give back and provide support for our community," he continued. "It was a no-brainer for all parties when this came up a few years back and it's grown

into something so special for community outreach."

The University and Morgantown High School marching bands will also be putting on a combined performance in honor of Hurricane Helene victims at 6:30 p.m.

Fans can bring stuffed animals and/or cash donations to the gate with them when they arrive.



Morgantown's students section gets excited for a game earlier this season.

Cassidy Roark/The Dominion Post

NFL

Mike Tomlin, Steelers aren't settling for merely being good during their 6-2 start

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Mike Tomlin could have played it safe. Could have stuck with Justin Fields. Could have settled for the weekly rock fights that have been the Pittsburgh Steelers' trademark for a half-decade and counting.

The NFL's longest-tenured coach, however, knew he hadn't seen enough. Not from Fields or the rest of the offense, either.

So Tomlin pulled Fields aside a few days after a relatively easy 19-point win over Las Vegas on Oct. 13 that boosted Pittsburgh's record to 4-2 and told Fields it was time to see if Russell Wilson, now fully recovered from a calf injury, could still cook.

Asked if it was a tough discussion considering Fields had accounted for 10 touchdowns against one turnover, Tomlin shrugged.

"I don't worry about the difficulty of conversations," he said at the time. "It's about whether or not they're necessary. We're pursuing big business here. Comfort is not a component of what we're chasing."

Neither, it seems, is complacency.

The NFL's most stable franchise is evolving,

working with a type of urgency it has perhaps lacked at times during a playoff victory drought that's at seven years and counting.

It's why the Steelers blew up the quarterback room during the offseason and why Tomlin turned to Wilson in mid-October and essentially said, "Let's see what you got."

Turns out, more gas in the tank than Wilson's abrupt exit in Denver would have people believe.

The 35-year-old has thrown for 542 yards with three touchdowns and no interceptions in wins over the New York Jets and New York Giants. The offense topped 400 yards in both games, something the Steelers hadn't done in consecutive weeks since 2018.

It's a promising start, though Wilson acknowledged it's just that — a start.

"We have great confidence (but) we haven't done everything yet," Wilson said. "We're obviously sitting here at 6-2, which is a great thing, but it doesn't mean anything."

Reaching the playoffs hasn't been the issue for Pittsburgh, which has made it to the postseason in three of the last four years. The problem has



AP photo

Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Russell Wilson (3) throws a pass during the first half of an NFL football game against the New York Giants, Monday, Oct. 28, in Pittsburgh.

been that the Steelers often look overmatched once they get there, lacking the firepower to keep up with teams like the Bills and Chiefs.

That may be changing in 2024. Pittsburgh has reached 20 points in five of its last six games, something it hasn't done since its 11-0 start in 2020, taking some of the pressure off a defense that has spent the last three years well aware that it could ill afford to get into a shootout.

While cornerback Joey Porter Jr. downplayed the idea that the defense has more wiggle room than usual — trotting out a

variation of Tomlin's "the standard is the standard" motto — Pittsburgh's ability to score more often has allowed defensive coordinator Teryl Austin to be even more aggressive.

The Steelers are tied for second in the NFL with 15 takeaways, many of them momentum-changers like T.J. Watt's strip-sack of Daniel Jones and Beanie Bishop's clinching interception in the fourth quarter against the Giants, part of what outside linebackers coach Denzel Martin describes as a turnover "culture."

There's even T-shirts to match. Coaches will hand them out after Saturday

walkthroughs. They come with their own color code. Get one, it's a white shirt. Get two, it's a gray shirt. Get three, it's a black shirt. Watt and Bishop are racking them up with increasing frequency.

Yet all is not perfect. The Giants gashed the Steelers for 157 yards rushing, not the best indicator for a team whose second-half schedule includes four games combined with Baltimore, Washington and Philadelphia, three of the most productive running teams in the league.

New York's productivity on the ground was a sobering and in some ways welcome reminder of the considerable work that lies ahead.

"I think that's good to be able to win 'in spite of' sometimes," Austin said. "And so I'm real confident in our group coming back and working our tail off to be better when we line up and play next."

It's a methodology that trickles from the top down.

Tomlin's message when he switched quarterbacks was simple: Good is no longer good enough. While Watt and defensive end Cam Heyward — now the longest-tenured defensive player in team history — are building re-

sumes worthy of Hall of Fame consideration, neither has reached a Super Bowl. Watt, in fact, is still waiting for his first playoff victory.

"We can't get comfortable because we know that we just got to, we got a lot of tough, tough games, a lot of tough ball ahead of us," outside linebacker Alex Highsmith said. "And so we know our ultimate goal. And so we know we just got to always want to get better and have that championship detail."

Something Wilson knows a little bit about. He arrived in Pittsburgh in March eager to resurrect his career after two underwhelming seasons with the Broncos. It's early — very early — but his play so far has validated Tomlin's decision to shake up the status quo and maybe set Pittsburgh on a path that's been a slippery slope since reaching the AFC championship in 2016.

"You want to be on the rise as you go," Wilson said. "I think we're on that journey right now. We're on that train of just continuing to grow. I think that's an exciting thing for this football team, what we're doing, how we're doing it."

MLB

World Series champion Dodgers have eye on back-to-back titles with Ohtani returning to mound

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The Los Angeles Dodgers' first game of the season in South Korea was overshadowed afterward by Shohei Ohtani's interpreter hinting at his stealing from the Japanese superstar. Their last postgame was a beer and champagne-fueled celebration of the franchise's eighth World Series title.

In between came a multitude of injuries, especially to the rotation as well as Mookie Betts' broken hand and Freddie Freeman's sprained ankle, Ohtani's historic 50/50 feat, the franchise's 11th National League West title in 12 seasons, and compiling the best record in the majors.

Then came the playoffs, where the Dodgers proved a resilient bunch.

They trailed rival San Diego 2-1 in the National League Division Series and rallied to win in five games.

They were pushed to six games in the NL Championship Series by the New York Mets before advancing.

They were about to lose the World Series opener until Freeman delivered the first walk-off grand slam in Series history. They ran through eight pitchers to eke out a 7-6 victory over the New York Yankees to close out the Series in five games.

"We just kept going. Even in the postseason, I don't think anyone had us picked. I don't think they had us picked to get out of the first series," manager Dave Roberts said. "For us to go out there and fight and scratch and claw and win 11 games in October, that's a credit to our guys."

Investing a billion dollars to acquire Ohtani and fellow Japanese player Yoshinobu Yamamoto last offseason certainly paid off, even if Ohtani's playoff performance didn't match what he did during the regular season when his offense carried the Dodgers.

Ohtani reached career highs in home runs, stolen



AP photo

Los Angeles Dodgers' Shohei Ohtani celebrates their win against the New York Yankees in Game 5 to win the baseball World Series, Thursday, in New York.

bases and RBIs and is the favorite to win NL MVP honors. In the playoffs, he went 2 for 19 with no RBIs and had one single after partially dislocating his shoulder in Game 2 of the World Series.

"What Shohei's done to our ball club, the Dodger fan base domestically, globally, I just don't think you can quantify," Roberts said. "He was playing with one arm in the postseason. So most guys would probably tap out, but he was going to not be denied at playing and posting and being in the lineup."

The Dodgers made some key pickups at the July trade deadline, including pitchers Jack Flaherty — who was one of three healthy starters in the playoffs — and Michael Kopech as well as utilityman Tommy Edman, whose offense in the NLCS earned him MVP honors.

Ohtani's former interpreter is on his way to jail on bank and tax fraud charges when he's sentenced in December. Ohtani is going back to being a two-way sensation next year when he resumes pitching after he spent this season recovering from a second elbow surgery.

The Dodgers have eight players who became free agents when the World Series ended: Walker

Buehler, Flaherty, Kiké Hernández, Teoscar Hernández, Daniel Hudson, Joe Kelly, Kevin Kiermaier and Blake Treinen.

Hudson announced his retirement after Wednesday night's victory, while Kiermaier had already said he planned to retire.

The Dodgers hold team options on Austin Barnes and Miguel Rojas for next season. Clayton Kershaw has a player option and has said he plans to be back after a toe injury kept him out of the playoffs.

But for now the celebration continues.

After winning a neutral-site World Series against Tampa Bay in 2020 and being denied a

parade because of the coronavirus pandemic, the Dodgers have pent-up energy to burn.

"I'm sure there's no asterisk on this one," Roberts said.

They will commemorate their championship with a downtown parade and Dodger Stadium celebration today, which would have been Fernando Valenzuela's 64th birthday. The 1981 NL Cy Young Award and Rookie of the Year winner died last week.

"It's going to be emotional," said Roberts, who was friends with Valenzuela. "I know he's smiling right now and very proud of this organization."



AP photo

Los Angeles Dodgers manager Dave Roberts celebrates their win against the New York Yankees in Game 5 to win the baseball World Series, Thursday, in New York.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Big 12 says helmet communications flaw resolved, no games were impacted

Associated Press

IRVING, Texas — Big 12 football teams have received an encryption update that protects communication from coaches to players through their helmets.

The conference released a statement Thursday saying none of its games were compromised by the flaw, which was first detected in an SEC game in September. All the Power 4 conferences use the same communications system.

The Big 12 said all schools can move forward using technology from the same company they're using, GSC, or from Coach-

Comm, which supplies a similar product.

Earlier this year, the NCAA approved coach-to-player communication through the helmet, the likes of which have been in play in NFL games for several years.

Coaches talk to players — normally the quarterback on offense and a linebacker on defense — by pressing a button to activate the system. The communication cuts off with 15 seconds left on the game clock.

The SEC and Big Ten previously said they were not aware of any games being compromised because of the problem.



AP photo

Arkansas fullback Kyle Thompson holds his helmet while on the sideline during the first half of an NCAA college football game against Texas A&M, Sept. 28, in Arlington, Texas.

TEAMS

FROM PAGE B-1

teams have excelled this year in multiple categories. Hayes is tied for 13th nationally with a 90% field goal success rate. Straw, at 44.1 yards per punt, would be a top-30 punter in the country, but his 19 punts are too few to qualify.

The Mountaineers are 27th in the Football Bowl Subdivision in allowing 16.96 yards per kickoff return and 28th nationally in allowing just 4.4 yards

per punt return. They're also 42nd with 21.83 yards per kickoff return.

WVU's special teams coordinator is Jeff Koonz, who now has the added responsibility of being the Mountaineers' defensive coordinator for the rest of the season following Tuesday's dismissal of Jordan Lesley.

"On special teams, we've played at a high level," Brown said. "And other than the blocked punt versus Pitt, we've played pretty well special-teams-wise all year."

NFL

Coughlin, Shanahan and Seifert make the list of coaching semifinalists for Hall of Fame

Associated Press

Two-time Super Bowl-winning coaches Tom Coughlin, Mike Shanahan and George Seifert are among the nine semifinalists in the coaching category for the 2025 Pro Football Hall of Fame class.

One other Super Bowl winner, Mike Holmgren, also made the cut Thursday after voting by the Hall's nine-member Blue Ribbon committee. The committee will meet Nov. 19 to pick one finalist to go before the Hall's full selection committee for consideration early next year.

The one coaching candidate will be grouped with one contributor and three seniors candidates. Between one and three of those five finalists will make it to the Hall based on getting at least 80% of the votes from the full committee.

Coughlin, Shanahan and Seifert are among the 14 coaches who have won

multiple Super Bowls. Nine of those coaches are already in the Hall and Bill Belichick and Andy Reid are not yet eligible.

Coughlin coached 20 years for Jacksonville and the New York Giants. He led the Jaguars to the AFC title game in their second season as a franchise and back again in the 1999 season. But his greatest success came after taking over the Giants in 2004.

He led the franchise to a Super Bowl title in the 2007 season when New York upset the undefeated Patriots and then knocked off Belichick, Tom Brady and New England again four years later. Coughlin finished with a 170-150 regular-season record.

Seifert helped San Francisco win two titles as a defensive coordinator under Bill Walsh and then two more as head coach after taking over for Walsh in 1989.

He won at least 10 games in all eight seasons



AP file photo

Jacksonville Jaguars executive vice president of football operations Tom Coughlin walks off the field before the start of an NFL football game between the Jacksonville Jaguars and the Los Angeles Chargers, Sunday, Dec. 8, 2019, in Jacksonville, Fla.

in charge of the 49ers with his 98-30 record (.766) the best for any coach on a single team with at least 100 games. But he was unable to duplicate that success in three seasons with Carolina, going 16-32.

Shanahan was the offensive coordinator under Seifert on San Francisco's

1994 championship team and then won back-to-back titles as head coach in Denver in 1997-98. Shanahan finished with a 170-138 record for the Raiders, Broncos and Washington and his impact on the game is still strong today through his disciples, including his son, Kyle, who

coaches San Francisco.

Four other current NFL head coaches worked under Shanahan in Washington — Sean McVay, Mike McDaniels, Matt LaFleur and Raheem Morris — and the offensive system he brought into the league that tied the outside zone run with the passing game is still the most prevalent in the league today.

Holmgren preceded Shanahan as offensive coordinator in San Francisco and also had a big impact on future coaches with Reid and Jon Gruden going on to win Super Bowls after working under Holmgren in Green Bay. Holmgren had a 161-111 record for the Packers and Seahawks, winning the title in 1996. He also got to the Super Bowl the following season in Green Bay and then again in the 2005 season in Seattle.

The other semifinalists include Chuck Knox, who won Coach of the Year

Awards with the Rams, Bills and Seahawks; Dan Reeves, who went to four Super Bowls with Denver and Atlanta; and Marty Schottenheimer, who won 200 regular-season games and made the playoffs 13 times in 20 full seasons as a head coach in Cleveland, Kansas City, Washington and San Diego.

Bill Arnsparger, the defensive coordinator for Miami's perfect team in 1972 and Super Bowl winner the following season, also made the cut.

The final candidate is the innovative Clark Shaughnessy, who is considered the "father of the T formation" and three-receiver set during his long career that included a stint as an adviser to Bears coach George Halas for a 73-0 title game win over Washington in 1940, two years as head coach of the Rams and a stint as defensive coordinator for Halas in Chicago.

PRO BASEBALL

After disappointment in World Series, Yankees turn attention to keeping Soto

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The New York Yankees season ended in a comedy of errors that left them to pursue Juan Soto without a title glow.

Soto was the last player lingering in the dugout after Wednesday night's 7-6 loss in World Series Game 5, watching the Los Angeles Dodgers celebrate after New York frittered away a five-run lead with a monumental meltdown that included three errors, a catcher's interference call, a balk and a pitcher failing to cover first base.

He walked up a step on the first-base end, pointed to the sky, then followed his Yankees teammates to the clubhouse for perhaps the final time.

"I would love to see him in pinstripes for quite a long time," captain Aaron Judge said.

Aaron Boone thought in an even more expansive span.

"I hope he's here forever," the manager said.

A free agent at 26, Soto is likely to command a contract of at least \$500 million. His market is likely limited to baseball's big-market behemoths, the Yankees, Mets and Dodgers along with perhaps the Blue Jays, Cubs, Giants, Padres, Phillies and Red Sox.

"Everyone wants to be on a winning team," Soto said. "That's one of the biggest things that you look up to."

He gave no hints of a favorite, answering questions as carefully as he observes the strike zone.

"I'm going to be available for all 30 teams," Soto said. "I don't want to say anybody has any advantage because at the end of the day, we're going to look at what they have and how much they want me."

While the Yankees went an AL-best 94-68 and won the East after missing the playoffs in 2023, they self-destructed against the Dodgers and consigned themselves to a 15th straight season of without a title.

With the Yankees ahead 5-0 in the fifth inning of Game 5, Judge dropped Tommy Edman's fly to center for his first error since May 2023, Gold Glove-winning shortstop Anthony Volpe bounced a throw to third trying for a forceout and ace Gerrit Cole didn't cover first on

Mookie Betts' grounder to Anthony Rizzo.

Boone was shattered. The clubhouse remained closed to media for an extended period after the game while the manager and players exchanged thoughts on the season and ending, according to reliever Clay Holmes.

"This is going to sting forever," Boone said.

"I'm heartbroken," he added, his voice quivering. "I haven't had that feeling of being — celebrating and going home, like many of the guys in there. I'm 51. I poured my life into that. You're chasing that, and when you get that close, it's heartbreaking."

He recalled the Yankees' Series-ending Game 6 loss to Miami in 2003, when Boone was a player.

"I can still see the Marlins and hear the Marlins celebrating on our field," he said. "It was one of the most painful moments that I've experienced."

New York has a 2025 option on Boone, who said Wednesday he hasn't thought about his future after leading the team to a 603-429 record, three AL East titles and one pennant in seven seasons. The Yankees' 15 years without winning the World Series is the third-longest drought in franchise history, behind the first 20 seasons from 1903-22 and 17 from 1979-95.

Much of the roster will change. Torres is a free agent along with Holmes, Tommy Kahnle and Tim Hill among the relievers and left fielder Alex Verdugo. The Yankees are likely to decline Rizzo's \$17 million option. Cole can opt out of his contract, but New York can void that by adding a \$36 million salary for 2029.

New York has weakness at the bottom of its batting order. The No. 8 slot was 21st in the majors at .219 and the No. 9 hole 12th at .228.

Jazz Chisholm Jr., inserted at third after he was acquired from Miami in July, could replace Torres at second.

DJ LeMahieu, coming off three straight injury-marred seasons, is signed for two more years at \$15 million each.

While Jasson Dominguez could be an option in the outfield, he struggled at the plate and defensively in left field following his return from Tommy John surgery.

MLB

Angels acquire slugger Jorge Soler from Braves for starting pitcher Griffin Canning

Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — The Los Angeles Angels acquired outfielder and designated hitter Jorge Soler from the Atlanta Braves in a trade for right-hander Griffin Canning on Thursday.

Soler has been a productive power hitter for five teams over the previous 11 major league seasons. The Cuban slugger was the MVP of the 2021 World Series with Atlanta, and he also won a ring with the Chicago Cubs in 2016.

Soler said he wasn't expecting to be traded by the Braves, who acquired him from San Francisco three months ago. He has two years left on the three-year, \$42 million contract he signed with the Giants in February.

"I was working out, and I got a call from the GM telling me I was getting traded," Soler said through an interpreter. "It's amazing how fast everything happened, but I'm grateful for the Angels for giving me the opportunity."

The Braves reacquired Soler to provide offense for their injury-depleted lineup on the way to a playoff berth, but he apparently wasn't a long-term fit in Atlanta. Marcell Ozuna is the Braves' designated hitter, while Ronald Acuña Jr. will be back from his torn right knee ligament to play right field in 2025.

While Atlanta offloaded the \$26 million still owed to Soler, the Angels were eager to add an established power hitter to their frequently punch-



AP file photo

Atlanta Braves' Jorge Soler celebrates after hitting a home run during the second inning of a baseball game against the Miami Marlins, Sept. 21, in Miami.

less lineup. Soler also developed a solid relationship with Angels manager Ron Washington and third base coach Eric Young when both were coaches for the Braves in 2021.

"It's somebody that can change a game in one swing of the bat," Angels general manager Perry Minasian said. "Can you play the outfield if you need him to. Great human being, A-plus clubhouse guy, somebody that our manager has familiarity with. Just felt like it was a really clean fit, really good fit for us and somebody that could help change our lineup."

Soler is most famous for his World Series MVP performance for Atlanta. After becoming the first player ever to homer as a leadoff hitter in the top half of the first inning of Game 1 in a World Series, he hit a memorable three-run, 446-foot shot that went all the way out of

Minute Maid Park in the Braves' clinching Game 6 victory over the Houston Astros.

Soler led the AL in homers with the Kansas City Royals in 2019, hitting a career-high 48. He made his first All-Star team and hit 36 homers in 2023 with the Miami Marlins, who signed him as a free agent after his World Series heroics for Atlanta.

Soler struggled in his 93-game tenure with the Giants, attributing it to issues with his timing and swing. His production rebounded after he moved to the Braves on July 29, finishing the season with 21 homers, 64 RBIs with a .780 OPS for both teams.

Minasian made the deal with the Braves' Alex Anthopoulos, his longtime boss in Toronto and Atlanta. Minasian said Soler ideally would be a designated hitter but he likely would get playing time as an outfielder while the An-

gels manage a roster also featuring injury-prone veterans Mike Trout and Anthony Rendon.

Soler was solely a DH for the Giants but has played the corner outfield spots at every other stop in his peripatetic career, even though he isn't considered a strong fielder.

"I have no issue at all wherever they put me," Soler said.

Canning is an Orange County native and a former second-round draft pick who has been part of the Angels' starting rotation for the past six years when healthy. He won a Gold Glove in 2020 but missed the entire 2022 season with a back injury.

Canning went 6-13 with a 5.19 ERA while making a career-high 32 starts last season for the Angels, who finished with the worst record in franchise history (63-99).

"It's tough," Minasian said. "It's someone who took the ball every single time last year, in a year where we had a ton of injuries. He's one of the reliable guys that was right there, ready to go. Even when he was struggling, and he had struggles, he did take the ball and give everything he had."

The Angels added a significant amount of payroll in acquiring Soler, but Minasian said he expects to be aggressive in free agency after Los Angeles collapsed in its first year without Shohei Ohtani.

"This is move No. 1," he said. "We expect there to be more moves. I expect to improve this club in a lot of different areas."

TENNIS

Zverev overcomes raucous home crowd to beat Fils and reach Paris Masters quarterfinals

Associated Press

PARIS — Alexander Zverev won the serving battle and silenced the raucous home crowd, beating French prospect Arthur Fils 6-4, 3-6, 6-3 to reach the Paris Masters quarterfinals on Thursday.

The third-seeded German compiled 16 aces compared to nine for the 20-year-old Fils in their first indoor meeting on a fast court suiting heavy servers with big forehands like Zverev. He improved to 3-1 overall against Fils.

"I am happy I hung in there today. It was a great match," Zverev said. "He is a great player and has

improved a lot this year. I am looking forward to the next few battles we are going to have."

Zverev, the French Open runner-up, saved three break points in serving for the match at 5-3 and held his nerve with the crowd cheering hard for Fils.

"The atmosphere here is a lot louder than at Roland Garros," the 27-year-old Zverev said. "It feels the court is smaller and the crowd is on top of you. It is something we don't get a lot on tour but I love it."

He next plays 10th-seeded Stefanos Tsitsipas in their 16th career meeting, with Tsitsipas 10-5 up.

The big-serving Greek earlier rallied to beat Francisco Cerundolo 6-7 (1), 6-4, 6-2 to stay in contention to qualify for next month's ATP Finals in Turin, the year-end tournament gathering the season's top eight players.

Although Tsitsipas was typically strong on serve, hitting nine aces and saving all three break points, he was not as clinical on Cerundolo's serve and converted three of his 11 break-point chances.

Later Thursday, second-seeded Carlos Alcaraz faced 15th-seeded Frenchman Ugo Humbert and eighth-seeded Grigor Dimitrov

needed to beat Arthur Rinderknech to have an outside chance of reaching the ATP Finals. Dimitrov is in 10th race and must reach Sunday's final in Paris. The Bulgarian veteran was runner-up here last year to Novak Djokovic.

In other third-round matches, the 2018 champion Karen Khachanov won 7-6 (5), 6-4 win over Alexei Popyrin.

Australian Jordan Thompson advanced to the first Masters quarterfinal of his career by beating veteran Adrian Panatta 7-5, 7-6 (5), saving two set points in the second set along the way.

ECONOMY

Inflation gauge reaches best point since 2021

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — As a presidential race profoundly shaped by Americans' frustration with high prices nears its end, the government said Thursday that an inflation gauge closely watched by the Federal Reserve has dropped to near pre-pandemic levels.

The Commerce Department reported that prices rose just 2.1% in September from a year earlier, down from a 2.3% rise in August. That is barely above the Fed's 2% inflation target and in line with readings in 2018, well before prices began surging after the pandemic recession.

Yet some signs of inflation pressures remained. Excluding volatile food and energy costs, so-called core prices rose 2.7% in September from a year earlier for the third straight month. On a monthly basis, core prices rose 0.3% from August to September, up from 0.2% from July to August. The increase in the core rate is higher than the Fed would prefer.

Still, for the past six months, core inflation has declined to a 2.3% annual rate, down from 2.5% in August. And economists still expect the Fed to cut its key rate by a quarter-point when it meets next week.

"It's essentially the soft landing that many of us dreamed of," said Gregory Daco, chief economist at the tax and accounting firm EY, referring to a scenario in which high interest rates manage to tame inflation without causing a recession. "You really have the best of both worlds, with consumer spending growth remaining resilient and inflation moving within striking distance of the



AP Photo

A shopper checks out at a cash register in a grocery store in Glenview, Ill., Sunday.

Fed's 2% target."

A separate measure of worker pay that the government issued Thursday — the employment cost index — showed that wages and benefits grew just 0.8% in the July-September quarter, the slowest such pace in three years. Measured from the same quarter a year earlier, workers' paychecks, excluding government employees, rose 3.8%, a pace consistent with the Fed's inflation target, Daco said.

Though faster wage growth provides a boost for workers, it can also fuel inflation if compa-

nies pass on their higher labor costs to consumers by raising prices.

Taken as a whole, the latest signs of a sustained cooling of inflation arrive five days before an election in which many voters have soured on the economy, mostly because average prices remain nearly 20% higher than they were four years ago. Former President Donald Trump has largely blamed the Biden-Harris administration's energy policies and promised that inflation would "vanish completely" if he is elected. Vice President Kamala Harris

has promised to ban price gouging for groceries and to reduce child care and health care costs.

Economists say Trump's policies would actually worsen inflation, mainly because of his plans to impose sweeping new tariffs and embark on mass deportations of migrants and other immigrants. Harris' proposals on price gouging, experts have said, would have little short-term impact.

Thursday's report also showed that Americans remain confident enough in their finances to keep shopping: Spending jumped 0.5% from

August to September, which helped the economy expand at a healthy clip in the July-September quarter.

Incomes rose more slowly last month, the government said, rising just 0.3%. In response, Americans cut back on their savings, leaving the savings rate at 4.6%, down from 4.8% the previous month.

On a monthly basis, prices inched up 0.2% from August to September, up slightly from a 0.1% increase from July to August.

Inflation peaked at 7.1% in June 2022 after the economy had accelerated out of the pandemic recession at a time of severe shortages of parts and labor, according to the gauge released Thursday, called the personal consumption expenditures price index. Inflation has steadily cooled over the past two years after supply chains recovered from the pandemic disruptions and the Fed jacked up its key interest rate to a four-decade high, depressing home sales and auto purchases.

The Fed tends to favor the inflation gauge that the government issued Thursday — the personal consumption expenditures price index — over the better-known consumer price index. The PCE index tries to account for changes in how people shop when inflation jumps. It can capture, for example, when consumers switch from pricier national brands to cheaper store brands.

In general, the PCE index tends to show a lower inflation rate than CPI. In part, that's because rents, which have been high, carry double the weight in the CPI that they do in the index released Friday.

Business
IN BRIEFEU Commission
fines Teva \$500M

BRUSSELS — The European Commission has fined Israeli generic drugmaker Teva more than 460 million euros (\$500 million) for improperly seeking to protect the patent for its multiple sclerosis drug and for disparaging a rival company's development of a competing medicine. The commission said in a statement Thursday that the pharmaceutical firm "misused the patent system to artificially extend patent protection" for its blockbuster MS drug Copaxone.

Wawa metal straws
can cut customers

NEW YORK — Some 60,000 Wawa-branded beverage tumblers are under recall due to a laceration hazard posed by the products' metal straw. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the metal straw inside the now-recalled tumblers can cut a user's mouth and/or fingers. Four injuries have been reported to date. The Commission is urging consumers to immediately stop using these metal straws — and contact the products' distributor, Halo Branding Solutions, for a silicone replacement. If a customer would like to return the tumbler as well, they can receive a \$15 refund in the form of a gift card.

Samsung moving
in deal for AI chips

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Samsung Electronics has reported progress on a major supply deal for artificial intelligence-focused chips, aiming to reassure investors following a slowdown in semiconductor profits during the last quarter. The South Korean technology giant said Thursday its operating profit for the July-September period increased by more than 277% from a year earlier to \$6.65 billion.



AP Photo

Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer and Chancellor Rachel Reeves speak with members of staff during a visit to University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire, in Coventry, England, Thursday.

WORLD

Treasury chief admits business tax
hike could lead to lower wages in U.K.

LONDON (AP) — U.K. Treasury chief Rachel Reeves conceded Thursday that wages may rise by less than previously thought as a direct result of her budget decision to increase a tax that businesses pay for their employees.

On Wednesday, Reeves raised taxes by around 40 billion pounds (\$52 billion) and announced more government borrowing to plug a hole she claims to have identified in the public finances, fund cash-starved public services and invest in an array of infrastructure projects, in a budget that could set the political tone for years to come.

The biggest single measure — worth some 25 billion pounds in five years — was an increase in the national insurance contributions employers pay in addition to the salaries of their workers. The levy, which was originally designed to pay for benefits and help fund the state-owned National Health Service but which is really absorbed into the overall tax take, will also be paid from a lower salary level.

Reeves admitted that the changes may prompt employers to pass on the additional financial burden by weighing down on wages.

"I recognize there will be consequences," Reeves told the BBC. "It will mean that businesses will have to absorb some of this through profit and it is likely to mean that wage increases might be slightly less than they otherwise would have been."

Her admission came as a widely respected British economic think tank warned that lower than anticipated wages may mean the tax raises more than thought, adding that Reeves may have to raise taxes again in coming years in order to support public services.

In its traditional day-after assess-

ment of the budget, the Institute for Fiscal Studies said some of the projections looked "unrealistic," particularly on public spending.

The IFS said the government will potentially need to raise up to another 9 billion pounds the year after next to avoid cutting spending in some departments.

Although day-to-day spending is set to rise rapidly after Wednesday's Budget, increasing by 4.3% this year and 2.6% next year, it then slows down to just 1.3% per year from 2026.

IFS director Paul Johnson said keeping to a 1.3% increase will be "extremely challenging, to put it mildly."

There were some visible concerns in the markets that the budget sums don't add up, and that growth will remain relatively low. On Thursday, the interest rates charged on U.K. bonds increased, while the pound was down against most other currencies, including the U.S. dollar.

"The quiet optimism that appeared to be spreading during Rachel Reeves' speech has evaporated and a higher risk premium has returned for U.K. debt," said Susannah Streeter, head of money and markets at stockbrokers Hargreaves Lansdown. "Bond yields are set to stay volatile, as institutions financing government borrowing keep a more suspicious eye trained on what the swollen investment budget will be spent on."

The center-left Labour party won a landslide election victory July 4 after promising to end years of turmoil and scandal under successive Conservative governments, restore Britain's economy growing and get beyond public services. But the scale of the measures announced on Wednesday by Reeves exceeded Labour's cautious general election campaign.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Layoff rates remain at
historically low levels

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Fewer Americans filed for unemployment benefits last week as layoffs remained at historically healthy levels despite elevated interest rates.

The Labor Department reported Thursday that jobless claim applications fell by 12,000 to 216,000 for the week of Oct. 26. That's fewer than the 227,000 analysts forecast.

The four-week average of weekly claims, which quiets some of the week-to-week fluctuations, fell by 2,250 to 236,500.

Weekly applications for jobless benefits are considered a proxy for U.S. layoffs.

In response to weakening employment data and receding consumer prices, the Federal Reserve cut its benchmark interest rate in September by a half of a percentage point as the central bank shifted its focus from taming inflation toward supporting the job market.

The Fed is trying to pull off a rare "soft landing," whereby it brings down inflation without tipping the economy into a recession.

It was the Fed's first rate cut in four years after a series of increases starting in 2022 that pushed the federal funds rate to a two-decade high of 5.3%.

Inflation has retreated steadily, approaching the Fed's 2% target and leading Chair Jerome Powell to declare recently that it was largely under control.

Also Thursday, the government reported that an inflation gauge closely watched by the Fed fell to its lowest level in three-and-a-half years.

During the first four months of 2024, applications for jobless benefits averaged just 213,000 a week before rising in May. They hit 250,000 in late July, supporting the notion that high interest rates were finally cooling a red-hot U.S. job market.

In August, the Labor Department reported that the U.S. economy added 818,000 fewer jobs from April 2023 through March this year than were originally reported. The revised total was also considered evidence that the job market has been slowing steadily, compelling the Fed to start cutting interest rates.

Despite some signs of labor market slowing, America's employers added a surprisingly strong 254,000 jobs in September, easing some concerns about a weakening job market and suggesting that the pace of hiring is still solid enough to support a growing economy. The Labor Department issues its October jobs report on Friday.

Continuing claims, the total number of Americans collecting jobless benefits, declined by 26,000 to 1.86 million for the week of Oct. 19. Last week's figure, which had been the most in three years, was revised down by 12,000.



AP Photo

A sign soliciting job applicants is displayed at an ice cream shop in Northbrook, Ill., Sunday.

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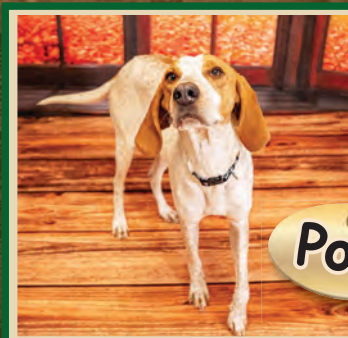


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Diego



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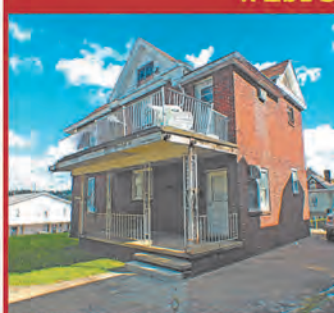
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1014 Pennsylvania Ave. Fairmont, WV
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- Wed. Oct. 30th - Washington, PA** - Luxurious Ranch-Style Spanish Estate on 21 Acres with Guest House
- Wed. Nov. 6th - Horner** - 4 Bedroom Move-in Ready Home in Lewis Co.
- Thu. Nov. 7th - Morgantown** - Spacious Brick 4 Bedroom on a Large Flat Lot in Morgantown
- Thu. Nov. 7th - Buckhannon** - 4 Bedroom on 36 Acres in Buckhannon
- Tue. Nov. 12th - West Elizabeth, PA** - Two Commercial Properties along Route 837 in Allegheny Co.
- Tue. Nov. 12th - Volga** - 3 Bedroom Ranch on Half an Acre
- Tue. Nov. 12th - Grafton** - 16 Acres with Home & Commercial Building
- Wed. Nov. 13th - Sistersville** - 58-Unit Storage Facility on 4 Acres in Sistersville
- Thu. Nov. 14th - Farmington, PA** - 4.62 Acres by the Nemaocolin Casino Selling to the Highest Bidder
- Tue. Nov. 19th - Morgantown** - 3 Bedroom with Full Basement on a Corner Lot in Morgantown

ONLINE AUCTIONS

- Mon. Oct 28th - Clarksburg** - Law Office Liquidation Auction
- Tue. Oct. 29th - Fairmont** - Move-in Ready 3 Bedroom on 1 Acre in Fairmont
- Tue. Oct. 29th - Ninevah, PA** - 2 Story Farmhouse with a Barn
- Tue. Oct. 29th - Washington, PA** - Washington Co. Government Office Building Liquidation
- Wed. Oct. 30th - Buckhannon** - Stone Ranch with Garage on 1 Acre
- Wed. Oct. 30th - Hopwood, PA** - Modern & Vintage Furniture, Electronics, Décor, Prints, Vinyls and Much More!
- Wed. Oct. 30th - Nineveh, PA** - Sporting Goods, Coins, Military Items, Antiques, and More!
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- Wed. Nov. 6th - Uniontown, PA** - 1960's Mustang Pedal Car, 1960's Vintage Bicycles, Mid Century Furniture, Vintage Japanese Toys, Tools and Much More!
- Wed. Nov. 6th - Rivesville** - Restaurant Equipment, Storage Racks, Construction & Shop Equipment, Tools, Firearms and Much More!

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- Thu. Nov. 7th - Morgantown** - The Estate of Harley & Marlene Hershman: Countless Vintage Items, Beautiful Home Décor, Tons of Glassware and Much More!
- Thu. Nov. 7th - Westover** - Income Generating Brick Duplex in Westover
- Thu. Nov. 7th - Morgantown** - 2 Acres Near Cheat Lake with Log Home & Cell Tower Leases
- Mon. Nov. 11th - Horner** - Antique Toys, Tonka Trucks, Diecast Metal Replicas, Quilts and Much More!
- Tue. Nov. 12th - Fairmont** - Clean, Turn-Key Ready Bar & Grill in Fairmont
- Tue. Nov. 12th - Westover** - 2 Bedroom Project Home in Westover
- Thu. Nov. 14th - Clarksburg** - 7,200 Sqft. Commercial Shop on a Major Thoroughfare in Clarksburg
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TO YOUR GOOD HEALTH

Active woman finds weight loss impossible

DEAR DR. ROACH: I am 5 feet, 1 inch tall, weigh 200 pounds, and have found it next to impossible to lose weight, even though I'm active. I swim, walk, or do yoga almost every day. I avoid most processed foods and stick to organic vegetables and pasture-raised eggs and meat.

My doctor put me on metformin; I lost 7 pounds, but that was it. I do have insulin resistance due to polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), and they are concerned about my cardiovascular health.

I'm not sure if metformin helped me. Are there other medications or supplements you might recommend to help with weight loss? — Y.F.

ANSWER: There is reason to be suspect about the benefit of weight loss for many people. What we define as "overweight" (a BMI between 25-30) has a lower risk of overall mortality, compared to a "normal weight" (a BMI between 18.5-24.9). The risk is even less risk compared to people who are "underweight" (a BMI less than 18.5). Losing weight for people who are in the "overweight" category has very little benefit when it comes to improving health.

The concept of a BMI as a measure of health

is deeply flawed. While there are attempts to make a new single-number calculator that better expresses risks, I find the combination of waist size and BMI to be helpful. Abdominal fat really does impart greater health risks. A muscular person with a narrow waist can have the same BMI as a nonmuscular person with a large abdomen, but they will have different risk profiles.

That being said, your calculated BMI is 37.8, in the range called "class 2 obesity." The term "class 3 obesity" is used when a person has a BMI over 40 or when a person with a BMI between 35-40 has medical complications of obesity, such as sleep apnea or diabetes.

A healthy diet and regular exercise remain the cornerstone of improving health in people who are overweight or obese. Even if you don't lose a single pound, eating less-processed food and getting regular exercise greatly improve health, compared to a typical American diet and a sedentary lifestyle.

Dr. Keith Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual letters, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu or send mail to 628 Virginia Dr., Orlando, FL 32803.

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Discretion is one of your superpowers, and others can sense it, even if they never quite catch you in action because you're keeping all your cards close to the vest.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). As far as you're concerned, happiness that comes at someone else's expense isn't happiness at all. You make it your business to know what the real story is.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). The focus is on relationships and interdependence. Don't hesitate to ask for help and offer it in return; it's how we thrive together. Also, even if it feels like a luxury, take the time to exercise because the mental clarity you gain will be priceless.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Your creativity is ever-evolving. You've got the core ideas, and you'll land in a dream collaboration — the sort that doesn't make you second-guess your moves as you commit to turning out the best craft possible.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Too much attention too soon can smother even the best concepts. Let things grow on their own without hovering over them. Your ideas spread like wildfire when they're given space to breathe.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). People won't ask for what they really need. For instance, they ask for advice when they really want approval, or they ask for input when they really want attention, funding, or a feeling of power.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Beware of the smile that spreads across the mouth

but never reaches the eyes. The eyes are supposed to be the starting point. Real smiles will come from true hearts and point to sweet opportunities.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Having candy or not having candy isn't a reason to cry. But, just ask any 2-year old, insignificant events can significantly impact the mood for those with a limited perspective. Broadened your perspective and a "candy" crisis will matter less.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). There's something occupying too much of your mental space. It's draining your energy without offering a solution. Let it go so you can redirect your focus to something productive.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). It's a trope of crime movies — the board of pictures, facts, evidence and the red yarn making connections. Today there's a mystery to put together... not a crime, but a complex issue with characters and timelines and connections that are best sorted in a visual way.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You've seen things go off track, and you've also gone the distance with projects that came to full fruition. So while it doesn't always seem like you know what you're doing, on a very basic level you most certainly do, so trust yourself.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Relationships go through different temperatures and tones. Don't let the one that's been simmering for too long become a reductive mess. Welcome a change in any direction.

CROSSWORD

- ACROSS**
- 1 Mimic
 - 4 Use a strainer
 - 8 Devils
 - 12 Lenient
 - 13 Genus of maple trees
 - 14 Slime
 - 15 Unclose, poetically
 - 16 Moon goddess
 - 17 "Back in the —"
 - 18 Beta follower
 - 20 Loquacious
 - 22 Lap dog, for short
 - 23 Make leather
 - 24 Fortune-teller
 - 28 Surgical beam
 - 32 Word of regret
 - 33 — and holler
 - 35 Between Mon. and Wed.
 - 36 Knight's title
- DOWN**
- 1 Like a bump on —
 - 2 Daddy
 - 3 Ideal
 - 4 Sausage variety
 - 5 Hosp. area
 - 6 Swamp
 - 37 Legend
 - 38 Rani's garment
 - 39 Authority (hyph.)
 - 41 Greek letter
 - 43 Word in recipes
 - 45 Pester
 - 46 Awe
 - 49 Catches
 - 52 Not so young
 - 53 Monster
 - 56 Speed
 - 57 Close tightly
 - 58 Part of ASAP
 - 59 Writer Umberto —
 - 60 "Present!"
 - 61 Dele's undoing
 - 62 Traitor

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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

- 7 Piece of land
- 8 Tropical lizard
- 9 Nearly every
- 10 Pillar
- 11 Nimble
- 19 "Mars Needs —"
- 21 Bring to a standstill
- 24 Free ticket
- 25 Inter —
- 26 Bashful
- 27 Dorothy's dog
- 29 Amateur astronomer
- 30 Madrid money
- 31 Check
- 34 Resistance unit
- 37 Pie a la —
- 38 Wound mark
- 40 Seat for a rider
- 42 Purpose
- 44 Metal waste
- 46 Lave
- 47 Pointed arch
- 48 — and clear
- 50 12 points, in printing
- 51 Stain
- 54 "America's — Talent"
- 55 Caviar

CURTIS

BY RAY BILLINGSLEY

PEANUTS

BY CHARLES M. SCHULZ

THE GRIZZWELLS

BY BILL SCHORR

BEETLE BAILEY

BY GREG, BRIAN & NEAL WALKER

FRANK & ERNEST

BY BOB THAVES

BORN LOSER

BY ART & CHIP SANSON

HAGAR THE HORRIBLE

BY DIK BROWNE

JANRIC CLASSIC SUDOKU

Fill in the blank cells using numbers 1 to 9. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and 3x3 block. Use logic and process elimination to solve the puzzle. The difficulty level ranges from Bronze (easiest) to Silver to Gold (hardest).

MARMADUKE

BY BRAD & PAUL ANDERSON

FAMILY CIRCUS

BY BIL KEANE

BLONDIE

BY DEAN YOUNG & JOHN MARSHALL

GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS

MUTTS

BY PATRICK MCDONNELL

2024 Tipoff 2025

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Mark Kellogg
WVU Women's Basketball Coach



Darian DeVries
WVU Men's Basketball Coach



Javon Small
Guard

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Father and son: The DeVries boys are back for one final run

Darian, Tucker tasked with helping to rebuild the WVU men's program

BY JUSTIN JACKSON
JJackson@DominionPost.com

It happens so much that Tucker DeVries is already prepared. The WVU guard meets someone new, introduces himself and then simply gets ready for the question about playing college basketball for his father.

"It's usually the first thing that comes up," DeVries said. "I get asked about it a lot."

For the last three years, the DeVries duo — Tucker followed his father Darian to WVU as a transfer this summer — put up some impressive numbers at Drake.

The Bulldogs won 80 games in those three seasons, played in two NCAA tournaments, while Tucker won two player of the year awards from the Missouri Valley Conference and scored 1,867 points.

"I think we've both enjoyed it," Tucker said. "I wouldn't trade it for anything. It's been a blast to do it together."

"Obviously, there are challenges and there's good and bad days. When

we get older, I think it will be really special to look back on."

The move to WVU is a step up in competition for both, but also a step away from real comfort and stability they had built at Drake.

"It has some challenges, especially early," Tucker said of the transfer to WVU. "We had a lot of new guys at Drake last season, three new starters."

"It just takes a little bit of time. I think we've all done a good job of getting to know each other. Hopefully by the time the season begins, we'll be as well-jelled as possible."

Much of that process falls to Darian, the coach now tasked with rebuilding a WVU program that finished last in the Big 12 last season and hasn't had a 20-win season since 2020.

It is more than just a change in the roster or teaching the Xs and Os.

Darian DeVries has now got to reshape the culture into his own fit.

"I think we've made some really great prog-

SEE RUN, 3



Darian DeVries (left) and son, Tucker, combined for 80 wins over the last three seasons at Drake. Both enter their first season at West Virginia. AP file photo



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RUN

FROM PAGE 2

ress," he said. "It's noticeable, like how our connectivity is on both ends of the floor. I think we're getting closer."

One final run

While the hope at WVU is for Darian to spend a lifetime on the Mountaineers' sidelines, this will be Tucker's final college season.

Success for the duo has already been achieved, but it came at another school in another conference in another time zone.

Their situation at WVU may be totally different than the challenges they faced at Drake, yet the relationship remains the same.

"For the most part, we just try to keep basketball at the gym and then keep all the other stuff

away from the gym," Tucker said. "Certainly you have some crossover. After a tough day, maybe I wait a little bit longer to call him. If it's going well, then I'll go home for dinner."

It was that thought that brought a smile to Darian's face.

"I've noticed he loves to come home whenever he scores 30," Darian joked. "That's the joy of being where we're at, being able to celebrate those moments together. Those can go for the bad moments, too. We have a great relationship in that regard, but I'm sure he enjoys them a lot more after good days."

In terms of bringing this WVU team together, Tucker's role has been more than just a player in a uniform.

Having already played in his father's system for three years, Tucker became a voice of expla-



Benjamin Powell/The Dominion Post

Tucker DeVries (12) averaged 21.6 points per game at Drake last season.

nation on the court, too, a guy who could point teammates in the right direction in the heat of a hectic practice.

Off the court, Tucker is also a sort of go-between with his teammates looking to build their own roles under Darian's watchful eye.

It's that part Darian saw first hand while he was an assistant

at Creighton under Greg McDermott, who coached his son Doug.

"That was one of the conversations they had. Greg told Doug, 'When you go back to the locker room, it's OK to join in. I get it, you're not going to be happy with me each day as your coach,'" Darian said. "Put your two cents in, too, if you want to. You have to be able to give him that space.

"I don't need to know everything that's going on in that locker room. I intentionally don't ask for that reason. I don't need Tucker to tell me everything. That's their time."

And sometimes that private time among players is spent using Tucker as a voice of reasoning.

"They've tried to use him to get out of conditioning," Darian said with a smile. "Hey, tomorrow can we cut practice a little bit short, that

type of stuff. That's all part of the uniqueness to it. They have someone they can use as well."

Player and coach

A situation is tossed at Darian, that in a close game in the final minutes, does the coach view Tucker as a player or still his son in those moments?

"Player," Darian answers without hesitation. "What I love about what Tucker brings to the game, especially when you have your dad coaching, is it's still never just about him.

"He's got a great feel for the game. I rely on our players a lot for input. I'll ask them what they're seeing. I think he does a really good job of relaying what he's seeing on the floor."

Maybe someday Tucker will take those moments with him into his


own coaching career. He says he would love to get into coaching one day.

For now, he's still got one more season as an athlete. One more season to be side-by-side with dad in what will likely, at the very least, be an interesting season in Morgantown.

Rest assured, whatever expectations Darian has for his son in their lone season at WVU, they may not compare to the expectations held by mom, Ashley DeVries.

"She wants him to make every shot and grab every rebound and never mess up on defense, that type of stuff, but she's great about it," Darian said. "She does a really good job of trying to keep that balance of making sure she's still mom, and as a son, he's got a place that he can go talk to her about anything. It's not always just basketball either."

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Mountaineers have a new look entering 2024-25 season

WVU has a new coach, one returner

BY JUSTIN JACKSON

JJackson@DominionPost.com

Darian DeVries' all-time coaching record against Big 12 competition is 1-1.

Three current WVU men's hoops players have experience playing in the conference, but two did it on other teams.

If there was only one way to describe what's about to transpire this season for the Mountaineers, it may be to simply state it's going to be a voyage into the unknown.

"It's going to be a good league, we all know that," DeVries said. "I think we've challenged ourselves in the nonconference, too. We certainly haven't made things easy for ourselves in the first year.

"Our guys are excited by that. They're excited to face these new challenges and opportunities. We also know that every single night, we could be playing one of the better teams in the country."

DeVries enters his first season with the Mountaineers after six successful seasons at Drake, where he went 150-55 and took the Bulldogs to three NCAA tournaments.

The roster was a complete rebuild, with only forward Ofri Naveh returning from last season.

That means WVU enters this season with 12 new scholarship players all trying to get on the



The Dominion Post file photo

WVU forward Ofri Naveh (left) is the only player returning from last season. He averaged 2.6 points per game as a freshman and played in 24 games.

same page, while learning a new system under a different coach.

The only exception to that statement is guard Tucker DeVries, the son of the head coach, who was a three-year standout at Drake and a two-time player of the year in the Missouri Valley Conference.

"It helps when everybody is putting in the same amount of work and everyone is trying to go full tilt to get to where we want to be," Tucker said. "When you're going through tough practices, when you're doing it all together, it certainly helps build that camaraderie and chemistry.

derie and chemistry.

"Ultimately you want that to translate onto the court. The more you're doing things together, the better it's going to be. I think the culture has been set to a pretty good standard."

There is some potential to be found, beginning with Tucker, but also with fellow teammate Jayden Stone.

A year ago, that duo were just two of 34 players in the entire country who averaged at least 20 points per game.

Tucker was 10th in the nation in scoring at 21.6 points per game, while connecting on 87 3-point-

ers.

Stone, who transferred from Detroit Mercy, was 22nd in the country in scoring, averaging 20.8 points. He hit 62 threes and also averaged 5.6 rebounds per game.

Illinois transfers Amani Hansberry and Senecire Harris were once both top-100 and 4-star recruits coming out of high school.

Hansberry, at 6-foot-8 and 240 pounds, will be a slightly undersized center, but he will bring his own 3-point shooting touch that could drag a lot of taller defenders away from the rim to guard him.

"Amani Hansberry is an undersized big man, but he's also going to present some opportunities for us on the offensive end with his ability to space the floor," Darian DeVries said. "Offensively, if you're 6-8 and you have the ability to shoot threes, you have to take advantage of that. That is tricky to guard sometimes."

None of them have the Big 12 experience quite like guards Javon Small and Josep Yesufu.

Small is a transfer from Oklahoma State, who is expected to take over as WVU's starting point guard.

He averaged 15.1 points, 4.7 rebounds and 4.1 assists with the Cowboys last season, including a 15-point, 12-rebound game against the Mountaineers.

Yesufu is another guard who spent two seasons with Darian DeVries at Drake, before transferring and playing two seasons at Kansas. He was a reserve on the Jayhawks' 2022 national championship team.

Toby Okani — a transfer from Illinois-Chicago — led the Missouri Valley Conference in blocks last season and was on the league's all-defensive team.

At 6-8, but listed as a guard, Okani will likely be the Mountaineers' most versatile player.

"I definitely think I'm a versatile defender," Okani said. "What that means to me is knowing I can switch on to a smaller guard and then maybe banging a little bit with the post guys. I'm just here to help and to use my athleticism and long arms to maybe get us some extra possessions on the other end."

Throw it all together, what exactly do the Mountaineers have? That's likely the question Darian DeVries and his staff is trying to figure out as the regular season is set to begin on Nov. 4, when WVU hosts Robert Morris.

"I want our identity to be is when you walk out of that gym, I want everyone to talk about how hard we play," Darian DeVries said. "I want (people) to know how connected they are and feel that life and that energy every single day."

ROSTER

2024-25 WVU MEN'S BASKETBALL



#0
Eduardo Andre
Center 6'11"
5th
London, England



#1
Joseph Yesufu
Guard 6'0"
5th
Bolingbrook, IL



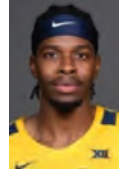
#2
Dylan Jay
Guard 6'4"
Freshman
Chelan, WA



#3
KJ Tanner
Guard 6'0"
Freshman
Memphis, TN



#4
Aden Tagaloa-Nelson
Guard 6'1"
Sophomore
Lexington, KY



#5
Toby Okani
Guard 6'8"
5th
Orange, NJ



#7
Javon Small
Guard 6'3"
Senior
South Bend, IN



#8
Jake Auer
Guard 6'0"
5th
Clive, IA



#9
Jafri Naveh
Forward 6'6"
Sophomore
Neot Golan, Israel



#10
Sencire Harris
Guard 6'4"
Sophomore
Canton, OH



#11
Jonathon
Powell
Guard 6'6"
Freshman
Dayton, OH



#12
Tucker DeVries
Guard/Forward 6'7"
Senior
Waukee, IA



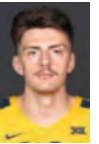
#13
Amani
Hansberry
Forward 6'8"
Sophomore
Silver Spring, MD



#14
Jayden Stone
Guard 6'4"
5th
Perth, Australia



#15
Abraham
Oyeadier
Center 6'9"
Freshman
Accra, Greece



#22
Haris Elezovic
Forward 6'8"
Senior
Sherbrooke,
Quebec, Canada

COACHING STAFF



Darian DeVries
Head Coach



Chester Frazier
Assistant Head
Coach



Tom Ostrom
Assistant Coach



Kory Barnett
Assistant Coach



Nick Norton
Assistant Coach/ Director
of Player Development



Caveil Witter
Assistant Coach

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WVU point guard Javon Small



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Darian DeVries

AGE: 49

COACHING CAREER: Went 150-55 in the past six seasons at Drake, leading the Bulldogs to three NCAA tournaments. Prior to that, he was an assistant coach at Creighton for 17 years under Greg McDermott and Dana Altman. At Drake, DeVries was 1-3 all-time in the NCAA tournament, winning an opening-round game against Wichita State

in 2021.

CONTRACT: DeVries signed a five-year deal with WVU through the end of the 2028-29 season. He will earn a base salary of \$15 million over those five seasons. According to an extension clause in the deal, if WVU finishes in the top six of the Big 12 in either of DeVries' first two seasons, he would earn an automatic extension for the 2029-30 season, worth another \$3.3 million. For the 2024-25 season, DeVries will make \$2.8 million in base salary.

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LEAP OF FAITH

Jayden Stone shares inspiring story on journey from Australia to WVU

BY JUSTIN JACKSON

JJackson@DominionPost.com

Jayden Stone is a fascinating book that certainly can't be judged by its cover.

To that point, the WVU guard — a transfer from Detroit Mercy now in his final season of eligibility — can't be summed up with just his basketball stats, his background or even his journey.

His uniqueness is found in every second of a 23-minute interview Stone had with local media in the preseason, beginning with his Australian accent that comes off like a calm and subdued Russell Brand.

"I've heard I've got a pretty soothing voice," Stone admits.

It's that voice that spins a tale of taking a leap of faith at just 15 years old, when he left Perth, Australia bound for the United States on a 27-hour journey that eventually landed him with distant family in Alabama to play high school basketball.

"I came over because I wanted to chase a dream," Stone said. "I wanted to chase something. That's the primal thing about human existence. We want to go after something. When you're determined, you don't look back."

He was raised by his mother, Tracey, and his grandmother. Those relationships are sewn into his heart. Now a world away, it was only the memories of holding his mother's hand while go-

"YOU'RE HOUSE-HOPPING AND STAYING WITH FAMILY IN ALABAMA FOR A LITTLE BIT. THEN YOU'RE IN WICHITA (KAN.). I'VE GOT A LITTLE PIECE OF MY HEART IN EVERY SPOT. IT WAS DIFFERENT. IT WAS DIFFICULT. YOU DON'T FEEL AT HOME ANYWHERE."

JAYDEN STONE
WVU GUARD

ing to the movies or the walks he would take with his grandmother he had as a reminder of home.

"I told my mom literally two days before or something like that," Stone said. "I'm going to America. I'm getting the ticket, and I probably won't be seeing you for a long time. She was a bit sad. My sister, too, was a bit incongruent with the whole idea of me leaving. They still think I was too young to leave, which, I probably agree, but it worked out in the end because I'm here."

Always on the move

Google maps are needed to trace all of Stone's steps he's taken on his basketball journey.

When talking to the young man, a thesaurus or a dictionary is also helpful.

He refers to himself as an "accidental diminisher," while also tossing out words like esoteric, impetus and transfixed.

His conversations go well beyond the basketball court, and it's quickly realized Stone is more than just a basketball player.

He has already earned a degree in psychology and maybe Stone has

been his best case study to date.

Each move has brought adversity, whether it be calling up someone for a couch to sleep on or simply adjusting to yet another unfamiliar place.

"You're house-hopping and staying with family in Alabama for a little bit," Stone said. "Then you're in Wichita (Kan.). I've got a little piece of my heart in every spot. It was different. It was difficult. You don't feel at home anywhere."

Stone played at two different high schools in Alabama — he was named the 2019 Alabama Class AA Player of the Year as a junior — and then transferred to Sunrise Christian Academy in Kansas as a senior.

College recruiting took him to Grand Canyon first, but then he transferred to Detroit Mercy in 2022.

"Coming to America, it's like anything, it's left some pit holes in my life and also brought some amazing stories I could ever imagine that I can share with my children," Stone said.

Now he's in Morgantown.

SEE FAITH, 8



Benjamin Powell/The Dominion Post

WVU guard Jayden Stone (14) puts up a shot in the Mountaineers' exhibition game against the University of Charleston.

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FAITH

FROM PAGE 7

“I feel like, ‘Oh man I’m only going to be in Morgantown for a couple of months until the season ends, and then I’ll be shipped off somewhere else or I might go home,’” Stone said. “You never know. I’ve been to so many different places. I just want to stay in one spot. But I know that’s not the nature of basketball. You’ve got to be all out and everywhere.”

Could’ve been a star

Stone’s college career did not begin with a bang. Grand Canyon won 40 games during his two seasons with the Antelopes, but his role was that of a reserve.

That all changed when he transferred to Detroit Mercy to play for Mike Davis, even though that move, again, took a major adjustment.

He was ruled academically ineligible during the second semester of his first year in Detroit.

Stone admits he did not handle that part of his life well, that he could have found a way to still support the team and show some leadership.

A season later, it was a different adversity. Stone was a star, averaging 21.6 points per game in the early portion of



Photo from Detroit Mercy

Jayden Stone (left) averaged 20.8 points per game last season and had three games with 30 or more points, but the Titans finished 1-31. Stone transferred to WVU this season for his final season of college eligibility.

his senior season.

Yet none of that helped the Titans win. Losses piled up in bunches — 26

in a row to start last season — but Stone couldn’t be stopped individually.

“It was rough. When

you are like the main player on the team, it’s transfixed on what he’s doing. It’s like, this is re-

ally on him. You are the scapegoat behind everything that’s happening or not happening. There

were a lot of things that were not happening in the locker room.”

He finished the season as the nation’s 22nd leading scorer, averaging 20.8 points per game with 11 games of at least 25 points.

The Titans finished 1-31.

“I wouldn’t say relieved,” Stone said. “You’re 1-31. With me, I got tagged by people as a guy who only scores and the only way I could be effective is to put the ball in the hoop and be the main guy. That’s not the player I want to be.”

Davis was fired at season’s end, which opened up the transfer portal a second time for Stone, who will now be playing for his sixth different school — high school and college combined — since first coming to the United States.

That plays into why I came here to West Virginia, not to look inward but to look outward and address the inward.

“I want to be a player who is about winning now. Before, you want to chase the stats. I think everyone does deep down, everyone is transfixed on his own stat line. But I just wanted to be part of winning for a change and give up on myself for a collective goal and try to chase something special.”

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BIG 12 MEN'S PREVIEW

Big 12 enters season with some heavy hitters at the top

Associated Press

The Big 12 has arguably been the best conference in college basketball, winning two of the past four national championships while getting at least seven teams into the NCAA tournament seven times in the last 10 years.

The addition of four new schools, three of which have recent NCAA tournament appearances, may end the argument.

"The league is a monster and it's been a monster for a long time," Kansas coach Bill Self said. "Everybody is good."

It's been that way for a while.

The conference tied for the most NCAA tournament berths with eight last spring and won consecutive championships — by Baylor and Kansas — before UConn went back to back the last two years.

Kansas has been a perennial favorite and is No. 1 in The Associated Press Top 25 preseason poll. No. 4 Houston, No. 5 Iowa State, No. 8 Baylor and No. 20 Cincinnati also were ranked.

No. 10 Arizona gives the Big 12 five of the top 10 teams in the preseason poll. Fellow new arrivals



AP photo

Kansas center Hunter Dickinson (right) averaged 17.9 points and 10.9 rebounds last season. He was named the league's preseason player of the year.

Arizona State, Colorado and Utah also make the conference stronger, potentially putting the Big 12 in position for a massive haul when NCAA tournament teams are announced on Selection Sunday.

"Every single night you're playing against old players, talented players, smart players and elite coaching, and as difficult and challenging as that is, that's awesome," Cincinnati coach Wes Miller said. "It helps you elevate your coaching, helps you elevate your program and what you're doing and how you do them. I think that experience is awesome."

Top-ranked Jayhawks

Kansas was the preseason No. 1 a year ago and fell short of expectations, knocked out in the second round of the NCAA tournament.

Self retooled his roster, adding shooters and athleticism to play around All-American Hunter Dickinson. Self hit the transfer portal hard, adding several key players, including A.J. Storr, who averaged 16.8 points at Wisconsin, and Zeke Mayo, who averaged nearly 19 per game for South Dakota State.

Mixed with a stellar recruiting class and a veteran backcourt, the Jayhawks again should be a

Preseason all-Big 12 first team

Caleb Love, Arizona
LJ Cryer, Houston
J'Wan Roberts, Houston
Tamin Lipsey, Iowa State
Hunter Dickinson, Kansas

Preseason all-Big 12 second team

Norchad Omier, Baylor
Jeremy Roach, Baylor
Keshon Gilbert, Iowa State
Dajuan Harris Jr., Kansas
Coleman Hawkins, K-State

Preseason Player of the Year:

Hunter Dickinson, Kansas

Preseason Co-Newcomer of the Year:

Jeremy Roach, Baylor

Preseason Co-Newcomer of the Year:

Coleman Hawkins, Kansas State

Preseason Freshman of the Year:

VJ Edgcombe, Baylor

favorite to win the Big 12 title and make a March Madness run.

Upper tier

Kansas will have plenty of competition from the deep, talented Big 12.

Houston has reached at least the Sweet 16 four straight seasons, including a trip to the 2021 Final Four. The Cougars have four starters back from last year's Sweet 16 team, led by dynamic guard L.J. Cryer.

Iowa State has its highest preseason ranking ever and three starters back from last year's team, which had the second-most wins in program history. Tamin Lipsey is one of the nation's most versatile point guards, able to do a little of everything.

Baylor lost four starters, but coach Scott Drew filled the holes with a strong transfer class. The group includes two players with Final Four experience, Jeremy Roach from Duke and former Miami forward Norchad Omier.

Arizona got a huge boost when high-scoring guard Caleb Love opted to return instead of leaving for the NBA. The Wildcats have a solid returning core and coach Tommy Lloyd filled holes via the transfer portal, including Oakland forward Trey Townsend.

Cincinnati returns its top three scorers as

the Bearcats attempt to reach the NCAA Tournament for the first time since 2019.

Keep an eye on

** Texas Tech lost its top two scorers, but coach Grant McCasland has a rosters full of shooters who can keep the Red Raiders in almost any game.

** Kansas State missed the NCAA tournament last season after making an Elite Eight run the year before, but coach Jerome Tang has the Wildcats poised to make another run by beefing up the roster through the portal, including former Illinois big man Coleman Hawkins.

** Arizona State coach Bobby Hurley has one of his best recruiting classes, headlined by five-star big man Jayden Quaintance. The additions of Alston Mason (Missouri State) and BJ Freeman (Milwaukee) give the Sun Devils two proven scorers.

** BYU always has shooters and this season, the first under coach Kevin Young, will be no different.

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Winds of change: College basketball enters new world following realignment

Very little unchanged outside of UConn being talented once again

Associated Press

College basketball has undergone a massive upheaval in a short time.

The transfer portal has created what amounts to free agency, with players switching teams like wardrobe changes at a Broadway show and forcing coaches to rebuild their rosters annually.

Name, image and likeness compensation deals have changed the game off the court, providing financial opportunities for athletes that weren't there just a few years ago while adding another layer of recruiting and retention headaches to coaching staffs. Extra eligibility for players because of the pandemic impacted rosters, too.

The latest jolt: Conference realignment, which has shifted — consolidated? — power in college hoops.

Well, maybe outside of two-time reigning champion UConn.

"I don't know what business anybody has been in where there hasn't been significant changes over time if

you've been in the business for three or four decades," said Bill Self, coach at top-ranked Kansas. "We're going through one of those changes now and people probably aren't as comfortable with the change — as I'm not, either — but I do think we'll get through it and it'll balance out, and we'll be at a place that we're much more comfortable in a short amount of time."

The latest realignment round, namely a contraction and eventual re-expansion of the Pac-12, started as a slow burn. Texas and Oklahoma kicked things off by leaving the Big 12 for the Southeastern Conference, then longtime Pac-12 rivals USC and UCLA bolted to the Big Ten.

Colorado ignited a flurry of further Pac-12 defections by opting to leave for the Big 12, a move that persuaded Arizona, Arizona State and Utah to join the Buffaloes. Oregon and Washington left for the Big Ten. California and Stanford followed suit,



AP photo

UConn coach Danny Hurley has led the Huskies to the 2023 and 2024 national championships.

heading off to the Atlantic Coast Conference.

That left Washington State and Oregon State as the only remainders of the "Conference of Champions." All of these changes took effect this summer, setting up a season of change in college sports.

The Pac-12 has since announced a rebuild, mostly by raiding the Mountain West Conference, causing a ripple effect. Even longtime holdout Gonzaga plans to leave the West Coast Conference for the new Pac-12 in 2026.

The jumbling has

forged four massive conferences with nearly coast-to-coast footprints, adding depth and talent to already-strong conferences. The changes also have forced coaches to adjust, while fans might need scorecards to remember who's playing where.

"Sometimes new is exciting," Michigan State coach Tom Izzo said. "Sometimes we want to be stuck in our ways, but we're not going to be able to be stuck in our ways, so I'm going to embrace that part."

Tony Bennett took the opposite route. The

longtime Virginia coach followed the footsteps of Villanova's Jay Wright two years ago by walking away from the sport at a relatively young age of 55. Bennett won a national championship in 2019, but grew weary of the 24-hour merry-go-round that college coaching has become and retired less than a month before Virginia's opener next week.

"The game and college athletics is not in a healthy spot and there needs to be change," Bennett said, calling himself a square peg in a round hole. "I think I was equipped to do the job

here the old way. That's who I am and that's how it was. My staff has buoyed me along to get to this point, but there needs to be change."

UConn's Dan Hurley has flourished in the changing winds.

Hurley won his first championship in 2022, retooled his roster and did it again. After flirting with the Los Angeles Lakers' job, he had to rebuild the roster again — forward Alex Karaban is the only returning starter — but has what he calls his deepest roster as the Huskies try to become the first team to win three consecutive national titles since John Wooden-led UCLA won its seventh straight in 1973.

"I owe it to the people that invest in me and invest in these players to literally drive the people around to you places that they don't think they can get to in such a pathological, sick, obsessive way that you're just pursuing championships so hard," Hurley said.

Every team in the country is pursuing that coveted national title. It's just many will be doing it from new conferences in this era of turmoil.

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TRANSFER PORTAL IMPACT

Where the top transfers in college basketball have landed

Associated Press

After Dusty May left Florida Atlantic to take over Michigan's program, plenty of the top remaining players from the Owls' 2023 Final Four team departed as well.

But they didn't all follow their former coach to Ann Arbor. They scattered to various programs.

Florida Atlantic's top four scorers from last season – all of whom had vital roles during the Owls' Final Four run a year earlier – are now playing elsewhere. They're among the most notable of the hundreds of transfers on college basketball rosters across the country.

In the era of the transfer portal, Florida Atlantic's ability to keep the nucleus of its Final Four team together for one more year was remarkable. The team's eventual breakup after its 2024 NCAA Tournament first-round overtime loss to Northwestern seemed inevitable.

May's first Michigan team will include Vladislav Goldin, a 7-foot-1 center who made 106 starts at Florida Atlantic and posted double-figure



AP photo

Former Illinois forward Coleman Hawkins is now at Kansas State. He averaged 12.1 points and 6.1 rebounds per game last season with the Illini.

scoring averages each of the last two seasons. After playing in the NCAA Tournament the last two years at FAU, Goldin believes he's capable of getting back there at Michigan.

"This team is probably the most talented I have ever played on, so many talented guys," Goldin told reporters this off-season. "It's insane talent. I've never seen it before."

Some of Goldin's other Florida Atlantic team-

mates opted to go on their own.

Johnell Davis, who led Florida Atlantic in scoring each of the last two seasons, will be playing for John Calipari at No. 16 Arkansas.

"He's a Hall of Fame coach and he wins everywhere he goes," Davis told reporters. "I'm excited to play for him."

Nick Boyd transferred to San Diego State, the team that ended Florida Atlantic's 2023 Cinder-

ella national title hopes with a Lamont Butler buzzer beater in the NCAA semifinals. Alijah Martin, who scored 26 points in that Final Four loss to San Diego State, transferred to Florida.

Here's a look at some of the other most notable transfers in college basketball this season. Their former schools are in parentheses.

** Oumar Ballou, C, Indiana (Arizona)

The 7-footer arrives at No. 17 Indiana after playing four seasons at Arizona. Ballou earned first-team all-Pac-12 honors each of the last two seasons. He averaged 12.9 points and 10.1 rebounds last season after collecting 14.2 points and 8.6 rebounds per game in 2022-23. Ballou has averaged 1.3 blocks per game each of the last two seasons.

** Tucker DeVries, G/F, West Virginia (Drake)

When West Virginia hired coach Darien DeVries away from Drake, his son followed him to Morgantown. DeVries, who is 6-foot-7, was named the Larry Bird Missouri Valley Conference player of the year and was the league

tournament's most outstanding player each of the last two seasons. He ranked 10th in Division I in scoring (21.6) last season and was the only Division I player to average at least 20 points, 6 rebounds, 3 assists and 1.5 steals per game. That followed a 2022-23 season in which he had 18.6 points per game.

** Coleman Hawkins, F, Kansas State (Illinois)

Hawkins was an Associated Press all-Big Ten second-team selection last season in his fourth year at Illinois. He averaged 12.1 points, 6.1 rebounds, 2.7 assists, 1.5 steals and 1.1 blocks. Big 12 coaches have selected him as the league's preseason co-newcomer of the year. Hawkins declared for the draft last spring and participated in the NBA Draft Combine before deciding to play one more season of college basketball.

** Great Osobor, F, Washington (Utah State)

Osobor comes to Washington after playing two seasons at Montana State and one at Utah State. He earned honorable mention on the AP All-America team last season and was named the Mountain

West Conference's player of the year and newcomer of the year. The 6-8 forward collected 17.7 points per game and 9 rebounds per game while shooting 57.7% from the floor at Utah State.

** Kadary Richmond, G, St. John's (Seton Hall)

After earning first-team all-Big East honors from the league's coaches and second-team honors from the AP while playing for Seton Hall last year, Richmond stayed in the conference but switched schools. The 6-6 guard played one season at Syracuse before spending three seasons at Seton Hall. Richmond had 15.7 points, 7 rebounds, 5.1 assists and 2.2 steals per game last season.

** Jeremy Roach, G, Baylor (Duke)

This 6-2 fifth-year senior was selected as the Big 12's preseason co-newcomer of the year along with Hawkins. He joins No. 8 Baylor after making 108 career starts at Duke. Roach was a Duke team captain each of the last two seasons. Roach averaged 14 points per game last season, 13.6 in 2022-23, 8.6 in 2021-22 and 8.7 in 2020-21.

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No. 16 WVU enters campaign with higher expectations

Four starters return from 25-win season

BY JUSTIN JACKSON

JJackson@DominionPost.com

The facts and figures are in. They all point to Mark Kellogg making an instant impact in his first season as the WVU women's basketball coach.

Now, what does he do for an encore?

"We're back at it and excited and ready for the opportunity that lays ahead for our basketball program," Kellogg said. "I think the goal and expectations, at least outside of the program, are maybe a little different than they were a year ago."

No kidding.

The Mountaineers will open the season as the 16th-ranked team in the country — their highest preseason ranking since the 2017-18 season — following a 25-8 campaign that ended in the second round of the NCAA tournament.

Four starters return, including all-Big 12 first-teamer J.J. Quinerly, who enters her senior season with 1,364 points, 231 steals and was named the conference's defensive player of the year a season ago.

"She had a fantastic year," Kellogg said. "J.J. set some new goals for herself. The more comfortable you get, I use the term playing free of mind, it allows you to slow your mind and react a little bit more."

"When you can do that,



The Dominion Post file photo

WVU forward Kyah Watson averaged 8.0 points and 6.4 rebounds for the Mountaineers last season. She also finished with 78 steals and three double-doubles.

you can be at your best and I think that's where J.J. is right now."

Since the NCAA women's tournament expanded to 64 — and now 68 — teams, the Mountaineers have never advanced past the second round.

Quinerly said that's definitely a goal the team has set this season, to reach a higher level, but she won't exactly be alone if WVU is able to accomplish it.

Joining her in the backcourt is junior Jordan Harrison, who was terrific last season while finishing second in the

Big 12 with 173 assists.

Harrison also averaged 13.5 points per game and finished with 96 steals, just one behind Quinerly.

"I don't think we really had to learn about each other, because we both play the same kind of game," Quinerly said of Harrison. "We both love to get to the rim and look for our teammates. We both don't shoot 3-pointers as much as we need to. I think our chemistry just immediately happened."

Kyah Watson and Kylee Blacksten both started all 33 games last

season.

Watson, a versatile forward finished third on the team with 78 steals. She also averaged 8.0 points and led the team with 6.4 rebounds per game. Watson had three double-doubles last season.

"Kyah has actually been really good and is looking to score more than she did a year ago," Kellogg said. "She would kind of fall by the way side (in scoring) last year. She's been much more aggressive and we've been on her to become more of a scorer."

Kellogg's recruiting haul just may have added three impact pieces to the roster.

That begins with Auburn transfer guard Sydney Shaw, who established herself as a top-level scorer this summer, when WVU went on its foreign exhibition tour of Italy and Croatia. Shaw led the team in scoring at 20.3 points per game in those three exhibition games.

"She needs to be an impact-type player for us," Kellogg said of Shaw. "What we've seen, so far, tells us that should be the

case. It gives us another threat and Sydney has been an elite shooter up to this point.

"She plays with some swagger about her. She's playing freely right now, which is what we want from her."

Then there are freshmen Jordan Thomas and Destiny Agubata.

Both are top 100 recruits, with Thomas bringing a lot of size in her 6-foot-3 frame that will help the Mountaineers become a better rebounding team.

That was the one area Kellogg knew his team had to be better at in his second season. The Mountaineers finished last in the Big 12 last season.

"Jordan Thomas might have been our second-leading scorer over in Europe," Kellogg said. "She's a bigger body, which we desperately needed. We knew that was the area we had to be better at. We have to be able to bang around with some of the other teams in the Big 12."

WVU's full-court pressing defense was the Mountaineers' strength last season. The press led to 23.6 turnovers forced per game, which was the third-most in the country.

Can it be better in Year 2 under Kellogg?

"Other teams may have scouted it now, but our pressure is really hard to get comfortable with," Harrison said. "I feel like our press is still going to be effective. Our pressure is too hard to practice for."

WVU opens the season inside the Coliseum on Nov. 5, against Towson.



Mark Kellogg

AGE: 48

COACHING CAREER: In his first season at West Virginia, Kellogg led the Mountaineers to a 25-8 record and a trip to the second round of the NCAA tournament. WVU finished tied for fourth in the Big 12 last season. His full-court-pressing style saw the Mountaineers finish third in the country in turnovers forced. Coached eight seasons at Ste-

phen F. Austin, where he won 195 games and advanced to two NCAA tournaments. Including his stops at Division II schools, Kellogg has won 470 games and owns a 78.6 winning percentage. Led West Texas A&M to the Division II national championship game in 2014 and a trip to the Elite Eight in 2015.

CONTRACT: Signed a five-year deal at WVU in 2023 that runs through the end of the of the 2027-28 season. He will earn a base salary of \$3 million over those five seasons. For the 2024-25 season, Kellogg will make \$575,000 in base salary.

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WVU point guard Jordan Harrison

Benjamin Powell/The Dominion Post

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Senior
Menifee, CA



#4
Destiny Agubata
Guard 5'11"
Freshman
Moreno Valley, CA



#5
Sydney Shaw
Guard 5'9"
Junior
Miami, FL



#8
Danelle Arigbabu
Freshman 6'4"
Senior
Berlin Germany



#10
Jordan Harrison
Guard 5'6"
Junior
Oklahoma City, OK



#11
JJ Quinerly
Guard 5'8"
Senior
Norfolk, VA



#14
Kylee Blacksten
Forward 6'3"
5th
Colorado Springs, CO



#17
Feryal Defne Atli
Guard 5'7"
Freshman
Mersin, Turkey



#22
Zye Nugent
Guard 5'7"
R-Senior
Denison, TX



#23
Jordan Thomas
Forward 6'3"
Freshman
Carrollton, TX



#24
Ashala Montgomery
Guard 5'10"
r-Junior
Madison, WI



#32
Kyah Watson
Guard 5'10"
Senior
Rapid City, SD



#33
Tirzah Moore
Forward 6'0"
Senior
Oklahoma City, OK



#37
Celia Riviere
Freshman 6'3"
Junior
Paris, France

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Quinerly wants to cap career by taking WVU to new heights

WVU guard looks to become a better 3-point shooter

BY JUSTIN JACKSON

JJackson@DominionPost.com

Oh the things J.J. Quinerly has experienced in her college career.

Where Quinerly now sits as one of the most recognizable and feared players in the Big 12, that didn't happen overnight.

Her final season of college basketball will be just the first time she's entered a season with the same coach.

"With this being my second year with coach (Mark) Kellogg, I kind of feel like a sophomore there," Quinerly said. "I'm definitely getting old, though. I've been here a long time."

Her journey to a shot at the WNBA — Quinerly's 2025 projections are all over the board, from late first round to a third-round selection — is just 30-some games away.

At this point, you'd think there is little else for Quinerly to improve upon.

Her defensive skills led her to being named the



The Dominion Post file photo

WVU guard J.J. Quinerly has scored 1,364 points and added 238 assists and 231 steals during her career with the Mountaineers.

Big 12 Defensive Player of the Year last season.

Her offensive skills will eventually put her in the school's all-time top 20 in both points and assists.

She also may become just the fourth WVU women's player to score 2,000 career points.

"Her name has some recognition now," Kellogg said. "She's as talented as any guard in the country."

To Quinerly, there is never a good time to cash

in. Her thoughts are always of improving as a player and how she can make the Mountaineers a better team.

It's with that in mind, Quinerly took on her latest offseason project: To become a better 3-point shooter.

She was 14th in the Big 12 last season, connecting on a career-high 55 shots from behind the arc, still 45 behind the leader.

"I've been working a lot on getting (3-pointers)

off a lot quicker," Quinerly said. "I've got to get to my spots where I know I can shoot the ball confidently.

"I hesitate when I shoot, so I've definitely been working on that."

Quinerly connected on 34.4% of her 3-point attempts last season. In comparison, that's not leaps and bounds behind last season's leader, Caitlin Clark, who connected on 38% of her 3-point attempts.

The difference is Clark

averaged 5.2 3-pointers per game, while Quinerly averaged less than two.

"I'm getting there," Quinerly said. "I have the confidence now just to shoot them. I just have to see a few go in. I have to have that mindset of looking for it. I think my mechanics are fine. I had to get my release quicker, which I've done that."

There is no telling what a big senior season could do for the WVU guard in that the women's game is at an all-time high in national exposure.

The 16th-ranked Mountaineers are scheduled to have four games nationally televised this season — they had none in the regular season a year ago — and a fifth game scheduled for ESPNU.

While Quinerly is well known throughout the Big 12, this could be an opportunity for the Norfolk, Va. native to get her name and talents out on a national showcase.

By most accounts, that is not exactly in Quinerly's comfort zone. She's never once asked to become the face of the program, and she's fine with letting her play speak for itself.

"We're working on

that," Kellogg said. "We need to promote her more. She needs to promote herself.

"I've said it many times before, she's an unassuming superstar. That's fantastic at times, but can also be detrimental. She's not a huge social media person. That's not her personality."

But her goals have remained consistent.

With a successful season, the Mountaineers could find themselves in a position to host a regional in the NCAA tournament, something no WVU program has accomplished in the current format.

She wants to become the school's all-time leader in steals, but needs a whopping 125 of them this season to get there. If she does it, Quinerly would set the school's single-season record, too.

It could be the perfect finish to a career that's seen just about everything else.

"All the things I've accomplished at this school, I think I've done some great things and I can't wait to keep it going," Quinerly said. "I'm just excited to get this season going."

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BIG 12 WOMEN'S PREVIEW

Some familiar teams will contend for Big 12 supremacy

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — The Big 12 Conference may have lost longtime members Oklahoma and Texas and welcomed four new teams this season, but there are still a bunch of familiar women's basketball programs that are expected to contend for the title in its first year as a 16-team league.

Those familiar programs have some familiar faces, too.

No. 13 Kansas State was the pick of the coaches to win the league, thanks largely to the return of preseason All-Big 12 picks Ayoka Lee and Serena Sundell. Eighth-ranked Iowa State, led by the returning stars Audi Crooks and Emily Ryan, had the second-most votes while No. 12 Baylor, TCU and No. 16 West Virginia also received plenty of preseason praise.

Those are all schools that have called the Big 12 home for years. And while they are happy to have Arizona, Arizona State, Utah and Colorado joining the mix, they don't intend to give up their spots in the confer-



AP photo

Kansas State center Ayoka Lee averaged 22.0 points and 10.3 rebounds per game last season.

ence hierarchy any time soon.

"I always felt if you were good enough to win the Big 12 championship, you're good enough to go to the Final Four and compete for a national championship, and obviously that remains," said Kansas coach Brandon Schneider, who has led the Jayhawks to the second round of the NCAA Tournament two of the past three years.

"I've also believed for a long time, if you talk about leagues across the country, none is more competitive than our league."

Texas won the wom-

en's Big 12 Tournament title two of the past three years, and Oklahoma has long been one of the nation's premier programs. But even without them, the conference is expected to be one of the toughest in the nation. It has four of the top 16 teams in the preseason AP Top 25 poll for the first time since the 2008 season.

TCU and Utah could push their way into the poll in a hurry, too. The Horned Frogs feature star shooter Madison Conner and the nation's No. 1-ranked transfer in Hailey Van Lith, while Utah is led by Gianna Kneepkens, a preseason

Preseason all-Big 12 team

J.J. Quinerly, West Virginia
Sarah Andrews, Baylor
Aaronette Vonleh, Baylor
Kaitlin Peterson, UCF
Audi Crooks, Iowa State
S'Mya Nichols, Kansas
Ayoka Lee, K-State
Serena Sundell, K-State
Hailey Van Lith, TCU
Gianna Kneepkens, Utah

Preseason Player of the Year: Ayoka Lee, Kansas State

Preseason Co-Newcomer of the Year: Aaronette Vonleh, Baylor

Preseason Co-Newcomer of the Year: Hailey Van Lith, TCU

Preseason Freshman of the Year: Tabitha Betson, Colorado

All-Big 12 selection.

"We've advanced in the NCAA Tournament the last two years," Utah coach Lynne Roberts said. "I'm hopeful even though we've been on the West Coast, people are still conscious of what we've achieved."

Title tilt time

The women's Big 12

title game will be at the T-Mobile Center for the second consecutive season but shift from Tuesday night, the eve of the men's tournament last season, to Sunday. If BYU makes the game, it would be pushed back to Monday.

"The championship last year at T-Mobile was incredible," said Big 12 Commissioner Brett Yor-mark, who moved the journey from the smaller, antiquated nearby Municipal Auditorium to the same venue used by the men's tournament. "We go on sale later this week for ticket sales and I expect those to grow exponentially."

Familiar faces, new places

In the era of the transfer portal, a number of Big 12 players shuffled around within the conference after last season, and that means they will be facing their old teams — and many old teammates — over the next four months.

Aaronette Vonleh started every game for Colorado last season but is now playing for Baylor. Ashley Cheva-

lier spent last season at Texas Tech but will play for Houston. Hannah Gusters was Oklahoma State's top scorer last season before heading to UCF, while Lior Garzon started 30 games for the Cowgirls but left for the Buffaloes.

Olympic medalist arrives

Van Lith, who played at Louisville and LSU before transferring to TCU for her final season, spent the summer as part of the 3x3 team representing the U.S. at the Paris Olympics. She helped the Americans come away with a bronze medal.

Her extensive experience in the 3x3 game, where pick-and-rolls play a big part in scoring, should help Van Lith transition into Horned Frogs coach Mark Campbell's offensive system — especially with 6-foot-7 Sedona Prince to work off in the post.

"One of the main reasons I wanted to come to TCU is the offensive system," Van Lith said. "It will push me to get better."



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NATIONAL PREVIEW

South Carolina looks for a repeat, but UConn, USC not far behind

Associated Press

Dawn Staley and South Carolina ran through last season undefeated on the way to the school's third national championship. With a lot of that squad back, there is good reason to think the Gamecocks could repeat.

Standing in their way could be a healthy UConn led by Paige Bueckers or JuJu Watkins and USC, which added some stellar transfers to help out the sensational sophomore. Those two preseason All-Americans hope to pick up the momentum from last season that was spearheaded by Caitlin Clark and Angel Reese and led to record ratings and attendance for the NCAA tournament.

"I know we lost some great ones in Angel and Caitlin, but we gained so much more," Staley said. "We gained so much more talent, skill set and marketability. I'm really looking forward to it. I'm glad it happened during a time in which I can attest to it, I can share with other people who are just now tuning in."

There are a host of other teams including Texas, UCLA and Notre Dame that also could challenge for the title. UConn was the last team to win back-to-back championships, winning four straight titles from 2013-16. South Carolina hopes to buck that trend and get to Tampa for the Final Four in April.

Staley's squad, which is No. 1 in the preseason AP poll, is going for its third national title in four years. The Gamecocks completed the sport's first undefeated season at 38-0 since UConn completed a perfect



AP photo

USC guard JuJu Watkins averaged 27.1 points and 7.3 rebounds per game as a freshman last season.

run to the championship in 2016. South Carolina's main loss from last season was 6-foot-7 center-piece Kamilla Cardoso, the team's top scorer and rebounder.

The Gamecocks are also missing junior Ashlyn Watkins, a 6-3 defender who led the SEC with 91 blocked shots. She was suspended from the program following her arrest on Aug. 31 for assault and kidnapping.

The season gets under-

way on Nov. 4 with a pair of games in Paris. Last season, the Gamecocks routed Notre Dame in the French capital. This year there's a double-header with No. 3 USC playing No. 20 Ole Miss and No. 17 Louisville facing No. 5 UCLA.

Realignment

There have been major power shifts in conference affiliation, with Texas and Oklahoma now in the SEC while

USC and UCLA are in the Big Ten. With South Carolina, LSU and now Texas and Oklahoma, the SEC has four of the top 10 teams in the pre-season poll.

ACL recovery

UConn, Texas and Notre Dame all have key players who missed at least parts of last season to recover from ACL injuries. Azzi Fudd of the Huskies, Rori Harmon of the Longhorns and Olivia Miles of the Irish all have been cleared to return. They are three of the top players in the country when healthy and provide their teams will leadership at guard.

Fudd still has a little bit to go before she's back to full strength, tell-

ing media at Big East media day that she does see the light at the end of the tunnel for her recovery.

Replacing legends

Longtime assistants Kate Paye at Stanford and Jan Jensen at Iowa took over their programs after head coaches Tara VanDerveer and Lisa Bluder, respectively, retired at the end of last season. Neither expects to change much as far as how the teams will play and while both are just outside the Top 25, it wouldn't be a shock to see them ranked soon.

Changing schools

The transfer portal was extremely active again in women's basketball with hundreds

of players changing teams. No school was hit worse than Oregon State, which made a run to the Elite Eight last season before losing to South Carolina. With the Pac-12 dwindling to just two schools, the Beavers lost three of their starting five with Raegan Beers going to Oklahoma, Talia Von Oelhoffen to USC and Donovan Hunter to TCU.

Other impact transfers include Kiki Iriafeen (Stanford to USC); Georgia Amore went with her coach Kenny Brooks from Virginia Tech to Kentucky; and Hailey Van Lith changed schools for a second time since starting at Louisville, leaving LSU for TCU.



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NOV. 4	ROBERT MORRIS
NOV. 8	UMASS
NOV. 15	at PITT
NOV. 20	IONA
NOV. 27	vs. GONZAGA
NOV. 28	vs. INDIANA OR LOUISVILLE
NOV. 29	vs. ARIZONA, DAVIDSON, OKLAHOMA OR PROVIDENCE
DEC. 6	GEORGETOWN
DEC. 10	NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL
DEC. 14	BETHUNE-COOKMAN
DEC. 22	MERCYHURST
DEC. 31	at KANSAS
JAN. 4	OKLAHOMA STATE
JAN. 7	ARIZONA
JAN. 12	at COLORADO
JAN. 15	at HOUSTON
JAN. 18	IOWA STATE
JAN. 21	ARIZONA STATE
JAN. 25	at KANSAS STATE
JAN. 29	HOUSTON
FEB. 2	at CINCINNATI
FEB. 5	at TCU
FEB. 8	UTAH
FEB. 11	BYU
FEB. 15	at BAYLOR
FEB. 19	CINCINNATI
FEB. 22	at TEXAS TECH
FEB. 25	TCU
MAR. 1	at BYU
MAR. 4	at UTAH
MAR. 8	UCF
MAR. 11	BIG 12 TOURNAMENT

HOME AWAY

WEST VIRGINIA WOMEN'S BASKETBALL 2024-25 SCHEDULE



NOV. 5	TOWSON
NOV. 9	NIAGARA
NOV. 12	PITT
NOV. 15	TEXAS A&M
NOV. 19	BOWLING GREEN
NOV. 22	LAFAYETTE
NOV. 29	vs. HIGH POINT
NOV. 30	vs. BOISE STATE OR SOUTHERN ILLINOIS
DEC. 1	vs. BUTLER, NEW MEXICO SANTA CLARA OR TEXAS
DEC. 6	EAST TENNESSEE STATE
DEC. 15	at TEMPLE
DEC. 21	at COLORADO
JAN. 1	UCF
JAN. 4	BYU
JAN. 8	at TEXAS TECH
JAN. 11	at OKLAHOMA STATE
JAN. 15	COLORADO
JAN. 19	IOWA STATE
JAN. 22	at ARIZONA STATE
JAN. 25	at ARIZONA
FEB. 1	OKLAHOMA STATE
FEB. 5	KANSAS
FEB. 8	at HOUSTON
FEB. 11	at BAYLOR
FEB. 15	CINCINNATI
FEB. 17	KANSAS STATE
FEB. 23	at TCU
FEB. 26	UTAH
MAR. 1	at CINCINNATI
MAR. 5	BIG 12 TOURNAMENT

HOME AWAY