



Local

More winter weather headed this way

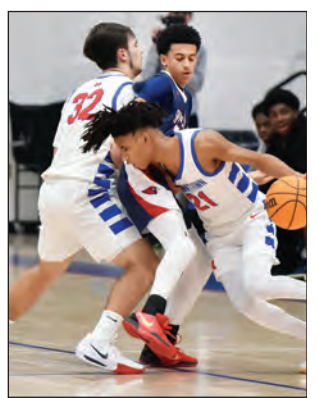
Page A-5



Boys basketball

Morgantown High's home win streak ends

Page B-1



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Thursday
January 16, 2025



High 32 **Low** 29
Complete forecast
Page A-8

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OBITUARIES

PAGE A-3

Hall, Judith
Dulin Jr., Norwood
Coombs Sr., William
Smith Jr., Franklin
Settles-Brown, LeAnna
Dalton, Gerald
Taylor, Llewellyn
Kesler, Ray

STATE

Democratic Party sues to block GOP replacement for de Soto

BY STEVEN ALLEN ADAMS
For The Dominion Post

CHARLESTON — A legal fight is brewing over whether to appoint a Republican or a Democrat to the West Virginia House of Delegates seat previously held by Joseph de Soto after the former delegate-elect switched parties prior to facing felony charges for threatening fellow lawmakers.

The West Virginia Democratic Party announced Wednesday that it has filed a writ of mandamus with the state Supreme Court of Appeals seeking the high court to require Gov. Patrick Morrisey to select a replacement for de Soto from three names submitted by the Berkeley County Democratic Executive Committee following a vote on Jan. 8 by the House to consider de Soto's 91st District seat forfeited.

"This is not just about one seat," said Del. Mike Pushkin, D-Kanawha, chairman of the West Virginia Democratic Party. "This is about defending the rule of law and ensuring that the people of District 91 have their rightful representation in the House of Delegates. The actions taken by the House of Delegates undermine the integrity of our democratic process."

The mandamus lawsuit — which names House Speaker Roger Hanshaw, R-Clay, and Morrisey — is requesting that the Supreme Court require the House of Delegates to either seat de Soto as lawfully elected delegate for the 91st District and administer the oath of office as soon as de Soto is able

SEE BLOCK, A-2

MON COUNTY

Commission reacts to new transportation chief

BY BEN CONLEY
BConley@DominionPost.com

Hope springs eternal in the hearts of Monongalia County Commissioners — at least when it comes to the county's on-again, off-again relationship with the West Virginia Division of Highways brass.

Members of the commission on Wednesday reacted to news that Jimmy Wriston is out

as the state's transportation secretary.

Todd Rumbaugh has been tapped by Governor Patrick Morrisey to fill that role.

"Mr. Rumbaugh is a long time WVDOH employee who has been serving as deputy commissioner of highways for construction," Morgantown Monongalia Metropolitan Planning Organization Executive Director Bill Austin

explained in an email to MPO Policy Board members. "I have had the privilege of working with him in the past and he seems amenable to working with local communities."

Commissioner Tom Bloom said he believes a change in leadership in Charleston as well as in Clarksburg, where new DOH District 4 Director Earl Gaskins is now in charge, will be positive for the county

as 2025 shapes up to be a big year for local road projects.

"I'm excited for a revitalization of communication and a working relationship to accomplish our mutual goals," Bloom said. "I believe next year will be called 'the year of road improvements in Monongalia County.'"

Bloom points to Green
SEE CHIEF A-2

A CLOSER LOOK AT WVU GUARANTEE



WVU graphic

A new last-dollar-in program, WVU Guarantee is open to resident undergraduate students across the WVU System — including at WVU Morgantown, WVU Institute of Technology and WVU Potomac State College — with a family adjusted gross income of \$65,000 or less who annually complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

BY DAVID BEARD
DBeard@DominionPost.com

Following Monday's announcement of its new financial aid effort, WVU Guarantee, the university elaborated on some aspects of the program in response to questions from The Dominion Post.

WVU Guarantee is open to resident undergraduate students at Morgantown, WVU Tech and Potomac State College whose family adjusted gross income is \$65,000 or less. Students must complete the annual FAFSA — Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

The program is "last dollar in," meaning it supplements other financial aid: Scholarships and federal aid. It will cover all remaining tuition and fees. For the fall 2025 program kick-off, students must complete their FAFSA forms by Aug. 1.

Upon admission, students are automatically



Submitted photo

Steve Hahn

evaluated for eligibility in WVU Guarantee and no further action is necessary — including waiting for the federal response to the FAFSA giving the family estimated contribution.

Interim Vice President for Enrollment Steve Hahn supplied the answers to our questions.

Annual program cost

"The investments in WVU Guarantee will vary from year to year based on the number of students who quali-

fy for the program and what other financial aid — federal and state grants, scholarships, etc. — those students are eligible to receive," Hahn said.

Because it's last dollar in, WVU Guarantee will look different for each qualifying individual resident student because each student has different financial needs.

"Hypothetically, when we apply our model to the current class already here, we find that more than 400 students would have benefited in some way from this new program and the cost of doing it would have been less than \$900,000 this year, for a ballpark median value to the student of about \$2,000 — but this is simply an average. Some will be less; some will be more."

Hahn said WVU is telling incoming and current resident students "that we will guarantee to close any gap, once

all other financial aid opportunities have been explored, to ensure uncovered tuition and fee costs don't keep anyone from coming to WVU or returning to WVU."

Could annual costs escalate?

We asked this question having in mind the PROMISE scholarship program, which began as a full-ride scholarship but over time had to be modified to include an award cap.

Hahn said that because WVU Guarantee is last dollar in, "the additional expenditure to make this guarantee is affordable and we don't see our cost structures changing sufficiently to necessitate a cap. Of course, if there would be significant structural changes made to the federal financial aid program or to our in-state aid programs, both outside of our control, we would need to assess in the light of these new

changes. But as of this time we don't foresee the need for a cap."

Funding source

"With WVU Guarantee, the university is making a new kind of investment in our students and, in turn, the Mountain State's future by realigning the resources we have. In doing so, we will ensure we are focused on the areas that will most immediately benefit and resonate with our students and their families. We view the financial investment as fairly minimal relative to the return to the students and our state."

In the short term, he said, WVU will implement WVU Guarantee using internal resources, and also explore the possibility of donor support.

WVU supports current students in a number of ways through the use of internal scholarships and other

SEE LOOK, A-2



INSIDE

LOCAL A-5 | OBITUARIES A-3 | OPINION A-4 | CROSSWORDS B-8 | COMICS B-8 | SPORTS B-1

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DISASTER

Fire destroys businesses on Frolic Lane



Ron Rittenhouse/The Dominion Post photos

DPNews@DominionPost.com

A fire broke out at 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, destroying Kash King Towing and Charlie's Auto Repair, two businesses working out of the same building at 56 Frolic Lane, off of Aaron's Creek Road.

Keith Seymour, who owns the building that housed the businesses, was out delivering firewood – and by the time he got back around 5 p.m., both businesses were fully engulfed, he said.

He praised Clinton District, Granville and Cheat Lake volunteer fire crews for their quick response and for keeping the flames away from a neighboring house.

The fire isn't suspicious in origin, he said, though the State Fire Marshal is still trying to determine the exact cause and assess the damage.

A total of eight cars and a motorcycle, as well as the building, were destroyed in the blaze.

Seymour said he vows to rebuild.

CONTACT

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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

Dominion Post.com

BLOCK

FROM PAGE A-1

to appear in the House Chamber as required by the state Constitution, or require Morrisey to accept the three placement recommendations for de Soto as submitted by the Berkeley County Democratic Executive Committee.

The lawsuit can be found at:

<https://embed.documentcloud.org/documents/25491965-wv-sca-wvdp-petition-for-mandamus-14jan2025/?embed=1>

“We urge the Governor to do the right thing, uphold the law, and appoint one of the nominees submitted by the Berkeley County Democratic Executive Committee,” Pushkin said.

A request for comment from Hanshaw and Morrisey was not returned.

The Berkeley County Democratic Executive Committee submitted the following names to Morrisey to succeed de Soto: Hedgesville residents David Michaels and Stephen Willingham, and Timothy Lee of Inwood.

During last week's one-day organization session of the Legislature, the House adopted House Resolution 4, declaring that de Soto's 91st District seat vacant after de Soto was unable to travel to Charleston to take his oath due to being placed on home confinement following felony charges of making terroristic threats to lawmakers in December.

De Soto was arrested on Dec. 12 after a West Vir-



Photo Courtesy/WV Supreme Court of Appeals

The West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals could determine whether a Republican or a Democrat is appointed to the House of Delegates seat of former delegate-elect Joseph de Soto.

ginia State Police investigation into threats made by de Soto to another person regarding several lawmakers stemming from a closed-door meeting of the House Republican caucus on Dec. 8, where members agreed to move forward with expulsion of de Soto over allegedly false claims about his military service. De Soto was placed on home confinement after posting a \$150,000 bond. A Berkeley County magistrate also submitted de Soto's case to a grand jury.

The state Constitution requires legislators to take their oath of office within the House Chamber: something de Soto is unable to do due to being on home confinement and with two protective orders from House members barring de Soto from the State Capitol Building

until 10 days following the conclusion of the 2025 regular legislative session, which ends on Saturday, April 12.

De Soto was elected in November as a Republican, but records from the Secretary of State's Office show that de Soto switched to a registered Democrat on Dec. 11 one day before his arrest. State Code 3-10-5 requires legislative vacancies to be filled by the governor from a list of three qualified individuals submitted by a political party executive committee of the same party of the office holder.

However, HR 4 makes the case that since de Soto was never seated as a member, never sworn in, and with his seat being considered forfeited, that means the seat remains a Republican seat, with the

Berkeley County Republican Executive Committee being able to submit three names to Morrisey to succeed de Soto.

Matt Herridge, chairman of the West Virginia Republican Party, confirmed Wednesday that the Berkeley County Republican Executive Committee was concluding its legislative vacancy nomination process for the 91st District this week and will submit its three nominees to the Governor's Office soon. Herridge said the state party supports HR 4.

“On this matter, we agree with the logic, precedent, and remedy detailed in HR 4, introduced by Speaker Hanshaw and adopted by the house last week,” Herridge said.

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

LOOK

FROM PAGE A-1

mechanisms that can and do shift around from year to year, he said. “In many ways, WVU Guarantee is an extension of the financial aid support we've already been providing on a large scale to ensure WVU remains affordable and accessible to West Virginia's students.

“This program simply formalizes that support for an important segment of our current and future student population. We believe that this represents a good use of our resources as we seek to expand access to higher education and, in doing so, change the trajectory of our students' futures and serve the needs of the state.”

What happens in tight budget years?

“We are enacting this program to remove bar-

riers to higher education for all the citizens of our state, and we hope that students who previously may not have seen WVU as an option for their education will now think of us. Whatever success we have in attracting those students will be additive to our budget position.”

Family income cap

WVU noted in Monday's program announcement that should a student's family AGI rise above the \$65,000 threshold after their initial enrollment as an undergraduate, WVU will continue to honor the program's benefits.

We asked for some elaboration on that, working from a hypothetical where a family's income suddenly rose from \$65,000 to \$265,000; and raised issues of fairness and subsidizing a student who no longer needs it.

Hahn said, “One of the hallmarks of our new

program is that it is a guarantee, and we are making a commitment to our students. We want our students to graduate and become fantastic, contributing West Virginia citizens. This requires a multi-year commitment, because that's how our students and parents plan. So, given the definition of a guarantee, the above situation [our hypothetical] could happen – and that is the price of offering a guarantee.”

Hahn noted that a more likely scenario is often the reverse: Students will fall below the AGI threshold later, due to a change in family or personal circumstances. “We would evaluate these students and use professional judgment to consider their candidacy for the program going forward.”

Loans

It initially appeared in the program materi-

als that the last-dollar-in aspect also included any federal loans that might result from the FAFSA application. We learned that this is not the case.

Hahn said, “WVU never requires students to take a loan and loans would not be required for tuition and university fees relative to the WVU Guarantee. So, we would apply the Guarantee without the need for loans.

“Some students may have additional scholarships or aid covering expenses like housing and meals, or it's possible that a loan would be used for these purposes. Even without the WVU Guarantee program, our student loan debt is lower than for similar schools, due to the affordability of our tuition and the aid already available to students.”

CHIEF

FROM PAGE A-1

Bag Road, the University Avenue/Collins Ferry roundabout, the temporary lights on Chaplin Hill at Exit 155, the new Morgantown Industrial Park access bridge, the Exit 155 interchange upgrades, the new Harmony Grove interchange and modifications to Willey Street as major projects that will either be under construction or make significant progress to that end in 2025.

“It's exciting to hear about our new DOT secretary. We're hoping to real-

ly hit the ground running with a lot of projects we have going on,” Commissioner Sean Sikora said.

In other news from Wednesday's meeting, Granville Mayor Patty Lewis provided an update on the forthcoming University Town Centre traffic lights that have been a topic of discussion since September 2021.

The lights will cost just over \$1 million split three ways between Granville, the county and developer WestRidge. They'll address two problem areas - one where University Town Centre Drive passes between Walmart and the

WVU Medicine facility, and another at the bottom of the hill between Granville Square and Sesame Drive, which provides access to Chick-fil-A, Wendy's, Panda Express, etc.

“All four pole foundations at the Walmart intersection have achieved the required depth. The rebar and anchor bolts were installed, concrete was poured and an independent concrete inspection is being conducted to make sure it meets all the cold weather requirements for curing,” Lewis said. “Blue and Gold Development, as a subcontractor, has started grading activities for the

increased turning radius at the Walmart intersection for the pedestrian crossing at that site.”

Foundation work at the Sesame Drive pole sites was expected to be complete this week, but has been slowed by the weather.

Lastly, the commission approved a request from Monongalia County Abandoned & Dilapidated Property Enforcement Agency to move properties at 16 Pond Road, 1 Red Bud Lane and 38 Dews Ave. to the complaint stage of the county's enforcement process.

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OBITUARIES

LeAnna Monique Settles-Brown

LeAnna Monique Settles-Brown held onto to life with serenity and a passion for family until GOD blessed her and awarded her with life in HEAVEN Thursday, January 9, 2025. After long-term sickness her pain has ended. GOD declared it was a time for healing, and He sent angels to escort LeAnna to the Kingdom of Heaven. They rejoiced and ascended to the 'highest ground'.



LeAnna was born March 25, 1979, in Uniontown, to proud parents, Tamarra Harris and Marvin Settles, Sr.

She attended Uniontown Senior High School. She later earned her GED and briefly attended West Virginia University.

Her love for all people and art was exemplified in her working career. Years of assisting customers and providing service as a cashier at Save A Lot, before enjoying a decade long position with Davis Lynch Glass Factory in Star City, Wyo., where she handled all processes including shipping and manufacturing ornamentals.

LeAnna adored her husband of 12 years, James P. "JP" Brown.

She leaves to cherish her husband of 12 years, James P. "JP" Brown; mother, Tamarra Har-

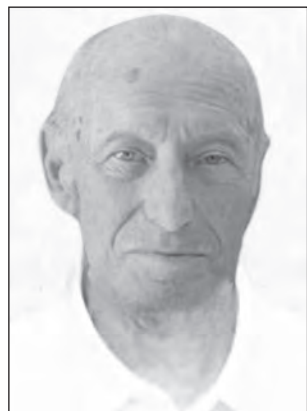
ris and stepfather, Craig, whom she admired and loved; her father, Marvin Settles, Sr.; children, Jenae Poole, Taryk Poole, Shailyn Poole, Avonna Brown, SuCora Brown, and Jamyz Brown; stepson, Jadon Frezzell; grandchildren, Chantz, Kinston, Sareniti, and Bella; brothers, Marvin Settles, Jr. and Justin (April) Settles; stepsiblings; grandmother, Leola Bryant; special aunt, Rose Thompson; other aunts, uncles, cousins, other relatives, and friends.

Friends will be received from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., the time of the funeral service, Saturday, January 18, in the LANTZ FUNERAL HOME, INC., 297 E. Main Street, Uniontown. Interment is private.

Condolences and floral tributes may be submitted through www.lantzfh.com

Llewellyn Alton Taylor

Llewellyn "Lee" Alton Taylor passed away Tuesday, January 14, 2025, at the age of 77. He was born to the late Pearly and Dorothy Gamble Taylor, in Morgantown, January 9, 1948.



In his youth, Lee moved to Youngstown, Ohio, where he spent many years employed at the steel mill. His strong work ethic never wavered, even after the mill's closure.

He continued to contribute to his community as a proud member of the Laborers Union Local #125 until his retirement.

Lee was the epitome of a handy man; he could always be found tinkering in his garage, and was never one to sit still. His hands, now at rest, have left a lasting imprint on the world that will never be forgotten.

Lee leaves behind a loving family: his brother, Gaylord Taylor; sister, Alberta McIe; daughters, Crystal, and Robin McK-

inney; five grandsons, three granddaughters, and five great-grandchildren.

He now joins his parents; his brother, Duane Taylor; his sisters, Alvada and Eldora Taylor; and his daughter, MeShell Watkins in eternal rest.

Friends and family are invited to gather at Fred L. Jenkins Funeral Home from 10 a.m. until the time of service at 12 noon Friday, January 17.

Condolences at fredjenkinsfuneralhome.com

Ray M. Kesler

Ray M. Kesler, 98, of Morgantown, passed away Sunday, January 12, 2025, in his home in Suncrest, where he resided for more than 60 years.

Friends and family will be received Saturday, January 25, in St. Thomas a Becket Episcopal Church, 75 Old Cheat Road, Morgantown from 11 a.m. until the time of the funeral service at 1 p.m., with the Rev. Michael Delk officiating. The service will be live streamed from the church website at <https://www.stthomasabecket.org> Following the funeral services, cremation services will be provided by Hastings Funeral Home.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the American Red Cross, P.O. Box 37839, Boone, IA 50037-0839.

A full obituary will appear in the Sunday edition of The Dominion Post.

Send condolences at www.hastingsfuneralhome.com



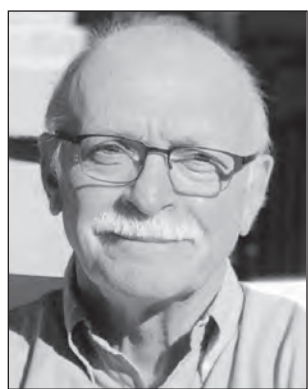
Norwood Franklin Dulin, Jr.

Norwood Franklin "Frank" Dulin, Jr. passed away in his home Thursday, December 26, 2024.

Frank was very well known for his brilliance, humor, generosity, kindness and drive to always be a better person. Frank graduated from West Virginia University with a degree in mining engineering, magna cum laude. He also was an accomplished mechanical engineer and was a certified professional engineer. He retired as vice president, Engineering at Swanson Industries, where he made key achievements to grow the business and became one of the majority owners of Swanson Industries and Morgantown Machine and Hydraulics.

Frank was a loving father, husband, brother, and son.

He was preceded in death by his father, Norwood Franklin Dulin; his mother, Mary Woodall Dulin Summers.



He leaves behind his wife, Kimmie Beard Dulin; two children, Matthew Christopher Dulin and Amy Richelle Dulin; grandson, William Perkins; and sister, Judy Verbosky. He is also survived by his previous wife, Ricki Dulin Gardner.

One of the quotes Frank said on a daily basis was: "If you do good things and live life the right way, good things will happen to you". Frank will be deeply missed by the many people he considered family and friends.

Judith Rhoda Chatfield Hall

Judith Rhoda Chatfield Hall, 93, of Morgantown, passed away peacefully, in her home, Monday, November 25, 2024. She was born in New York, N.Y., a daughter of the late Henry Chatfield and the late Sonia Sigberman Chatfield.

Friends and family will be received at Hastings Funeral Home, 153 Spruce Street, Morgantown, Saturday, January 18 from 3 p.m. until the Celebration of Life at 4 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made, in Judith's memory, to the Nature Conservancy of West Virginia, 435 Wilson Street, Elkins, WV 26241 (please write TNC West Virginia on the memo line) or at www.nature.org/donatewv; or the WVU Foundation- The Judith and John Hall Arts and Sciences Library Endowment (Fund # 3L157), 1 Waterfront Place 7th Floor, Morgantown, WV 26501.



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



Gerald Ray Dalton

Gerald Ray Dalton, 84, of Morgantown, passed away Monday, January 13, 2025, in his home. Gerald was born April 5, 1940, a son of the late Wilbur and Lucille Dalton.

Gerald enjoyed telling lifetime memories, driving and working on trucks/equipment, logging, and dirt track races. Gerald was first employed by Sterling Faucet as an over-the-road truck driver and then drove for Coastal Tank Lines.

In 1969, he purchased his first truck and became self-employed. In addition, he was a long-time business owner of a sawmill located on the Kingwood Pike.

Gerald is survived by his son, Nolan Dalton and wife Cheryl; daughter, Elizabeth "Liz" Dalton; sister, Carol Lantz and husband Gail; bro-

ther, Merle Dalton and wife Mary; niece and nephews, Mike Lantz, Willis Dalton and Carrie Dalton.

In addition to his parents, Gerald was preceded in death by his brother, Derald Gay Dalton.

Friends and family will be received from 3 to 8 p.m. Thursday, January 16, in Mt. Pleasant Church, 1700 Kingwood Pike, Morgantown, WV 26508, where visitation will continue from 11 a.m. until the time of the funeral service at 1 p.m. Friday, January 17, with Pastor Donna Dalton officiating and Kathy Dalton assisting. Interment will follow at Mt. Pleasant Cemetery.

Send condolences at hastingsfuneralhome.com



William Howard Coombs, Sr.

William "Bill" Howard Coombs, Sr., 99, of Morgantown, passed away Sunday, January 12, 2025, in Mon Health Medical Center. He was born March 20, 1925, in Morgantown, a son of the late Wilbur and Margaret Reiner Coombs.

Bill attended St. Paul Lutheran Church. He was a graduate of Morgantown High School and West Virginia University.

Bill served in the United States Army during World War II and received the Purple Heart.

He was formerly employed by the U.S. Forestry Department and opened Coombs Flowers with his wife, Agnes in 1952.

He was the past president of the West Virginia Region of FTD. He was the FTD Florist of The Year in 1978 and was the president of the Mid-Atlantic Florist Association in 1981. He also held membership in the Southern Retail Florist Association.

In his free time, he enjoyed reading, watching movies and gardening.

He was a member of the Suncrest Garden Club, Beaumont Dance Club and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

He is survived by his children, Anne Vineyard (Stott), Bill Coombs, Jr. (Karen), and Jim Coombs (JB); grandchildren, Lauren Byrer (Mark), John Coombs, Kathryn Heiskell (Skip), Christian Vineyard (Julie), Mike Coombs (Janet), Kaleb Blankenship; and nine great-grandchildren. Bill is also survived by his stepdaughter, Rebecca Glenn (Stan); his stepdaughter-in-law, Donna Prince; six step-grandchildren; and 19 step-great-grandchildren. He is also survived by several extended family members and friends, including Emil and Tobi, who were two exchange students that were like family to him.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his first wife of 52 years, Agnes Marie Miller Coombs; second wife, June B. Coombs; brother, Carl Coombs; his grandchild, Sean Coombs; and stepson, Larry Prince.

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



Memorial donations may be made, in honor of Bill's service to his country, to The Wounded Warrior Project at www.woundedwarriorproject.org Friends and family will be received at Hastings Funeral Home, 153 Spruce Street, Morgantown, from 4 to 8 p.m. Friday, January 17, and again from 10 until the time of the service at 11 a.m. Saturday, January 18, with the Rev. J.B. Blankenship-Coombs officiating. A committal service will take place at East Oak Grove Cemetery, with full military rites being conducted by VFW Post #9916, #548, and the United States Army.

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



With Sympathy

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Associated Press

Mediators herald Gaza ceasefire, hostage deal

DOHA, Qatar — Mediators say Israel and Hamas agreed to a ceasefire deal to pause the devastating 15-month war in the Gaza Strip, raising the possibility of winding down the deadliest and most destructive fighting between the bitter enemies. The three-phase deal, announced Wednesday in the Qatari capital, promises the release of dozens of hostages held by militants in Gaza and hundreds of Palestinian prisoners in Israel, and it would allow hundreds of thousands of displaced people in Gaza to return to what remains of their homes. It also would flood badly needed humanitarian aid into the devastated territory. Qatar's prime minister said the deal would go into effect on Sunday. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says final details still need ironing out.

Winds, arsonists complicate fight against LA-area wildfires as crews report progress

LOS ANGELES — Firefighters have reported significant gains against the two massive wildfires burning around Los Angeles while also extinguishing smaller blazes set by arsonists. The progress was reported Wednesday as a final round of windy, flame-fanning weather moved through Southern California. With winds picking up again, much of the nation's second-most populous metropolitan area was still on alert for new outbreaks and flareups from the fires that have killed at least 25 people and destroyed thousands of homes. Better conditions expected in the coming days should help fire crews make even more headway and allow residents to return to their neighborhoods to begin rebuilding.

EDITORIAL



Benjamin Powell/The Dominion Post

Patrick Morrisey is all smiles as he is sworn in as West Virginia's 37th governor Monday at the Capitol in Charleston.

Residents to count on W.Va.'s elected team

Gov. Patrick Morrisey gave us a peek at his inspiration when he touched on points from the presidential administrations of Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush during his inauguration ceremony Monday. Rather than Reagan's "shining city on a hill," Morrisey repeatedly referred to West Virginia as "that shining state in the mountains." Later, he appeared to give a nod to Bush's No Child Left Behind education initiative by saying we will aim to assure every child has a chance to thrive and that "We will leave no one behind."

It is encouraging to hear our new governor say he is focusing on hope — becoming economically competitive, doing right by our students AND those working in the public school system, continuing to attack the substance abuse epidemic and being a beacon of opportunity and prosperity for ALL.

Certainly, he has showed his willingness to get to work quickly on that which he believes is important for achieving those goals.

On Tuesday, in Washington, D.C., U.S. Sen. Jim Justice, R-W.Va., took the oath of office to join U.S. Sen. Shelley Moore Capito, R-W.Va., in getting to work for the Mountain State there.

Justice understands it is "time to set America on the right path," and that he has a job to do.

"Together, we can work in tandem to implement the changes that West Virginians demanded for our country at the ballot box in November," Capito said. "I'm excited for all he will accomplish as a Senator and look forward to the results we can deliver for the Mountain State as a unified team."

West Virginia's team — from our senior senator in the nation's capital to the greenest member of the House of Delegates in Charleston — knows what Mountain State residents expect of them. If they keep their focus on providing the hope, opportunity and prosperity about which Morrisey spoke, we will be a shining state in the mountains, indeed.

Forecast: blustery conditions to continue over the following areas....



The reality Hollywood can't change

We recall the catastrophic fires in Maui almost two years ago, then the horde of unusually violent hurricanes trashing Florida's west coast. To the surprise of many, those storms unleashed cataclysmic flooding in western North Carolina, up there in the mountains. All these extreme weather events were tied in part to warming temperatures. As for wiping out large parts of an entire civilization, though, nothing can match the wildfires torching community after community in and around Los Angeles.

But in the case of Los Angeles, the problem isn't just climate change. It's the climate itself.

Hollywood could build outdoor sets resembling New Guinea's tropical rainforests. But that didn't change the reality that California, as much of the West, is arid and has always been. Warming temperatures make it more arid.

Los Angeles is drier than Beirut. Sacramento is as dry as the Sahel, an African region bordering the Sahara Desert. Even San Francisco gets only a bit more rain than Chihuahua. Across the border in Reno, annual precipitation is seven inches. Florida and Louisiana can see that much rainfall in a day. Climate change threatens them, too, but with flooding.

These grim statistics were laid out almost 40 years ago by Marc Reisner in his masterpiece, "Cadillac Desert: The American West and Its Disappearing Water." He describes the parched reality of

our West and the extreme measures -- all those dams and irrigation projects -- taken to hide that fact.

In 1878, the explorer John Wesley Powell drew a line down the North American midsection, from Manitoba down through the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas and into Mexico. It was the "Hundredth Meridian" -- the 100th line of longitude west, dividing the humid East from the drier West.

Americans moving west tried to recreate the world of green lawns and golf courses left behind in Kentucky and Wisconsin. Deserts have their own beauty, but many didn't see it. For a long time, Reno banned water metering.

There was not a tree growing in what's now San Francisco when Spanish explorer Juan Manuel de Ayala sailed into the bay in 1775. "Today," Reisner wrote, "Golden Gate Park looks as if Virginia had mated with Borneo, thanks to water brought nearly two hundred miles by tunnel." The same kind of water system supplies the ravaged neighborhoods of Los Angeles.

And so the new inhabitants started off with an uphill climb to stave off and hide the West's natural dryness. But climate change is most certainly defeating many of these efforts as it makes dry



FROMA HARROP

areas dryer.

And climate scientists now fear that many places are getting hotter than their earlier models predicted. That seems to be especially the case in locations where large numbers of people live.

President-elect Donald Trump vows to undo President Joe Biden's ambitious agenda to address climate change and move the country -- and world -- away from planet-warming fossil fuels. Trump has shown himself useless in addressing this existential threat, denying it even exists.

California is obviously no stranger to calamitous fires. The 2018 Camp Fire in the Sierra Nevada foothills leveled the town of Paradise, destroying more than 18,000 structures and killing 85 people.

The Pacific Palisades, Altadena and other currently ravaged areas are densely populated. Their firefighting infrastructure was created to put out house fires, not massive conflagrations whipped by the Santa Ana winds.

Many burned-out residents valiantly vow to rebuild. Can they adjust to living in increasingly arid conditions? They will have to.

America, meanwhile, faces a new leadership in Washington pathologically hostile to confronting climate change. But even after the Trump era passes into bizarre memory, the American West will be arid. God made it that way.

Follow **Froma Harrop** on Twitter @FromaHarrop. She can be reached at fharrop@gmail.com.

Carter's kindest media eulogists were rough on Reagan

In all the somber coverage of Jimmy Carter's death, the audience could and should expect the tone of kindness that wafts over wakes and funerals. Each president served as leader of our nation, shouldering a great burden over a large country with an ever-enlarging government.

But sometimes the tributes grow a little too treacly. CBS reporter Lesley Stahl mourned during the state funeral in Washington that Carter was already unpopular when she became a White House correspondent in 1979. But she claimed Carter "ended up accomplishing so much more than we realized when he was president. He turns out not to have been a weak president at all."

America in 1980 was mired in inflation and a hostage crisis and the Soviet Union expanded into Afghanistan. But now we should pretend Carter didn't project weakness?

This is quite different from CBS when Ronald Reagan died in 2004. Within minutes of the news of Reagan's death hitting the television, CBS ran a

canned piece by reporter Jerry Bowen that hammered Reagan for getting a cozy home loan and "cashing in" with personal appearances after his presidency was over. It was a very cheap shot. It looks even cheaper with the post-presidential cash-ins by the Clintons and the Obamas.

A few days later, CBS "60 Minutes" veteran Morley Safer gruffly dismissed Reagan on Larry King's show on CNN: "I don't think history has any reason to be kind to him." Safer wanted History to be cemented in the leftist media's hostile first draft.

Ronald Reagan drew mostly positive or at least sensitive coverage when his time came. But we still found the Democrat itch coming through. Early on, there was this CNN on-screen text: "BY-PRODUCT OF 'REGANOMICS': HUGE BUDGET DEFICITS." ABC's Sam Don-



TIM GRAHAM

WITHIN MINUTES OF THE NEWS OF REAGAN'S DEATH HITTING THE TELEVISION, CBS RAN A CANNED PIECE BY REPORTER JERRY BOWEN THAT HAMMERED REAGAN FOR GETTING A COZY HOME LOAN AND "CASHING IN" WITH PERSONAL APPEARANCES AFTER HIS PRESIDENCY WAS OVER. IT WAS A VERY CHEAP SHOT.

aldson blamed the big deficit on Reagan for "stubbornly" refusing to raise taxes.

Later, Donaldson claimed if you said, "Mr. President, I'm down on my luck," he would literally give you the shirt off his back. And then he'd sit down in his undershirt and he'd sign legislation throwing your kids off school lunch programs, maybe your parents off Social Security, and of course the Welfare Queen off of welfare."

Associated Press reporter Beth Fouhy provided this less-than-objective analysis: "By persuading Congress to approve sweeping tax cuts for the

wealthy while slashing welfare benefits and other social services like the federal housing assistance program, Reagan was blamed for a huge surge in the nation's poor and homeless population."

Somehow both were true: Reagan exploded the deficit, and mercilessly cut off spending for the vulnerable. The allegations of "slashing" social spending were perpetually overwrought.

But the first AP dispatch upon Carter's death pitched Carter as a very special leader. Bill Barrow and Alex Sanz insisted, "Carter forged a path that still challenges political

assumptions and stands out among the 45 men who reached the nation's highest office. The 39th president leveraged his ambition with a keen intellect, deep religious faith and prodigious work ethic."

To these journalists who tout Carter as keen and deep and prodigious, whenever Carter is maligned in retrospect, he is misunderstood.

For political purposes, these historical images are mostly useful in terms of the political parties shaping their own image. Carter has long been a drag on the Democrat image, so trying to "correct" it is unsurprising.

Journalists have noted how Biden and Carter were each defeated on similar "misfortunes" like inflation and foreign crises. Uh-oh. Biden has reopened his party's wound of domestic ineptitude and global weakness. Lesley Stahl and Sam Donaldson can only accomplish so much.

Tim Graham is director of media analysis at the Media Research Center and executive editor of the blog NewsBusters.org.

CVB

Something for all in Mountaineer Country

HAPPY NEW YEAR! HERE IN MOUNTAINEER COUNTRY, WE ARE THRILLED TO WELCOME 2025 AND ALL OF THE EXCITING OPPORTUNITIES THAT COME ALONG WITH IT. Whether you want to avoid the cold and stay cozy inside, or get out and make the most of the winter months, there's something for everyone in Monongalia County. We've gathered a list of some of our favorite upcoming events to ensure you start the New Year off strong. From live music, unique tea classes and local farmers markets, there's truly something for everyone (and resolution) in Mountaineer Country.

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

Mountain Stage Concert, 7 p.m. Sunday

Experience an unforgettable evening of live music at this year's Mountain Stage. Hosted by Grammy Award winner Kathy Mattea, the event will feature a diverse lineup of folk, blues, country, indie rock and more. Don't miss performances by talented artists such as Jim Lauderdale, Sister Sadie, Crys Matthews, Jedd Hughes and Critton Hollow. The show takes place at 7 p.m. Sunday at the WVU Canady Creative Arts Center on Sunday. Tickets are available starting at just \$10. Don't miss the chance to watch an exceptional performance.

Tea Class: Chai Something New, 1 p.m. Jan. 25

Are you hoping to chai

something new in 2025? Antiquitea House has you covered. Learn about the different flavor profiles of chai tea and how it's different from other blends. Through this experimental class of "tea sipformation" guests can sample a range of chai teas, learn where they form, and see how they're blended and prepared. This is the perfect opportunity to find your next favorite warm drink to keep you cozy this winter. Whether you're passionate about tea or looking for a unique experience, don't forget to preregister for this event. Tickets are \$15 and guests can claim their spot in person or call ahead at 304-241-5237.

February Farmer's Market, 10 a.m. Feb. 1

Keep your winter diet fresh and support local farmers at the first February Farmer's Market. The market is held at the Monongalia County Center, and features produce all sourced within 50 miles. Shop through locally-raised meats, eggs, mushrooms, baked goods, honey, maple syrup, grains, plants, body-care items and more local goods.

Details for this event and others can be found at VisitMountaineerCountry.com/Events

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

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

No more snow days



Ron Rittenhouse/The Dominion Post photos

The icicles on this Richwood Avenue home offer a telling snapshot of the area's recent weather conditions. With temperatures in the single digits on Wednesday, Monongalia County school officials made the decision to use another snow day - the last it had available for the season.

Mon Schools will have to make up any additional used

BY JIM BISSETT

JBissett@DominionPost.com

Bob Dylan didn't have Monongalia County Schools in mind when he sang about not needing a weatherman to know which way the wind blows.

However, the winds of late across Morgantown and the region have been howling on the icy, arctic side - which is why the district is now fresh out of snow days for the winter season.

In fact, things are now in the negative on the weather ledger.

That's because the mercury only made it up to the single digits Wednesday morning, prompting the county to call another snow day.

The weather also forced the cancellation of an event at the district bus garage at Mylan Park to celebrate the earlier arrival of three new electric buses in the fleet.

Mon Schools Superintendent Eddie Campbell Jr. talked meteorology with Board of Education members during their first meeting of the new



Warming temperatures over the next few days may help melt some of these icicles, but with more frigid weather predicted for next week, Mon Schools could likely be calling an Arctic Academy day or two.

year Tuesday night.

He knows that any snow days to come will mean dipping into the school calendar to make up for the deficiency and hit the state-mandated 180-day instruction mark for the academic year.

This prompted a timely weather query from Mike Kelly, BOE president.

"I'm going to ask the 'elephant in the room' question: Spring break? I'm asking because I know there are fami-

lies who plan vacations around it."

"Right now, we're fine on spring break," came the superintendent's reply. "And we do have three Arctic Academy days left."

Arctic Academy days are discretionary days the district has in its pocket for conditions that might be rough in terms of windchill factors and the like.

Conditions, Campbell said, that could be dan-

gerous for students waiting at bus stops on dark, frigid mornings.

"We don't want to put kids in precarious situations," he said.

Deputy Superintendent Donna Talerico praised the district's maintenance staff for making school campuses safer over the past two weeks by ensuring sidewalks and parking lots were free of snow and ice.

"And that includes Saturdays and Sundays," she said. "We have great employees."

Temperatures, meanwhile, will make significant, warming leaps for the rest of this week, according to AccuWeather.

Look for a high of 32 and a low of 29 today, the forecaster said.

Friday's high is projected at 38, AccuWeather said, with temperatures of 44 expected on Saturday to go with bouts of rain or drizzle.

Don't get too comfortable, though - daytime highs only in the single-digits and teens are predicted for next week, along with lows as frigid as -12 on Tuesday.

COMMUNITY

AmeriCorps celebrates MLK Day through service

DPNews@DominionPost.com

Hundreds of Morgantown residents will serve as volunteers on the annual Martin Luther King Jr. holiday to honor the life and legacy of Dr. King, improve their communities, and celebrate the 30th anniversary of the National Day of Service. Volunteers will join in a book drive event with book readings, coloring activities, crafts and cookies, joining hundreds of thousands of Americans

across the country in volunteer service.

Observed each year on the third Monday in January, Martin Luther King Jr. Day is the only federal holiday designated as a National Day of Service to encourage all Americans to volunteer to honor King's life and legacy and improve their communities. For 30 years, the MLK Day of Service has grown and its impact has increased as more Americans embrace the idea

that citizenship involves taking an active role in improving the communities where we live, work and play. AmeriCorps remains committed to showing that joining together in service can unify Americans to transform communities through a fierce urgency of now.

Join participants from 1-3 p.m. Monday at the Vandalia Lounge in the Mountainlair to participate in this day of service. The event is a part-

nership between WVU AmeriCorps VISTAs and American Connection Corps, both AmeriCorps organizations.

Details about the book drive

WVU students can earn volunteer hours by donating new or used children's books. Each book donated will count as 30 minutes of volunteer hours, with a maximum of three hours (six books). You are wel-

come to bring as many books as you'd like to support the cause. Drop off donations with your name and student email at one of the drop-off locations to receive hours.

Drop-off locations and dates:

- Through Friday: Allen Hall 805L (8th Floor), 355 Oakland St., Morgantown, WV 26506

- Noon-1 p.m. Monday: Mountainlair (Vandalia Lounge), 1550 University Ave., Morgantown

"Today we answer Dr. King's call to serve and are making a difference in Morgantown, WV," said Lucas Lemonds, an AmeriCorps ACC Member serving with Generation WV. "Let's honor Dr. King's legacy and celebrate 30 years of helping build the Beloved Community by working toward a better tomorrow. Together, let's unite, serve with our neighbors, and transform our communities as we

SEE SERVICE, A-6

CONNECT

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EVENTS

WVU Arts & Entertainment season has everything from 'Mean Girls' to Melissa Ethridge

DPNews@DominionPost.com

WVU Arts & Entertainment will host a varied line-up leading into spring, but you don't have to wait until then for some quality entertainment.

At 7 p.m. Saturday, Mountain Stage comes to the WVU Canady Creative Arts Center with performers Jim Lauderdale, Sister Sadie, Crys Matthews, Jedd Hughes and Critton Hollow.

Coming in the spring:
•"Menopause the Musi-

cal 2," 7:30 p.m. March 24
•"Dear Evan Hansen," 7:30 p.m. March 25
•Melissa Ethridge, 7:30 p.m. April 16
•"Stomp," 7:30 p.m. May 13

Ticket prices may fluctuate, based on demand, at any time. WVU Student discount is limited to 1 discounted ticket per valid WVU Student ID.

Buy tickets online Ticketmaster.com. All shows are in the WVU Canady Creative Arts Center, unless otherwise noted.

This Week at the Elks Lodge #411

DPNews@DominionPost.com

Morgantown Elks Lodge #411 will host a dinner special and live music this weekend.

On Friday, the venue will offer creamed chicken and biscuits for a special dinner feature. The Antler Pub is open from 3-10 p.m.

On Saturday, Hollow Point will perform from 8-11

p.m. Cost is \$8 at the door. The pub opens at 6 p.m.

A Valentine's Dinner and Dance is set for Feb. 14, offering dinner and dancing for two. Details and tickets are available at <https://www.bpoelks411.org/valdinner.html>.

For more information and full calendar of events, go to [BPOElks411.org](https://www.bpoelks411.org)

LOCAL BRIEFS

DPNews@DominionPost.com

DUI checkpoint set for Friday on W.Va. 7

The West Virginia State Police will conduct a sobriety checkpoint/BLITZ from 6 p.m.-midnight Friday on W.Va. 7.

The checkpoint will be held in the effort to detect and deter impaired drivers. It is not the intention of State Police to inconvenience motorists, but to make the highways safer for everyone driving through the state.

For more information, contact 1st Sgt. Whetzel at the Morgantown Detachment, at 304-285-3200.

Cornhole tourney set for Saturday at Legion

American Legion Riders Chapter 174 will host a cornhole tournament on Saturday. Registration begins at noon and play begins at 1p.m. Cost is \$10 per person. There will be a blind draw for partners. Pot will payout 50/50.

Beverages and food will be available for purchase. American Legion Mountaineer Post 174 is located at 3470 Earl Core Road, Morgantown. For more information, call 304-291-4676.

Newcomers Club hosts coffee, luncheon in January

Are you new to Morgantown and the greater Mor-

gantown community? Perhaps you have lived here for a while already or have experienced a recent life change and wish to expand your circle of acquaintances and familiarity with the area's people and places. Either way, the Morgantown Community Newcomers' Club <https://morgantownnewcomers.org/> welcomes you! The club also welcomes members from surrounding areas.

Club activities help newcomers and native community members connect and include monthly coffees and luncheons featuring area speakers, an annual fall picnic, and special interest groups such as: walking, books, movies, cooking, wine tasting, among others, and special activities.

Upcoming monthly members' luncheons will be held on Wednesdays: Jan. 22 at Black Bear Burritos and Feb. 19 at Oliverio's Ristorante.

Upcoming members' coffees will be on Wednesdays, 10 a.m.-noon Feb. 5, and March 5. These gatherings are great opportunities for new members to meet current club members and learn how club membership can further connect them with their community.

For more information about these events, the club, and how to join, call or text Denise Berrebi, president, at 304-685-1291.

MONEY

IRS announces Jan. 27 start to 2025 tax filing season

DPNews@DominionPost.com

WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service on Monday announced that the nation's 2025 tax season will start Jan. 27 and will feature expanded and enhanced tools to help taxpayers as a result of the agency's modernization efforts.

The IRS expects more than 140 million individual tax returns for tax year 2024 to be filed ahead of the April 15 federal deadline. More than half of all tax returns are expected to be filed this year with the help of a tax professional, and the IRS urges people to use a trusted tax pro to avoid potential scams and schemes.

The 2025 tax filing season will reflect continued IRS progress to modernize and add new tools and features to help taxpayers. Since last tax season, the improvements include more access to tax account information from text and voice virtual assistants, expanded features on the IRS Individual Online Account, more access to dozens of tax forms through cell phones and tablets and expanded alerts for scams and schemes that threaten taxpayers.

The IRS has also expanded features and availability of last year's Direct File program. This year, Direct File will be available starting Jan. 27 to taxpayers in 25 states. In addition, the IRS Free File program opens today. Available only on IRS.gov, IRS Free File Guided Tax Software provides millions of taxpayers nationwide access to free software tools offered by trusted IRS Free File partners.

The IRS is also working to continue the success of the 2023 and 2024 tax filing seasons made possible with additional resources. The past two filing seasons saw levels of service at roughly 85% and wait times averaging less than 5 minutes on the main phone lines, as well as significant increases in the number of taxpayers served at Taxpayer Assistance Centers across the country. Based on the IRS' current plan and funding levels, the agency will work to provide similar levels of performance on these key service metrics in the upcoming filing season.

"This has been a historic period of improvement for the IRS, and people will see additional tools and features to help them with filing their taxes this tax season," said IRS Commissioner Danny Werfel. "These taxpayer-focused improvements we've done so far are important, but they are just the beginning of what the IRS needs to do. More can be done with continued investment in the nation's tax system."

The Get Ready page on IRS.gov highlights steps taxpayers can take now to streamline the filing process and the many resources available to interact with the IRS before, during and after filing their federal tax return.

Direct File opens Jan. 27 for taxpayers in 25 states

On the first day of the filing season, Direct File will open to eligible taxpayers in 25 states to file their taxes directly with the IRS for free: 12 states that were part of the pilot last year, plus 13 new states where Direct File will be available in 2025. During last year's pilot, Direct File was available in Arizona, California, Florida, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, New York, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Washington State and Wyoming. For the 2025 tax filing season, Direct File will also be available in Alaska, Connecticut, Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

Direct File will include new features this year to make filing taxes quicker and easier. Similar to commercial tax software, a data import tool will allow taxpayers to opt-in to automatically import data from their IRS account, including personal information, the taxpayer's IP PIN and some information from the taxpayer's W-2.

This year, Direct File users can try a new chat bot to help guide them through the eligibility checker. Live chat will again be available in English and Spanish, and users can opt into additional authentication and verification, which will allow customer service representatives to provide more information.

Also, this year, Direct File will cover more tax situations. During the pilot, Direct File supported taxpayers claiming the Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit and Credit for Other Dependents. This year, Direct File will also cover taxpayers claiming the:

- Child and Dependent Care Credit
- Premium Tax Credit
- Credit for the Elderly and Disabled
- Retirement Savings Contribution Credits

In addition to covering taxpayers claiming the standard deduction and deductions for student loan interest and educator expenses, this year, Direct File will support taxpayers claiming deductions for Health Savings Accounts. The Treasury Department estimates that more than 30 million taxpayers will be eligible to use Direct File across the 25 states.

Direct File is a web-based service that works on mobile phones, laptops, tablets or desktop computers. It guides taxpayers through a series of questions to prepare their federal tax return step-by-step. Last year, thousands of Direct File users got help from IRS customer service representatives through a live chat feature in English and Spanish. Once taxpayers have completed their federal tax return, the Direct File system au-

tomatically guides them to state tools to complete their state tax filings.

Free File program opens early; available in English and Spanish

Although the IRS will not begin accepting tax returns until Jan. 27, taxpayers have several options available now to get a head start on their taxes.

As of Monday, most everyone can file electronically for free by using IRS Free File, available only on IRS.gov. Now in its 23rd year, Free File offers free tax preparation software from eight companies in the public-private partnership between the IRS and Free File Inc. As part of this partnership, tax preparation and filing software partners offer their online products to eligible taxpayers for free. To access these free tools, taxpayers must start from the IRS Free File page on IRS.gov.

This year, eight private-sector partners will provide online guided tax software products for taxpayers with an Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) of \$84,000 or less in 2024. Additionally, one partner will offer a product in Spanish.

Although the IRS official tax filing season begins later this month, IRS Free File providers will allow taxpayers to prepare and file returns now and hold them until they can be electronically filed on that date. Many other software companies offer a similar option.

Other free options to file tax returns

In addition to Free File and Direct File, the IRS reminds taxpayers there are important programs available to help taxpayers:

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance/Tax Counseling for the Elderly. Taxpayers can find organizations in their community with IRS certified volunteers that provide free tax help for eligible taxpayers including working families, the elderly, the disabled and people who speak limited English.

MilTax. A Department of Defense program, MilTax generally offers free return preparation and electronic filing software for federal income tax returns and up to three state income tax returns for all military members, and some veterans, with no income limit.

Highlights of other IRS changes to help taxpayers

As part of ongoing IRS improvement efforts, the agency is working to build on the success of the 2023 and 2024 filing seasons.

The IRS is once again working to provide taxpayers expanded help in-person through more hours at Taxpayer Assistance Centers nationwide. The IRS also will be focused on continuing high levels of service on its main taxpayer phone lines, with a goal of up to

85% level of service.

The IRS also continues to urge taxpayers to visit a trusted tax professional for help with their taxes or visit IRS.gov first. As part of IRS improvement efforts since 2022, the agency continues to add and expand a variety of online tools and services to help people with their taxes.

Included among the improvements taxpayers will see during the 2025 filing season are:

IRS Individual Online Account: The IRS continues to add more functionality to this important tool. Individuals can create or access their IRS Online Account at Online Account for individuals. With an IRS Online Account, people can:

- View key details from their most recent tax return, such as adjusted gross income.
- Request an Identity Protection PIN.
- Get account transcripts to include wage and income records.

Sign tax forms like powers of attorney or tax information authorizations.

•View and edit language preferences and alternative media.

•Receive and view over 200 IRS electronic notices.

•View, make and cancel payments.

•Set up or change payment plans and check their balance.

New scam alert available on Individual Online Account: To help protect taxpayers against emerging threats, there's a new banner on the Online Account homepage that alerts taxpayers of potential scams and schemes, along with a link to their Digital Notices and Letters page to view correspondence sent to them from the IRS. The feature helps to educate taxpayers on common scams and fraudulent efforts to steal taxpayer information and provide taxpayers with more ability to validate the legitimacy of IRS communications.

Redesigned Notices: The IRS successfully redesigned 284 notices in 2024, exceeding the agency's 200 notice goal. It is important to note that 200 notices were redesigned and deployed in 2024 and that the 84 additional redesigned notices are in line to be deployed in 2025. All notices will be added to Individual Online Account so taxpayers receiving a specific letter can see them.

Mobile-Adaptive Tax Forms: Taxpayers can now access 67 forms on cell phones and tablets. The most recent forms feature "save and draft" capabilities, which allow the taxpayer to start a form, save it and return to it later. The addition of save and draft allows for future capabilities, including the ability for multiple spouses to sign a form.

Virtual assistants to help with refunds, others questions: Whether a taxpayer uses an online tool or calls the IRS, they will experience upgraded help features.

SERVICE

FROM PAGE A-5

strive toward a brighter future.

How to get involved

"Everybody can be great, because everybody can serve," King said. "You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love." Whether you plan on cleaning up a public space, mentoring a young person, training tutors, or assisting those

who are food insecure or unhoused, what you do makes a world of difference. Find opportunities to volunteer for MLK Day of Service and engage with your community while honoring the legacy of Dr. King at [AmeriCorps.gov/MLKDay](https://www.AmeriCorps.gov/MLKDay).

About the organizations

AmeriCorps, the federal agency for national service and volunteerism, provides opportunities for Americans to serve their country domestically, address the nation's most pressing challenges, improve lives and communities, and strengthen

civic engagement. Each year, the agency places more than 200,000 AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in intensive service roles; and empowers millions more to serve as long-term, short-term, or one-time volunteers. Learn more at [AmeriCorps.gov](https://www.AmeriCorps.gov).

American Connection Corps is a national service program dedicated to expanding digital access and connectivity in rural and underserved communities. By supporting broadband development, digital literacy, and community engage-


ment, ACC Fellows work to close the digital divide and empower communities to thrive in the modern economy.


WVU AmeriCorps VISTA is a national service program hosted by West Virginia University that focuses on alleviating poverty by building the capacity of local organizations and empowering communities across West Virginia. AmeriCorps VISTA members work with local organizations to address critical issues such as food insecurity, education, and housing, while developing sustainable solutions for long-term impact.

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STATE

Senate President Smith names remainder of leadership team, committee chairs

BY STEVEN ALLEN ADAMS
For The Dominion Post

CHARLESTON — State Senate President Randy Smith named the rest of his new leadership team heading into the 2025 legislative session, as well as the remainder of his major committee chairs and vice chairs, only retaining one senator from his predecessor's tenure.

Smith, R-Tucker, had already announced a new majority leader and the leadership teams for the Senate's Finance and Judiciary committees earlier this month. In a statement Wednesday, Smith said he was excited to begin the 60-day regular session on Wednesday, Feb. 12, with a new team in place.

"I'm proud of the team we have put together for the upcoming session," Smith said. "I knew that I wanted fresh perspectives and a new approach to how we work as a team to address the challenges that are facing West Virginia. Each one of our committee chairmen and vice chairmen brings a unique perspective to the table, and I am very excited about the work that we will accomplish together."

Smith was formally voted in last Wednesday as senate president after being selected as the Senate Republican caucus's nominee last December. The retired coal miner and chairman of the Senate Energy, Industry and Mining Committee succeeds former senate president Craig Blair, a Republican state senator from Berkeley County who lost his GOP primary last May.

Smith announced that state Sen. Jay Taylor, R-Taylor, will be his new majority whip. He succeeds state Sen. Ryan Weld, R-Brooke, in that role. Taylor first took office in 2023 and is in the middle of his four-year term. He previously served as vice chairman of the Senate Outdoor

Recreation Committee. In December, Smith announced that former Senate Economic Development Committee Vice Chairman Patrick Martin, R-Lewis, would become the next Senate Majority Leader, succeeding state Sen. Tom Takubo, R-Kanawha, who held that role during Blair's tenure as senate president.

Smith also announced Wednesday the remaining chair and vice chair positions for major Senate committees. Only Senate Education Committee Chairwoman Amy Grady, R-Mason, will retain her gavel going into the new year. Grady, an elementary school teacher, first took office in 2021 and is beginning her second four-year term. Sen. Charles Clements, R-Wetzel, will remain her vice chairman.

State Sen. Laura Wakim Chapman, R-Ohio, will chair the Senate Health and Human Resources Committee. Chapman, who first took office in 2023, succeeds former Republican Marshall County state senator Mike Maroney, who lost his GOP primary last year and is facing a jury trial on charges of indecent exposure, disorderly conduct and driving under the influence. State Sen. Vince Deeds, R-Greenbrier, will be her vice chairman.

"I look forward to working to improve accessibility to healthcare, lowering health costs, and shortening wait times for our citizens," Chapman said in a post on social media Wednesday. "The committee will find creative solutions for mental health and addiction treatment, childcare, foster care, and other issues. We will also look for ways to support our health professionals and find ways to expand the workforce."

Smith also made the following appointments to the Senate minor committees:

- Energy, Industry and Mining: Chairman Chris Rose, R-Monongalia; Vice Chairman Ben Queen, R-Harrison.

- Economic Development: Chairman Glenn Jeffries, R-Putnam; Vice Chairman Robbie Morris, R-Randolph.

- Banking and Insurance: Chairman Mike Azinger, R-Wood; Vice Chairman Robbie Morris, R-Randolph.

- Military: Chairman Ryan Weld, R-Brooke; Vice Chairman Scott Fuller, R-Wayne.

- Pensions: Chairman Mike Oliverio, R-Monongalia.

- Agriculture: Chairman Craig Hart, R-Mingo; Vice Chairman Darren Thorne, R-Hampshire.

- Natural Resources: Chairman Bill Hamilton, R-Upshur; Vice-Chairman Vince Deeds, R-Greenbrier.

- Workforce: Chairman Rollan Roberts, R-Raleigh; Vice Chairman Jack David Woodrum, R-Summers.

- Confirmations: Chairman Donna Boley, R-Pleasants; Vice-Chairman Laura Wakim Chapman, R-Ohio.

- Enrolled Bills: Chairman Jack David Woodrum, R-Summers; Vice Chairman Scott Fuller, R-Wayne.

- Rules: Chairman Randy Smith, R-Preston; Vice Chairman Senator Patrick Martin, R-Lewis.

- Select Committee on Substance Abuse and Mental Health: Chairman Brian Helton, R-Fayette; Vice Chairman Ryan Weld, R-Brooke.

- Transportation and Infrastructure: Chairman Mark Maynard, R-Wayne; Vice Chairman Jay Taylor, R-Taylor.

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Water company's paperless billing dispute continues: Awaits PSC decision

BY DAVID BEARD
DBeard@DominionPost.com

West Virginia American Water and state Public Service Commission staff continue to debate paperless billing and whether it should be "opt in" or "opt out."

WVAW wants to go "opt out" for most of its customers, saying it's convenient, has been successful in other parent company territories and could save lots of money.

PSC staff say the proposal is unreasonable under state code and could potentially harm customers who are less tech savvy or lack connectivity, by effectively forcing them into a billing method they may not understand or want.

An administrative law judge sided with PSC staff and denied WVAW's request, but WVAW is disputing the order. Both sides now await a PSC decision.

WVAW submitted its request in June. The company said it has 171,000 customers and 44,000 are enrolled in paperless billing. Those customers have opted in — that is, chosen to enroll in the program.

It estimates another 65,000 would be eligible to switch over to paperless. Customers eligible to be automatically enrolled would be those who have a valid email or text contact on file and are registered on WVAW's "MyWater" portal. The company would send several notices to them announcing the automatic enrollment and provide an online

link to opt out, followed by a mail notice with another opt-out opportunity.

Low-income customers and those who have a "do not solicit" flag on their accounts would not be included. WVAW said the move could save it \$490,000 in annual print and postage costs, if all eligible customers enrolled.

PSC staff continues to maintain that the program is unreasonable, flawed and poorly supported. A customer who has a MyWater account doesn't necessarily use it or ever wants to use it. Many people have secondary email accounts they rarely access. And WVAW has customers without reliable internet.

Staff said it "believes that customers who did not 'opt in' should not be burdened with the task of having to jump through hoops to 'opt out' of a program that they have already rejected."

WVAW counters that only those customers who already interact with the company through the MyWater portal will be enrolled. Those who have chosen not to interact electronically or lack the means to do so will not be enrolled. And customers who were enrolled but want to withdraw can do so by phone if they lack other means.

Both sides discussed a case where Frontier wanted to start a similar program and imposed a \$2.99 monthly paper billing fee, the PSC determined that was unjustly discriminatory to seniors and those unfamiliar

with paperless billing.

Staff argues that while there is no fee involved in the current case, the principle remains the same and PSC's Frontier order applies here. WVAW counters, "Unlike the program in the Frontier case, the company's Paperless Program will not increase any customer's bill but instead has the potential to produce cost savings for all customers."

WVAW adds, "customers enrolled in paperless billing often experience increased satisfaction given that paperless billing is secure, convenient, clutter free, easily accessible, and will allow customers to receive their bills 2-3 days sooner. ... Other American Water affiliates have implemented similar programs in other jurisdictions without issue."

WVAW said it is willing to implement a 12-month pilot program. Staff echoed its previous thought that those who want paperless have already opted in and no one should be forced through hoops to opt out.

The administrative law judge, in his recommendation, said he "agrees with staff that a utility program that automatically enrolls West Virginia customers into online billing should be considered an unreasonable practice, notwithstanding the multiple safeguards WVAWC offered. [The ALJ] does not believe that this conclusion would be altered by WVAWC's offer of a 12-month trial program."

Trial starts for West Virginia couple accused of subjecting their 5 children to forced labor

Associated Press

CHARLESTON — A witness broke down in tears as she described children carrying heavy objects on hilly terrain at the home of a West Virginia couple who were later arrested after two of their five adopted children were found locked in an outbuilding.

The trial of Jeanne Kay Whitefeather and Donald Ray Lantz began Tuesday on more than a dozen counts that include forced labor, civil rights violations, human trafficking and gross child neglect.

In her opening statement, assistant prosecutor Madison Tuck said evidence will show the couple forced the children to work and used them "physically, emotionally and mentally so that they would comply." She said text messages between Lantz and Whitefeather mentioned making the children stand for long periods of time and locking the two older children, both teenagers, in the outbuilding.

Whitefeather's attorney, Mark Plants, said the case "is about adoptive parents struggling to deal with their children's past trauma and severe mental illness." He said friends and relatives of Whitefeather will testify that four of the children suffered "physical, sexual and emotional" abuse by their biological mother, including what he said was the mother's use of alcohol and drugs while she was pregnant.

"This is a normal family," Plants said. "They have Christmases. All of them. They have Christmas presents. They have family vacations. They sit around dinner tables and eat."

Lantz and Whitefeather are white. The children, all siblings ranging

in age from 5 to 16, are Black.

The couple adopted the five siblings while living in Minnesota and moved to a farm in Washington state in 2018 before moving again to West Virginia in 2023, when the children ranged in age from 5 to 16.

Neighbor Joyce Bailey testified Tuesday that when the family first arrived at the home in Sissonville, West Virginia, in 2023 in a vehicle pulling a trailer for animals, it was raining and the children were told to line up outside.

"You never see them talk to each other," she said. "They didn't talk at all among themselves. You didn't see them out unless they were working. They never played."

Bailey became emotional several times in describing what she said was the difficulty some of the children had in carrying fencing for the animals, propane tanks, full buckets of water and other supplies between the home, a trailer and a barn as Lantz watched. Video of the physical labor taken by Bailey was shown in Kanawha County Circuit Court.

"He made them carry it all, that heavy fencing," Bailey said. "They would just stand there and wait for him to tell them what to do."

Bailey said she also witnessed the oldest boy carrying a propane tank. The boy "could barely walk. He acted like his feet were so sore. He was dragging them," Bailey said. "Mr. Lantz was just standing there. He never said anything, not helping him."

Bailey said "it was tearing me up," so she started to take video. When Lantz looked over at her, Bailey said, her husband told her to stop filming, but she continued, replying, "I don't care."

In September 2023, the couple bought a bigger house in Beckley and started moving furniture out of the Sissonville home. A month later, Bailey said, she saw Lantz lock the two teenagers in the outbuilding and leave the property. Whitefeather left a short time later. Someone called police, and Bailey said she saw sheriff's deputies knock on the outbuilding door for several minutes. A girl answered but indicated she didn't have a key. Bailey said she could hear the deputy talking to the girl, then used a crowbar to get the children out.

A deputy said in a criminal complaint that the children were in dirty clothes and that the oldest boy was barefoot and had what appeared to be sores on his feet. Inside the main residence, a 9-year-old girl was found alone crying in a loft with no protection from falling. A fourth child was with Lantz when he eventually returned. Deputies were later led to the couple's 5-year-old adopted daughter.

Whitefeather and Lantz were arrested and the children were placed under the care of Child Protective Services.

According to the complaint, the children had been deprived of adequate food and hygienic care, and the outbuilding had no running water or bathroom facility. Plants has referred to the outbuilding as a "teenage clubhouse" and said there was a key inside. But Tuck said the children never knew about a key.

Plants said the oldest boy had attempted to run away from home and that the lock on the outbuilding was aimed at keeping him from trying it again. The boy currently is receiving full-time care in a psychiatric facility.

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BOYS BASKETBALL

CLASH OF THE TITANS

No. 1 Spring Mills ends No. 2 Morgantown High's home win streak

BY MICHAEL GRIFFITH

Sports@DominionPost.com

The Rowdie Center hosted a rematch of last season's Class AAAA boys state title matchup as the No. 2 Morgantown Mohigans welcomed the top-ranked Spring Mills Cardinals on a snowy Tuesday night.

MHS (5-1) entered the contest with a 50-game winning streak on its home floor but couldn't find the 51st victory as Spring Mills (8-0) headed back to the eastern panhandle with a 57-40 win.

Spring Mills junior Akwasi Opoku-Achampong led all scorers with 18 points on six three-pointers. The Cardinals made ten shots in 18 attempts from beyond the arc. Lokkhae Uth-Smith added the other four triples for Spring Mills.

Senior Marty Johnson led the Mohigans with 11 points and sophomore Max Frey with 10.

"They kicked our butts tonight," MHS head coach Dave Tallman said. "They're a really good team and really athletic. They came in here and beat us on our home court, which hasn't been done in a long time. They played hard and made shots. That's going to be a hard team to beat this season."

The game started with the two teams trading three-pointers as Frey and Opoku-Achampong got their teams on the board early.

The Mohigans led 6-3 early on, but



Ron Rittenhouse/The Dominion Post

Morgantown's Marty Johnson (21) uses a screen from teammate Brady Savage (32) against Spring Mills on Tuesday night.

GIRLS BASKETBALL

UHS girls take down No. 2 Wheeling Park

BY NICK HENTHORN

For The Dominion Post

WHEELING – The University Hawks braved the trip through the snow up to the Palace on the Hill for an important OVAC 5A matchup with the Wheeling Park Patriots on Tuesday and emerged back out to the frosty evening with a 60-45 road victory.

University (6-3) received double-digit scoring efforts from Brianna Fox (19), Julia Maisel (18), and Hannah Stemple (12). Still, the scoring was slow to start Tuesday, with the first basket coming nearly seven minutes into the first quarter, a banked-in two-point jumper from Stemple breaking and thawing the scoring.

University led 10-7 after the first quarter. The Hawks shot 5-11 in the frame, while Wheeling Park shot 2-16.

Fox provided a spark at the end of the quarter, flipping in a layup at the buzzer. The score carried into a strong second quarter, with Fox scoring nine points and Maisel scoring 13.

Fox made it two buzzer-beaters in a row with a corner three-pointer to send the contest into the halftime break.

"I liked how we shared the basketball," University head coach Nick Lusk



Nick Henthorn/The Intelligencer

University's Hannah Stemple skies for a basket against Wheeling Park on Tuesday night.

said. "I thought defensively we did a nice job, and we rebounded. That's what we stressed at the beginning of the game—defense, rebounding, and sharing the ball. We've been doing that for the last few games, and it's been pretty good for us."

"They're all playing well," Lusk said of his squad. "Our five starters, this is the most experienced team I've had. These girls have been together, these five starters have played together, and they know what I expect and each other expects. We're just playing well right now."

University shot 54 percent in the first half, while Wheeling Park shot 23 percent. In many other

categories – rebounds, turnovers, assists – the two teams were neck-and-neck in that stretch, but Patriots head coach Ryan Young looked beyond the stat sheet to assess his team's performance.

"You could blame the game on poor shooting, but the difference was that the University flat-out played harder than we did from the beginning of the game," Young said. "We had a really difficult time finding them in transition, and we had a tough time staying in front of them defensively. We'll see these defenses all year, and we can't let a slow start offensively dictate how we play defensively."

SEE UHS, B-2

NFL

Tomlin undecided on Steelers starting QB for 2025

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — In his final news conference of the season, Mike Tomlin was noncommittal about who will be playing quarterback for the Steelers next season.

All three quarterbacks on the 53-man roster, including starter Russell Wilson, are not under contract for the 2025 sea-

son. Tomlin did not endorse Wilson nor backup Justin Fields for the job and he said he's going to discuss the position with general manager Omar Khan later this week.

"We got some major discussions there," Tomlin said. "It was a really good experience with the three quarterbacks who were on our roster this year, individually

and collectively. We are certainly open to considering those guys, but there's a lot of work ahead of us.

"The major work starts first and foremost in understanding what our options are, what the field looks like in terms of free agency, what the draft pool looks like and

SEE STEELERS, B-3

NHL

Struggling Penguins place 2-time All-Star goaltender Tristan Jarry on waivers

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — The Pittsburgh Penguins ran out of patience waiting for two-time All-Star goaltender Tristan Jarry to emerge from a slump, placing him on waivers Wednesday ahead of a pivotal seven-game road trip that could determine the course of the rest of their season.

The 29-year-old Jarry is 8-7-4 with a 3.32 goals against average and a .886 save percentage this season for Pittsburgh, which is on the fringe of

the playoff race in the Eastern Conference due in large part to subpar play in net.

The Penguins have allowed an NHL-high 173 goals, with neither Jarry nor Alex Nedeljkovic establishing themselves behind a defense prone to lapses.

The Penguins will call up promising rookie Joel Blomqvist to join Nedeljkovic on the road trip, which starts on Friday in Buffalo. Blomqvist went 3-5 with a 3.60 goals against average and a .904

save percentage during a stint in Pittsburgh earlier in the season.

It seems unlikely a team would be willing to claim Jarry and pick up his salary, meaning Jarry will be reassigned to the Penguins' American Hockey League affiliate in Wilkes-Barre/Scranton once he clears waivers.

"At this point, (I) just feel it's best in the long run for the team and for Tristan to allow Joel to come up here," Pittsburgh general manager

SEE JARRY, B-2

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SCOREBOARD

CALENDAR

THURSDAY, JANUARY 16

GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL
University at John Marshall, 7:30 p.m.

BOYS' HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL
Elkins at Preston, 7:30 p.m.

Trinity at Weirton Madonna, 6:30 p.m.

HIGH SCHOOL WRESTLING
University/Morgantown at OVAC tournament, at Wheeling, 5 p.m.

ON TV

COLLEGE BASKETBALL (MEN'S)

7 p.m.: CBSSN — Hofstra at Towson
ESPN2 — Memphis at Temple
ESPNU — High Point at Longwood
FS1 — Michigan at Minnesota
9 p.m.: BTN — Maryland at Northwestern
CBSSN — UTEP at Liberty
FS1 — Rutgers at Nebraska
11 p.m.: CBSSN — Gonzaga at Oregon St.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL (WOMEN'S)

6 p.m.: ACCN — Georgia Tech at Notre Dame
7 p.m.: BTN — Nebraska at Iowa
PEACOCK — Illinois at Indiana
SECN — Mississippi St. at Tennessee
8 p.m.: ACCN — California at Duke
9 p.m.: PEACOCK — Ohio St. at Wisconsin
SECN — Florida at Mississippi

GOLF

1 p.m.: ESPN2 — Latin America Amateur Championship: First Round, Pilar Golf Club, Buenos Aires, Argentina
4 p.m.: GOLF — PGA Tour: The American Express, First Round, PGA WEST Pete Dye Stadium Course, La Quinta, Calif.
7 p.m.: GOLF — PGA Tour Champions: The Mitsubishi Electric Championship, First Round, Hualalai Golf Club, Kaupulehu, Hawaii
2:30 a.m. (Friday): GOLF — DP World Tour: The Dubai Desert Classic, Second Round, Emirates Golf Club, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

NBA

7:30 p.m.: TNT — Cleveland at Oklahoma City
TRUTV — Cleveland at Oklahoma City (DataCast)

10 p.m.: TNT — Houston at Sacramento
TRUTV — Houston at Sacramento (DataCast)

NHL

7 p.m.: ESPN — Detroit at Florida
9:30 p.m.: ESPN — Edmonton at Colorado

TENNIS

3 a.m.: ESPN2 — ATP/WTA: The Australian Open, Second Round, Melbourne, Australia
10 a.m.: ESPN2 — ATP/WTA: The Australian Open, Second Round, Melbourne, Australia
9 p.m.: ESPN2 — ATP/WTA: The Australian Open, Third Round, Melbourne, Australia
3 a.m. (Friday): ESPN2 — ATP/WTA: The Australian Open, Third Round, Melbourne, Australia

USHL HOCKEY

7 p.m.: NHLN — 2025 All-American Prospects Game: Team Blue vs. Team White, Plymouth, Mich.

PRO BASKETBALL

EASTERN CONFERENCE Atlantic Division

Table with columns: Team, W, L, Pct, GB. Rows: Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Brooklyn, Toronto.

Southeast Division

Table with columns: Team, W, L, Pct, GB. Rows: Orlando, Miami, Atlanta, Charlotte, Washington.

Central Division

Table with columns: Team, W, L, Pct, GB. Rows: Cleveland, Milwaukee, Indiana, Detroit, Chicago.

WESTERN CONFERENCE Southwest Division

Table with columns: Team, W, L, Pct, GB. Rows: Houston, Memphis, Dallas, San Antonio, New Orleans.

Northwest Division

Table with columns: Team, W, L, Pct, GB. Rows: Oklahoma City, Denver, Minnesota, Portland, Utah.

Pacific Division

Table with columns: Team, W, L, Pct, GB. Rows: L.A. Clippers, L.A. Lakers, Sacramento, Phoenix, Golden State.

PRO HOCKEY

EASTERN CONFERENCE Atlantic Division

Table with columns: Team, GP, W, L, OT, Pts, GF, GA. Rows: Toronto, Florida, Tampa Bay, Boston, Ottawa, Montreal, Detroit, Buffalo.

Metropolitan Division

Table with columns: Team, GP, W, L, OT, Pts, GF, GA. Rows: Washington, New Jersey, Carolina, Columbus, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, N.Y. Rangers, N.Y. Islanders.

WESTERN CONFERENCE Central Division

Table with columns: Team, GP, W, L, OT, Pts, GF, GA. Rows: Winnipeg, Minnesota, Dallas, Colorado, St. Louis, Utah, Nashville, Chicago.

Pacific Division

Table with columns: Team, GP, W, L, OT, Pts, GF, GA. Rows: Vegas, Edmonton, Los Angeles, Calgary, Vancouver, Anaheim, Seattle, San Jose.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Texas QB Quinn Ewers declares for NFL draft as program ushers in Arch Manning era

Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — Texas junior quarterback Quinn Ewers declared for the NFL draft on Wednesday, ending a Longhorns career in which he led the program to a Big 12 championship and twice to the College Football Playoff but was not always embraced by a fan base eagerly waiting for Arch Manning to take over.



AP photo

Texas quarterback Quinn Ewers (3) passes against Ohio State during the first half of the Cotton Bowl College Football Playoff semifinal game, Friday, Jan. 10, in Arlington, Texas.

Ewers passed for 9,128 yards and 68 touchdowns in a career that few Texas quarterbacks can match. He had hinted before the season ended that it would be his last in college.

"These past three years have been some of the best years I could have imagined," Ewers said in social media post announcing his decision. "The relationships I've built between coaches and teammates will last forever."

His 27 career wins rank fourth as a starting quarterback at Texas, and he led the Longhorns to their first Big 12 title in 14 years in 2023 before the program moved to the Southeastern Conference. In their first season in the SEC, the Longhorns rose to their first

No. 1 ranking since 2008 and played in the league championship game.

Ewers' biggest legacy will be leading the program to the playoff semifinals in consecutive years, though it fell short of the championship game. He had a fumble on a sack that led to a game-clinching touchdown for Ohio State on Jan. 10 in the Cotton Bowl.

Ewers' career

Ewers, who grew up in the Dallas suburbs, was the top-rated high school

quarterback in the country when he signed with Ohio State and left school early to join the Buckeyes for the 2021 season. But after one season spent deep on the Ohio State depth chart, Ewers transferred to Texas, which had just finished 5-7 in coach Steve Sarkisian's first season.

He was the starter by the season opener in 2022 and led the team through seasons of 8-5, 12-2 and 13-3 records. But he was dogged by various shoulder, abdomen and ankle injuries and missed at

least two games each season. An abdomen strain this season allowed Manning to start twice and earn the program's first SEC win, which came against Mississippi State.

Make way for Manning

Ewers' departure sets the stage for Manning to take over in 2025.

The son of Cooper Manning, the grandson of former NFL quarterback Archie Manning and the nephew of Super Bowl-winning QBs Peyton and Eli Manning passed for 939 yards and nine touchdowns and ran for four TDs this season but has seen only limited playing time since September.

Texas fans have been eagerly awaiting his chance to be the full-time starter. Manning will get it with a rebuilt offense.

Top receivers Matthew Golden and Isaiah Bond have declared for the draft and senior tight end Gunner Helm completed his eligibility. Running back Jaydon Blue, who scored a team-high 14 touchdowns including four in the playoffs, and starting tackles Kelvin Banks Jr. and Cam Williams also left for the NFL.

JARRY

FROM PAGE B-1

Kyle Dubas said Wednesday. "We think over the past year-and-a-half, with his play in Wilkes-Barre and when he's been up here with us, he's earned the right to have a go at it."

The decision comes 18 months after Dubas signed Jarry to a five-year deal with an average annual value of \$5.375 million. Jarry was an All-Star in 2020 and 2022 but has struggled most of the last two seasons.

"He's continued to come in here, put the work in and that's not been a question at all," Dubas said. "That

just hasn't materialized the way we would like it to on the ice. At this level, you get to the point where you have to do what's right ... for him and for us."

Jarry ceded the starting job to Nedeljkovic last spring. While he reclaimed his spot atop the depth chart coming out of training camp, he stumbled out of the gate and was sent to Wilkes-Barre/Scranton for a lengthy conditioning stint.

While there was a brief uptick in his play after he returned, Jarry has lost five straight starts and continues to struggle early in games.



AP photo

A shot by Seattle Kraken's Chandler Stephenson gets past Pittsburgh Penguins goaltender Tristan Jarry for a goal during the first period of an NHL hockey game in Pittsburgh, Tuesday.

TITANS

FROM PAGE B-1

a 10-0 run late in the opening quarter saw the Cardinals ahead 15-8 after the first eight minutes.

MHS fired back with a 7-2 run in the second quarter, cutting the lead to two points. However, Spring Mills pushed the lead back to multiple possessions late in the first half.

Uth-Smith scored two of his 14 points with a steal and a slam in the open court. He was followed by Opoku-Achampong, who hit a triple

from long range as the halftime buzzer sounded, swelling the lead to 27-20 at the break.

"I didn't think our defense was terrible; they just made shots," Tallman said. "A few times we got caught not putting our hands up, but they (Spring Mills) were a little hungrier than we were tonight. I told our guys all we can do is keep chipping away and getting better."

Opoku-Achampong opened the second half the way he had closed the first, nailing a deep three-pointer, extending

the lead to 10.

The Mohigans got within eight at 30-22 but could not pair defensive stops with made baskets, as the Cardinals answered any success MHS found on offense.

Spring Mills outscored the Mohigans by 10 in the second half, holding them to eight points in the final quarter.

"We know what we can do, and we haven't really done it this year," Spring Mills coach Luke Samples said. "I'm proud of the selflessness of our team and being able to control the tempo in the fourth

quarter. We knew coming here and winning at all would be tough, and we are happy to get the win."

Morgantown will return home to host University for a 7:30 p.m. tip-off on Friday as the Mohawk Bowl hits the hardwood.

"We know Spring Mills isn't the only team we have to beat this season; there are a lot of good teams," Tallman said. "We play University Friday night, who is pretty good, too. I'm not frustrated or upset. We will break down the film and continue to work. March is about nine weeks away."

UHS

FROM PAGE B-1

"Consistently this year we have defended teams and we have rebounded. That wasn't the case tonight. I thought University deserved a lot of credit for how they came out, this is a good basketball team and this was a big game for seeding purposes. They kind of took it to us."

The lead grew to as much as 25 in the third

quarter, but Park cut into the deficit in the fourth, getting as close as a dozen.

The Patriots' Alexis Bordas led all scorers with 24 points. Karingtyn Miller joined her in double figures with 11. Bordas added four rebounds and four steals to her stat line.

"I'd say we did pretty well on her," Lusk said of Bordas, the two-time state Player of the Year. "We wanted to make sure we took her away and

made her uncomfortable, and we did that. She's going to get hers, she's so good, she's the best player in the state. She's going to get her points, but I thought we did a nice job of containing her and making her shots tough."

Maggie Hupp had nine rebounds for Park.

University finished the game going 12-19 from the foul line. Wheeling Park was 1-4.

After Tuesday, Wheeling Park falls to 7-3. The OVAC website had Wheeling Park atop the 5A girls' basketball standings going into the game, with University in third.

Morgantown Gun Show advertisement for January 18-19 at Mylan Park. Features text: 'BUY! SELL! TRADE! 400 TABLES!', 'MORGANTOWN GUN SHOW', 'JANUARY 18 - 19', 'MYLAN PARK', 'Ruby Community Center, 500 Mylan Park Lane, Morgantown, WV 26501', 'SAT: 9-5 | SUN: 9-4', 'Showmasters, Inc. | 540-951-1344 | ShowmastersGunShows.com'

Best Alignment in Town advertisement. Features text: 'BEST ALIGNMENT IN TOWN', '\$40 OFF FULL SET OF TIRES!', 'Call 304-418-3200 today to set up your appointment.', 'Nissan Express Service', 'Premier Nissan of Morgantown', '304.418.3200'

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

CFP championship game prediction: Ohio State will take home the title

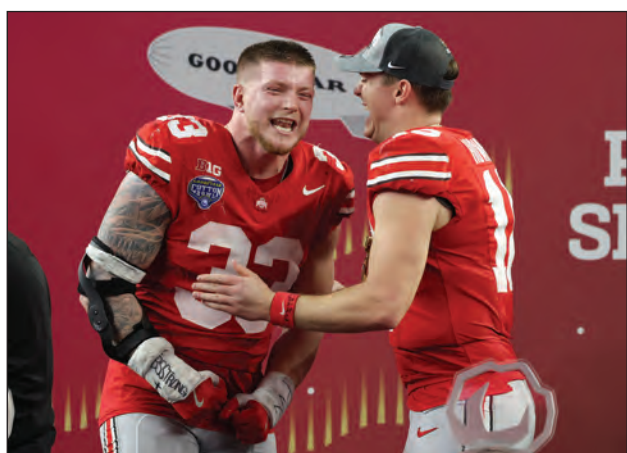
Associated Press

Ohio State plays Notre Dame in the College Football Playoff championship game at Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta on Monday night. BetMGM Sportsbook listed Ohio State as an 8.5-point favorite on Wednesday, down a point from the opening line.

The eighth-seeded Buckeyes (13-2) have beaten Tennessee, Oregon and Texas on their way to the title game, where they will play for their sixth national championship since the poll era began in 1936. Their most recent title came in 2014.

The seventh-seeded Irish (14-1) have beaten Indiana, Georgia and Penn State and will be playing for their 12th championship, and first since 1988.

Why Ohio State will win
The Buckeyes are more



AP photo

Ohio State defensive end Jack Sawyer, left, and quarterback Will Howard celebrate after the Cotton Bowl College Football Playoff semifinal game against Texas, Friday, Jan. 10, in Arlington, Texas.

talented and the healthier team right now, and that's a good place to start.

The offensive lull in the 28-14 semifinal win over Texas probably caused some heartburn for Ohio State fans. Credit the Longhorns, who

have one of the best defenses in the country and neutralized star receiver Jeremiah Smith. Ohio State has shown it has plenty of other weapons, though.

The Buckeyes' top-ranked defense already has won CFP games

against three offenses that, on paper, are superior to Notre Dame's.

Why Notre Dame will win

The Irish have a championship-caliber defense that forces turnovers at one of the highest rates in the nation. If the Irish are going to win, they almost certainly will need a couple takeaways.

Offensively, the Irish must excel on third down. They've converted 22 of 44 over three CFP games, including 11 of 17 in the 27-24 semifinal win over Penn State. They also must continue showing progress in the downfield pass game. Jaden Greathouse had his first 100-yard receiving game in the semifinal and Riley Leonard, who has been mediocre on throws longer than 10 yards, had pass plays of 32, 36 and 54 yards.

COLLEGE ATHLETICS

March Madness will pay women's teams under a new NCAA approved structure

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Women's basketball teams finally will be paid for playing games in the NCAA Tournament each March just like the men have for years under a plan approved Wednesday at the NCAA convention.

The unanimous vote by NCAA membership was the final step toward a pay structure for women playing in March Madness after the Division I Board of Governors voted unanimously for the proposal in August.

Now, so-called performance units, which represent revenue, will be given to women's teams playing in the tournament. A women's basketball team that reaches the Final Four could bring its conference roughly \$1.26 million over the next three years in financial performance rewards.

In the first year, \$15 million will be awarded to teams out of the fund, which is 26% of the women's basketball media revenue deal. That will grow to \$25 million, or 41% of the revenue, by 2028. The 26% is on par with what men's basketball teams received the first year the performance units program was established.

This will start in March in the 43rd year of the women's NCAA Tournament. The lack of a units system for the women's tournament has been a point of sharp criticism.

"It's great women's basketball is getting the long-deserved financial reward for NCAA post-season success," Louisville coach Jeff Walz said.

The women's March Madness plan is similar to the men's basketball unit program. Each of 32 conferences that receive an automatic bid to the tournament will receive a unit, and additional units will be rewarded for teams that receive at-

large bids to the 68-team field.

The longer a school's tournament run lasts, the more units the school's conference receives. Conferences decide the distribution of unit revenue to each of its members. Each unit was worth about \$2 million for the 2024 men's tournament.

Men's basketball teams now receive 24% of the media rights deal, which is \$8.8 billion over eight years, starting this year. Women's basketball is valued at \$65 million per tournament in the NCAA's new media rights deal with ESPN — roughly 10 times more than in the contract that ends this year.

The women have a higher percentage of the media revenue deal to bolster the value of each performance unit.

The NCAA sharing March Madness revenue with its member schools has long been a feature of the men's tournament. The 2018 tournament, for example, brought in \$844.3 million in television and marketing rights, the vast majority from a contract with CBS and Turner Sports to televise the games.

Most of the money flows through the NCAA to conferences and then back to member schools, more than 300 of which field Division I basketball teams eligible to play in the tournament. The schools mostly reinvest in athletics, from scholarships for athletes in all sports to coaching salaries, training facilities, stadiums, ballparks and arenas.

The women's tournament is coming off its most successful year ever, which included a record audience of 18.7 million for the title game won by South Carolina over Iowa, the highest for a basketball broadcast of any kind in five years.

NFL

Bears interview Steelers offensive coordinator Arthur Smith for head coaching job

Associated Press

LAKE FOREST, Ill. — The Chicago Bears interviewed Pittsburgh Steelers offensive coordinator Arthur Smith for their head coaching job on Wednesday.

Smith was hired by the Steelers a year ago after coaching Atlanta to a 21-30 record from 2021 to 2023. The Falcons were 7-10 in each of his three seasons before firing him.

The Steelers went from

trying for 27th in scoring in 2023 to finishing 16th this past season, after signing Russell Wilson and acquiring Justin Fields from Chicago to play quarterback.

The Bears are looking to replace Matt Eberflus, who was fired on Nov. 29. Chicago finished last in the NFC North at 5-12 and lost 10 in a row before closing the season with a win at Green Bay.

The development of quarterback Caleb Williams will be the top pri-

ority for the next coach in the wake of the Bears' fourth straight losing season. The No. 1 pick in last year's draft, he threw for 3,541 yards, 20 touchdowns and six interceptions. But he was sacked a franchise-record and league-leading 68 times.

Smith is the 11th candidate the Bears have confirmed interviewing, a list highlighted by Detroit Lions offensive coordinator Ben Johnson, former Seattle Seahawks coach Pete Carroll and former

Tennessee Titans coach Mike Vrabel, who got the New England job. Chicago has also interviewed interim coach Thomas Brown, former Carolina and Washington coach Ron Rivera, Detroit defensive coordinator Aaron Glenn, former Stanford coach David Shaw, Arizona Cardinals offensive coordinator Drew Petzing, Miami Dolphins defensive coordinator Anthony Weaver and New York Giants offensive coordinator Mike Kafka.

STEELERS

FROM PAGE B-1

then beginning the process in terms of decision making based on known variables."

Since Ben Roethlisberger retired following the 2021 season, the Steelers have entered each season with a different starting quarterback. It was Mitch Trubisky in 2022, Kenny Pickett in 2023 and Wilson in 2024. Wilson's two predecessors did not return after they were named the starter.

The fact the Steelers did not win a playoff game with any of those players is the reason Tomlin is undecided on his starter entering

the offseason.

"It's also been three out of the past four years we've taken a quick exit from the tournament," Tomlin said. "We're having all of those discussions and acknowledging those similarities exist. Obviously, that will be a component in our decision making."

Wilson said Monday he wanted to return, but the Steelers are going to have to weigh how Wilson and the offense finished the season and whether a 36-year-old can play the position the way the game is trending toward mobile quarterbacks.

Of the eight teams remaining in the playoffs, six have mobile quarterbacks, with the two ex-

ceptions being Matthew Stafford of the Rams and Jared Goff of the Lions. The other six are elite running quarterbacks and/or have an ability to escape the pocket to extend plays in the passing game.

Quarterback mobility has long been a preference for Tomlin at the position, and that has not changed.

"Very," Tomlin said when asked how important mobility was for him at quarterback. "But that's not a new discussion. I've expressed that in this setting and settings like this for years. The X-factor that quarterback mobility is in our game, how it's trending and has been trending is

not a new discussion."

If the Steelers cannot come to terms on a contract with Wilson or if Wilson decides to sign elsewhere in free agency, Tomlin said he believes Fields proved this season he can be a full-time starter for the Steelers.

"I thought the way he managed his professional circumstance was really impressive," Tomlin said. "I thought he brought an urgency to his day-to-day work regardless of his role. I thought he got continually better in our system of ball throughout the process. I thought the way he conducted himself makes that a legitimate thought or idea at this juncture."



AP photo

A person spins a basketball on their finger during South Carolina's practice for the NCAA Women's Final Four championship basketball game Saturday, April 6, 2024, in Cleveland.

The Dominion Post HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETES OF THE WEEK



AUSTIN HUMMEL
UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL

UHS freshman Austin Hummel sealed the deal for the Hawks over Bethel Park, Pa., last week in a highly competitive dual with a pin in the 106-pound bout. The Hawks entered the final match of the evening leading 32-30, needing a victory by Hummel, to remain undefeated at 8-0.



HANNAH STEMPL
UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL

Hannah Stemple scored 26 points on the road against Beckley in a 95-57 win for the Hawks. The senior shot 8/12 from the floor, including 6/7 from three-point range, with a broken finger on her right hand. Stemple surpassed the 1000-point mark for her career during the contest.



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AUTO RACING

JR Motorsports enters Justin Allgaier into Daytona 500 in partnership with Chris Stapleton

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — The NASCAR team owned by Hall of Famer Dale Earnhardt Jr. will attempt to make its Cup Series debut in the Daytona 500 with a champion driver and a partnership with a Grammy Award-winning artist.

JR Motorsports has entered reigning Xfinity Series champion Justin Allgaier into next month's season-opening "Great American Race" in a Chevrolet sponsored by the whiskey label created by 10-time Grammy winner Chris Stapleton. Traveller Whiskey is a collaborative blend created by Buffalo Trace Distillery with Stapleton.

Allgaier will have to qualify for the Daytona 500 — a race his boss has won twice — on either speed in time trials or via one of the qualifying races. It marks the first time in JRM history the team has entered a race in the Cup Series, and Earnhardt said the team will be focused on qualifying via speed powered by a Hendrick Motorsports engine.

The deal came together when Stapleton, who has a friendship with Rick Hendrick, approached Hendrick about a NASCAR collaboration with Traveller Whiskey. Hendrick put Stapleton in touch with Earnhardt as he also has an ownership stake with JRM.

"We had this whiskey and I always have 'pie in the sky' dreams of things to do and we knocked on the door a little bit," Stapleton told The Associated Press. "If I'm being 100% honest, I just thought it would be cool to see whiskey on a car. And he brought up Dale Jr. and I was like 'Why wouldn't we do that if we can?' This is a lot of my audience, for both whiskey and country music, and what (Earnhardt) does in auto racing."

The third-party introduction is helping Earnhardt and his sister, Kelley Earnhardt-Miller, attempt to make a dream come true for their race team.

"I shared with Rick that for a very long time that I had a dream, at one time in my life, of entering the Daytona 500 as a car



AP photo
Driver Justin Allgaier gets in his car before a NASCAR Xfinity Series auto race, Saturday, Nov. 9, 2024, in Avondale, Ariz.

owner," Earnhardt told AP. "Rick presented the opportunity to connect with Chris and his team, they were interested in marketing in our sport, and Rick knew that I was wanting to fulfill this opportunity. It was like two people that wanted the same thing."

The Earnhardts have led JRM to 88 Xfinity Series victories with drivers Chase Elliott, William Byron, Tyler Reddick and Allgaier last November. JRM is starting its 24th year of overall competition with four cars in NA-

SCAR's second-tier Xfinity Series.

JRM has never attempted to enter a Cup race. The Earnhardts have expressed interest in moving up to Cup competition, but have balked at purchasing the eight-figure charter needed to compete.

Earnhardt said there have been no discussions on future Cup ventures for JRM beyond trying to make the Daytona 500. It will be a high-pressure situation for the Greg Ives-led team as Earnhardt has warned them he and

his sister will be hovering from the moment the car is unloaded at Daytona Beach International Speedway through every mile it turns on the track.

Stapleton also plans to attend what will be his first Daytona 500. He and Earnhardt said the musician was intricately involved in the car design, which Stapleton saw in person for the first time Wednesday.

"I'm a bit of a retro guy, I like things that are kind of a throwback," Stapleton said. "So I was looking for a little bit of that flavor in the car, but also something that really blended JR Motorsports and Traveller Whiskey. It had to look like both of those things and I think we achieved it."

Aside from promoting his whiskey, Stapleton is hoping the Daytona 500 turns into a core memory of his accomplished career.

"I wanted to build a thing — I wanted to see the car and I want to see it run. And that, for me, would be the victory," Stapleton said. "And I want the moment of it. It's just like going to the Super

Bowl and getting to stay on the sidelines. That's what I want. I want the moment, the moment of the synergy that is happening."

"Whatever comes of it, we still did it."

Allgaier is the defending Xfinity Series champion and former Cup Series driver who ran the Daytona 500 in 2014 and 2015. His most recent time in a Cup car was last May as the substitute driver for Kyle Larson as Larson attempted to compete in both the Coca-Cola 600 and Indianapolis 500 on the same day.

Allgaier started the Coke 600 for Larson and was credited with a 13th-place finish when the race was called for rain.

"This is an incredible honor to be driving JR Motorsports' inaugural entry into the Cup Series," said Allgaier. "Entering into the Daytona 500 has been a goal of this company for a long time and I know that we are going to have everything we need to go out and contend for the win. This is going to be special for sure."

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Urban Meyer joins Nick Saban in College Football HOF's Class of 2025; Vick, Strahan also elected

Associated Press

Urban Meyer will join Nick Saban in the 2025 College Football Hall of Fame class, and Michael Vick and Michael Strahan are among the former players who will be inducted.

The National Football Foundation announced Saban's selection last week and the rest of the 18-player, four-coach class on Wednesday.

Saban retired last year as the NCAA's active leader in wins with 292-71-1 over 28 seasons at Toledo, Michigan State, LSU and Alabama. His seven national championships — one at LSU, six at Alabama — are most by a Football Bowl Subdivision coach.

Meyer was 187-32 with three national championships over 17 seasons at Bowling Green, Utah, Florida and Ohio State. He won 22 of 24 games at Utah before taking over at Florida, where he won national titles in 2006 and 2008. He moved to Ohio State in 2012, won his third national championship in 2014 and went 83-9 over seven seasons.

Vick was the consummate dual-threat quarterback in his two seasons at Virginia Tech, where he



AP photo

Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer watches from the sidelines during the second half of the Big Ten Conference championship NCAA college football game against Wisconsin Saturday, Dec. 6, 2014, in Indianapolis.

led the Hokies to a 22-2 record and the 1999 national championship game. His 13-year NFL career was interrupted by his 2007 conviction for his involvement in a dogfighting ring. He pleaded guilty and served 21 months in federal prison before resuming his career in 2009. Last month he was hired as Norfolk State's head coach.

Strahan, now co-host on ABC's Good Morning America and a FOX NFL Sunday analyst, was a terror as a defensive lineman for Texas Southern from 1989-92. He recorded 41.5 sacks in four seasons before he went on to play 15

seasons for the New York Giants. He was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2014.

Terry Hanratty, 24-4-2 as Ara Parseghian's quarterback at Notre Dame from 1966-68, also was selected. He helped lead the 1966 team to a share of the national championship and joins teammates Jim Lynch, Alan Page and Joe Theismann in the Hall of Fame.

Among other picks was Wisconsin's Montee Ball, who won the 2012 Doak Walker Award as the nation's best running back. The year before he tied Barry Sanders' NCAA record of 39 total touch-

downs in a season. He finished his career with 5,140 rushing yards, averaging 104.9 per game, and 77 rushing touchdowns.

Other players in the 2025 class are Gregg Carr of Auburn, Blake Elliott of Saint John's (Minnesota), Greg Eslinger of Minnesota, Graham Harrell of Texas Tech, John Henderson of Tennessee, Michael Huff of Texas, Jim Kleinsasser of North Dakota, Alex Mack of California, Terrence Metcalf of Mississippi, Haloti Ngata of Oregon, Steve Slaton of West Virginia, Darrin Smith of Miami, Dennis Thurman of Southern California and Ryan Yarbrough of Wyoming.

Other coaches in the class are Larry Blakeney of Troy and Larry "Bub" Korver of Northwestern College (Iowa). Blakeney guided the Trojans from Division II to the FBS from 1991-2014 and remains the Sun Belt Conference's coaching wins leader with a 178-113-1 record. Korver was 212-77-6 with two NAIA championships in 28 years (1967-94) at Northwestern.

The 2025 class will be inducted Dec. 9 during an awards dinner in Las Vegas. The Hall of Fame is in Atlanta.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

TCU women went from forfeiting games to a top-10 team atop Big 12

Associated Press

FORT WORTH, Texas — The TCU women had to forfeit two games and conduct open tryouts on campus last January because they didn't have enough healthy players.

A year later, with Sedona Prince and Madison Conner both healthy and joined in the lineup by standout transfer Hailey Van Lith, the Horned Frogs (18-1) are a top-10 team and on a nine-game winning streak that includes their first 6-0 start in the Big 12 Conference.

"Gone from the 'Underfrogs' and holding open tryouts to this week being ranked in the top 10 ... it's been a very magical ride," second-year TCU coach Mark Campbell said.

TCU won its first 14 games in Campbell's debut last season, but Prince (broken finger) and Conner (MCL) got sidelined by injuries and Owens sustained a season-ending knee injury within a couple of weeks after that school-record start. That left the Frogs with six available scholarship players, and two of them were on minutes restrictions coming off their own injuries.

About 40 students then went through tryouts on campus the same week that TCU forfeited Big 12 games against Kansas State and Iowa State. No. 9. Four of them were added to the roster before the season resumed with a 66-60 win at home last

Jan. 23 over UCF, the same team the 10th-ranked Frogs beat 90-81 at home Tuesday night for their second nine-game winning streak this season.

"The game that laid the foundation for TCU was a year ago when we played UCF here," Campbell said after the latest win over the Knights. "Today was a really special game for our program, for the people that were a part of that game a year ago. There's a huge mural in our offices of pictures from that game that will be up there as long as I get to coach here."

The 6-foot-7 Prince had 27 points on 11-of-15 shooting and seven rebounds against UCF this week. Van Lith scored 20 points while matching her career high with six 3-pointers and had seven assists without a turnover, while Conner made four 3s while scoring 14 points and having six assists. The Frogs had assists on 29 of their 32 made field goals and finished with 15 3-pointers, their most ever in a Big 12 game.

TCU's current nine-game winning streak followed an 85-52 loss to reigning national champion South Carolina on Dec. 8. That came at the end of the first week that the Frogs had ever been in the top 10 — then at No. 9.

"The Frogs are seeking their first NCAA Tournament appearance since 2010.



AP photo

South Carolina forward Ashlyn Watkins (2) works to pass the ball as TCU's Sedona Prince (13) and Hailey Van Lith (10) defend in the second half of an NCAA college basketball game in Fort Worth, Texas, Sunday, Dec. 8, 2024.

NFL

Browns sued by city over possible move from Cleveland to proposed domed stadium in suburbs

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Cleveland's fight to keep the Browns from moving from downtown and into a proposed dome in the suburbs has taken yet another legal turn.

The city has filed a lawsuit to stop the NFL team from leaving Cleveland's lakefront when its stadium lease expires after the 2028 season. Team owners Dee and Jimmy Haslam intend to build a \$2.4 billion stadium and adjacent entertainment complex in Brook Park, Ohio, 15 miles south of the city.

Cleveland filed the lawsuit in the Cuyahoga

County Common Pleas Court on Tuesday.

It's the latest twist in a struggle that has history and familiarity to Browns fans, who felt betrayed in 1995 when late owner Art Modell, unable to strike a deal with the city to get a new stadium, moved the franchise to Baltimore.

That messy situation led to the enactment of the "Modell Law," which in part says that any professional sports team that uses state funding for its facility for home games can't leave without permission or providing advance notice.

The law, passed in 1996,

also gives residents a chance to buy the team or find a new buyer. In the lawsuit, the city claims the Browns violated the law by not doing either.

The Browns have not commented on the city's lawsuit.

In October, the team informed Cleveland Mayor Justin Bibb of its intentions to build the state-of-the-art stadium, which the Browns have proposed being partially funded by public money. Cleveland has been in its current home, Huntington Bank Field, since 1999 when the city was awarded an expansion team following

Modell's exit.

The team has filed its own lawsuit seeking clarity on the "Modell Law." That federal case is pending.

The Haslams previously benefited from the Modell Law. When it was enacted to keep the Columbus Crew of Major League Soccer from leaving Ohio's state capital in 2019, the Haslams bought the franchise. Haslam Sports Group also has a minority ownership stake in the NBA's Milwaukee Bucks.

The city had previously offered the Browns \$461 million to help with renovations to their current 65,000-seat stadium.

78336 Jan. 9, 16
Notice of Ancillary Filing without Administration to Creditors, Distributees & Legatees

Notice is hereby given that the following foreign will or affidavit of heirs has been filed in the Monongalia County Clerk's Office at 243 High Street, Room 123 Morgantown, WV 26505-5461 and no appointment or administration is being made pursuant to the provisions of West Virginia Code 44-1-14b. An interested person objecting to the filing of the foreign will or affidavit or objecting to the absence of appointment or administration being made in this state must file a statement with the Monongalia County Commission through the Monongalia County Clerk's Office at the address listed above within 60 days after the date of first publication or 30 days of service of the notice, whichever is later. If an objection is not timely filed, the objection is forever barred. The Monongalia County Commission upon receiving any timely objection thereto shall schedule a hearing or hearings thereon and order relief, if any, it considers proper including, but not limited to, an order directing that full and complete ancillary administration of the estate of the nonresident decedent be made in this state.

First Publication Date: Thursday, January 9, 2025

ESTATE OF

THOMAS N. COWELL DECEASED
 1374 MOUNT PLEASANT ROAD HEMPFIELD TOWNSHIP PA 15601

AFFIANT

SHARON KOLSON AFFIANT
 4802 GREENHEAD CT MURRYSVILLE PA 15668

ESTATE OF

JOHN ROBIN MOORE DECEASED
 14907 VIEW CREST ROAD CUMBERLAND MARYLAND 21502

AFFIANT

JONATHAN RYAN MOORE AFFIANT
 5665 OLD FARM CT COLUMBUS OH 43213

ESTATE OF

GEORGE W. RADABAUGH AKA GEORGE WASHINGTON RADABAUGH, GEORGE RADABAUGH DECEASED
 3001 GRAFTON RD GRAFTON OH 44044

AFFIANT

DIANA K. MANNING AFFIANT
 1009 SHADE CREED ROAD VICTOR WV 25938

Subscribed and sworn to before me on Wednesday, January 8, 2025

Carye L. Blaney
 Carye L. Blaney
 Clerk of the Monongalia County Commission

78335 Jan. 9, 16
Notice of Administration to Creditors, Distributees & Legatees

Notice is hereby given that the following estate(s) have been opened for probate in the Monongalia County Clerk's Office at 243 High Street, Room 123 Morgantown, WV 26505-5461. Any person seeking to impeach or establish a will must make a complaint in accordance with the provisions of West Virginia Code 41-5-11 through 13. Any interested person objecting to the qualifications of the personal representative or the venue or jurisdiction of the court, shall file written notice of an objection with the County Commission through the Monongalia County Clerk's Office at the address listed above within 60 days after the date of the first publication or within 30 days of the service of the notice, whichever is later. If an objection is not filed timely, the objection is forever barred. Any person interested in filing claims against an estate must file them within 60 days of the date of first publication in accordance with West Virginia Code 44-2.

Settlement of the estate(s) of the following named decedent(s) will proceed without reference to a fiduciary commissioner unless within 60 days from the first publication of this notice a reference is requested by a party of interest or an unpaid creditor files a claim and good cause is shown to support reference to a fiduciary commissioner.

First Publication Date: Thursday, January 9, 2025
 Claim Deadline: Monday, March 10, 2025

Estate Name:	TERRY RAY PRICE
Executor:	John T. Price 145 Meadowview Dr., Howell MI 48843
Estate Name:	DAVID A. BLONIARZ
Executrix:	Sandra Lee White 220 Sherwood Street Morgantown WV 26505-3118
Attorney:	Karen Hall, Esq. 235 High Street Suite 422, Morgantown WV 26505-5447
Estate Name:	KAREN TIBBS AKA KAREN WOLFE TIBBS
Executrix:	Krista R. Tibbs Aka Krista Renee Tibbs 460 Blackberry Ridge, Morgantown WV 26508-4869
Attorney:	Wendy Gail Alke
Estate Name:	CAROLYN HAGEN JACOBS HAMPSON
Administrator:	Sheriff Of Monongalia County 116 Walnut Street, Morgantown WV 26505-5422
Estate Name:	SHIRLEY CRESS
Executor:	Ronald A. Cress 17188 Magic Mountain Dr., Round Hill VA 20141-4401
Estate Name:	GEORGE C. POOLE AKA GEORGE CALVIN POOLE
Executor:	Jeffrey S. Poole 636 Kingwood Pike, Morgantown WV 26508-3966
Estate Name:	BRADLEY WAYNE THOMAS
Executrix:	Germaine Thomas 4115 Cove Point Dr., Morgantown WV 26508-8679
Estate Name:	STEVE ANTHONY MORRIS
Executrix:	Mary Lou Morris 1026 Bakers Ridge Road, Morgantown WV 26508-1593
Estate Name:	PATRICK EUGENE DEBERRY
Administratrix:	Patricia Faye Schamberger 401 Alexandria Dr., Reedsville WV 26547-2003
Estate Name:	EILEEN T. FORD
Executor:	Arthur L. Ford 283 Spring Street, Morgantown WV 26505-3531
Estate Name:	BARBARA J. GUTMAN
Executrix:	Dan J. Krupp 17020 Duck Lane, Haymarket Va 20169
Attorney:	Michael W. Barill, Esq. Steptoe & Johnson PLLC Po Box 1616, Morgantown WV 26507-1616
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Co Executrix:	Joyce A. Riffel Nka Joyce Agnes Field 1009 Dawson Rd., Princeton KY 42445-6214
Co Executrix:	Blanche L. Field Nka Blanche Leslie Kessler 65 Dawson Rd., Morgantown WV 26501-7618
Estate Name:	SARAH P. WHITTY
Executrix:	Susannah W. Azzaro 447 Marietta Place, Pittsburgh PA 15228-1230
Estate Name:	PATRICIA SUE MALOTT
Administratrix:	Trisha Malott Po Box 776, Dellslow WV 26531-0776
Estate Name:	MICHAEL JAMES JACKSON
Administratrix:	Catherine Oneal 443 Washington St., Morgantown WV 26501-6646
Estate Name:	ABNASH C. JAIN
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Attorney:	Michael W. Barill, Esq. Steptoe & Johnson PLLC Po Box 1616, Morgantown WV 26507-1616
Estate Name:	SYLVIA ELAINE BELT
Executrix:	Tina Marita Hartzell 918 Bakers Ridge Rd., Morgantown WV 26508-1436
Fiduciary:	Beth L. Umina
Commissioner:	125 Green Bag Rd., Morgantown WV 26501-7157
Estate Name:	ANTHONY P. BARILL
Executrix:	Sherri L. Pisegna 214 Poplar Dr., Morgantown WV 26505-2539
Estate Name:	WILLARD DAVID DEAVERS
Administrator:	Alan Hubert Deavers 1069 Aarons Creek Rd., Morgantown WV 26508
Estate Name:	ROSELLA ANNE MURRAY
Executrix:	Lori Jean Mobley 74 New Hill Rd., Madsville WV 26541-8102
Estate Name:	DAVID KENT SUMMERS
Executor:	David Michael Summers 66 Central Ave., East Falmouth MA 02536-6218
Fiduciary:	George B. Armistead
Commissioner:	Po Box 835, Morgantown WV 26507-0835
Estate Name:	WILDA C. MICHAEL
Administrator:	Freddie W. Eddy II 1937 Daybrook Rd., Fairview WV 26570-9207
Estate Name:	DEBRA MANCINI AKA DEBRA MARIE MANCINI
Administrator:	Steven Mancini 109 Bonita Dr., Hampton VA 23664-1905
Estate Name:	THOMAS P. KILIONSKI AKA THOMAS P. KILIONSKI SR.
Co Executor:	Thomas Kilionski Jr. 66 Lawrence St., Morgantown WV 26508-6244
Co Executor:	Stephen Kilionski Po Box 232, Great Bend NY 13643-0232
Estate Name:	GREGORY T. NICHOLSON
Executrix:	Dianna Mccune 520 Herman Avenue, Star City WV 26505-2032
Estate Name:	BERNARD IVAN SWINNEY
Administratrix:	Debra Ann Swinney 668 E Brockway Ave., Morgantown WV 26501-6216
Estate Name:	BONNIE SUE ST. CLAIR
Executrix:	Leslie R. St. Clair 565 Burroughs Street, Morgantown WV 26505-3354

Subscribed and sworn to before me on 1/8/2025

Carye L. Blaney
 Carye L. Blaney
 Clerk of the Monongalia County Commission



The Beaver Excavating Company is looking for a goal-driven Project Manager/Estimator to work as part of our team in Morgantown, WV. This position is responsible for all aspects of the planning and execution of assigned projects. This position works closely with project superintendents, owners, engineers, and construction managers. In addition, this role supervises and trains project engineers and other related project staff.

The Project Manager/Estimator creates clear and attainable project objectives while keeping a focus on quality, cost, and time. This role advocates a teamwork approach and keeps the lines of communication open to ensure the best possible outcome for the customer.

Main Job Tasks & Responsibilities:

- Actively participates in ensuring job site safety according to Beaver safety policies
- Runs 'Pre-Job', 'Mid-Job', and 'Post-Job' meetings
- Communicates production goals clearly to field supervision
- Manages multiple projects at one time
- Develops and communicates project schedule
- Ensures that the activities of subcontractors and suppliers are monitored, completed appropriately, and are understood by job site Superintendents and Foreman
- Ensures that subcontracts and purchase orders are completed correctly with all pertinent information and submitted in a timely fashion
- Provides mentorship to subcontractors to meet project goals and requirements
- Communicates with owners and their representatives regarding budgets, schedules, and change management in a professional manner, ensuring a long term relationship
- Leads project reviews and problem resolution with owners, subcontractors, and suppliers
- Responds timely to customer's needs without compromising safety, quality, or reputation
- Coordinates project close-out and ensures completion of proper documentation
- Maintains project quality and conformance to drawings and specifications
- Seeks to meet project DBE, MBE, and EEO requirements
- Informs customers of the Beaver Companies' abilities and areas of expertise
- Maintains a vision of value engineering and actively pursues implementation within the project
- Proactively looks ahead to identify and avoid potential challenges
- Maintains full awareness of all current project conditions and issues, including union, environment, geotechnical, government regulations and permits, materials supply, subcontractors, and schedules

Marketing & New Work Development Responsibilities:

- Develops and maintains positive relationships both publicly and professionally in and outside of the workplace

Management & Development Responsibilities:

- Weighs-in on performance reviews for assigned personnel when necessary
- Estimating & Bidding Responsibilities: Accurately and efficiently bids projects
- Develops pricing for RFPs, change orders, change authorizations, bulletins, etc.
- Demonstrates a thorough understanding of how each project was bid and communicates efficiently with project Superintendents.

Cost Management Responsibilities:

- Identifies and manages project scope changes
- Coordinates job set-up, cost codes, and reporting project costs
- Manages project payment applications
- Tracks quantities to update project revenues
- Directs pre-job planning, turnover, lessons learned, etc.
- Manages project claims and change orders
- Takes the lead to address and solve issues that impact safety, job costs, production, quality, and profitability

Responsibilities and tasks outlined in this document are not exhaustive and may change as determined by the needs of the company

Skills & Requirements:

- Ability to demonstrate an understanding of industry practices and the impacts of project activities
- Excellent written and verbal communication
- Strong organizational and prioritization skills
- Strong leadership skills and complex problem-solving skills as it relates to customers, equipment, personnel, subcontractors, suppliers, governmental agencies, etc.
- Competent use of MS Office and construction software skills
- Demonstrates respect for coworkers and customers

Education & Experience:

- Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering, Construction Management or equivalent required; equivalent field experience will be considered
- 5 years' experience in the construction industry required
- Previous field experience preferred
- Previous experience in a supervisory role preferred

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TO YOUR GOOD HEALTH

Double-check for drug interactions when taking new medicines

DEAR DR. ROACH: My wife was recently discharged after a lengthy hospital stay with multiple diagnoses. Most of her issues were treated medically and resulted in six new medications from four different medical disciplines, in addition to three other medications that were prescribed pre-hospitalization.

Finding drug interactions was fairly easy online, and the hospital's discharge papers indicated dosing by morning, noon and night. However, some of the drugs need to be spaced out a few hours apart, and this wasn't explained in my wife's discharge papers. I had to research those intervals on my own.

Using an online spreadsheet, I was able to create a daily schedule to be sure that the drug interactions are held to a minimum. My question is: Is it common practice to discharge patients without a clearer idea of when their medications should be taken? -- E.W.

ANSWER: When a person is taken care of by multiple providers, there is always the risk that nobody is looking at the whole person's history, and medication interactions are among the many problems that can occur. Having a regular physician, such as a family physician or

internist, can help avoid the exact problem you've identified.

However, the person's regular doctor needs the up-to-date information, which is sometimes lacking. Very few people do what you do, and I admire your dedication and thoroughness. However, the online programs don't always make it clear whether a drug interaction is high-risk. Many interactions that my program alerts me to have minimal or no clinical significance. It takes clinical judgment to be able to interpret these.

One person who has the training to help and is often overlooked is your pharmacist. I strongly recommend getting all your prescriptions in one place and speaking to the pharmacist after an enormous change in your medical regimen, such as the six new medicines your wife started. The timing of medicines consists of both art and science, but some interactions cannot be overcome by changing the timing. So, an expert, either her doctor or pharmacist, is needed.

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

Since we only see our half of relationships, it's impossible to know how the other person might be experiencing it, but oh, how we'll try in the afterglow of the Cold Moon.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). There's someone you haven't spoken to in a while, and now's the perfect time to reconnect. Strike a casual yet respectful tone. Navigating this subtle balance makes all the difference in creating a meaningful and influential connection.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You may doubt you can accomplish what's asked, but extend a little faith. Dismissing belief is for the unimaginative. You're far too creative for that. Wear belief like a cape and you may actually fly.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). People who turn to you for insights may not listen when you give them. Why is this? Because most people who ask for advice really want something else -- attention, to make a sale, compliments, etc.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). It's thrilling when everything is moving fast and lots is happening simultaneously. Though it may feel like a bit of a blur as you're going through it, later you'll count this among your most productive days.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You've racked up some incredible achievements, but bragging about them isn't your style. You're not stuck in yesterday's victories; your heart is firmly fixed on the horizon. You sense the best is yet to come.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Your ability to focus amidst chaos is unmatched. While

others scramble, you remain calm, wait for opportunity and do the one thing that solves 12 problems. Your influence will grow.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). There are people lost along a route you know all too well. You can help them find their way, but remember -- it's more effective to guide them toward meeting their needs than to try to fulfill all their desires yourself.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Contributions fuel today's exchanges. The support you'll receive comes from those you've already backed; relationships thrive on reciprocity. If you've yet to invest, don't expect a return.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). There you go again, effortlessly enchanting those unprepared for your charms. Keep it up and you might just make someone fall head over heels. This power isn't one to take lightly, though.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Your social savvy naturally guides you toward a light touch, polite candor and the wisdom of listening more than speaking. Skimming the surface of conversation can still convey key ideas and spark rapport.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Some people have a way of turning everything into a contest. You'll have some stiff competition even if you don't start off with an awareness that this is, indeed, a game. Even so, you have as good a chance at the prize as any.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). The early days of a relationship set the tone for everything that follows. Knowing that key expectations are being established, be mindful of your words.

CROSSWORD

- ACROSS**
- 1 Buck's mate
 - 4 Italian wine region
 - 8 "Fernando" group
 - 12 Likely
 - 13 Bar order
 - 14 Grow tepid
 - 15 Calendar abbr.
 - 16 Some children
 - 17 Fossil fuel
 - 18 Accomplish
 - 20 Cartoon — Boop
 - 21 Have being
 - 22 Dandy
 - 23 Stone that sparks
 - 26 Conspired
 - 30 Young man
 - 31 Mermaid's home
 - 32 Physicians' org.
 - 33 Rime
 - 34 Put a spell on
 - 35 Cup edge
 - 36 Crying
 - 39 Disagreeable job
- DOWN**
- 41 Unfashionable
 - 42 Small
 - 43 Special talent
 - 46 Judge's office
 - 50 Nobleman
 - 51 San — Obispo
 - 52 Kimono sash
 - 53 Poker payment
 - 54 Sea eagle
 - 55 Scam
 - 56 Marsh plant
 - 57 Ownership proof
 - 58 Plus

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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

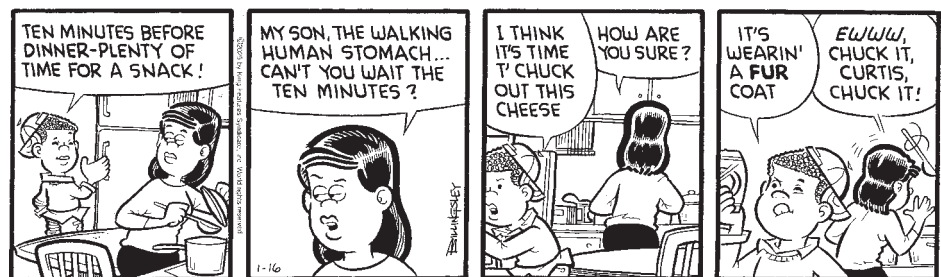
- 8 Take willingly
- 9 Italy's shape
- 10 Watercraft
- 11 Friend
- 19 Writer — Fleming
- 20 Scary yell
- 22 Fiber plant
- 23 Dart
- 24 Dolly material
- 25 "What's the big —?"
- 26 Skin
- 27 Poi source
- 28 Arab ruler
- 29 Noblewoman
- 31 "Eyes Wide —"
- 37 Made turbid
- 38 Animal pelt
- 39 Stopped
- 40 — and haw
- 42 Complain
- 43 Dread
- 44 Highway division
- 45 Commedia dell'—
- 46 Panacea
- 47 — Raton, Florida
- 48 Black
- 49 Orange zest
- 51 Conducted

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15				16				17		
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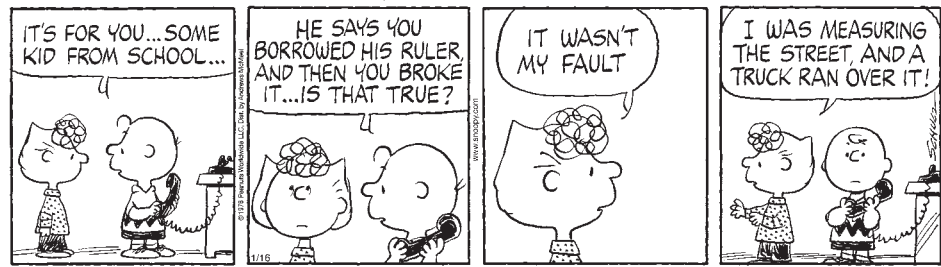
CURTIS

BY RAY BILLINGSLEY



PEANUTS

BY CHARLES M. SCHULZ



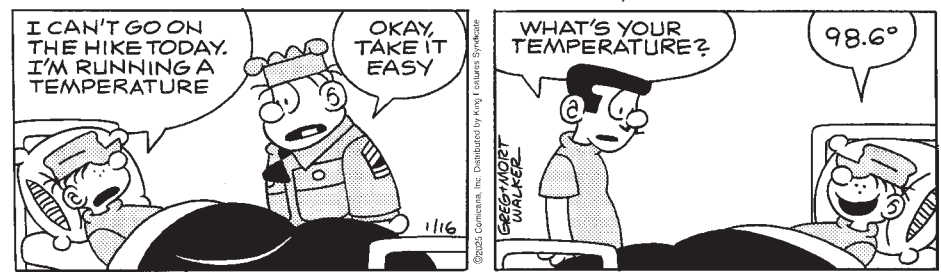
THE GRIZZWELLS

BY BILL SCHORR



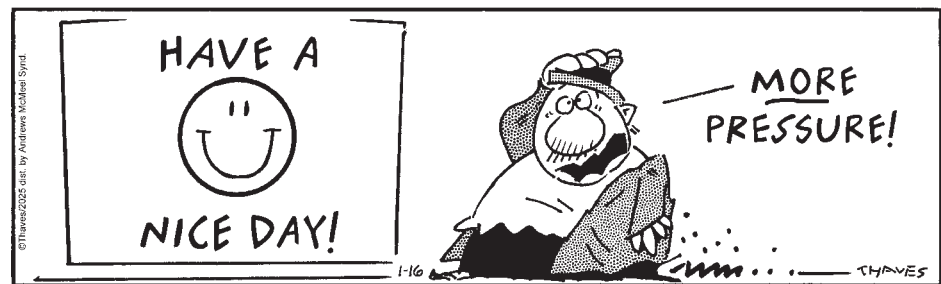
BEETLE BAILEY

BY GREG, BRIAN & NEAL WALKER



FRANK & ERNEST

BY BOB THAVES



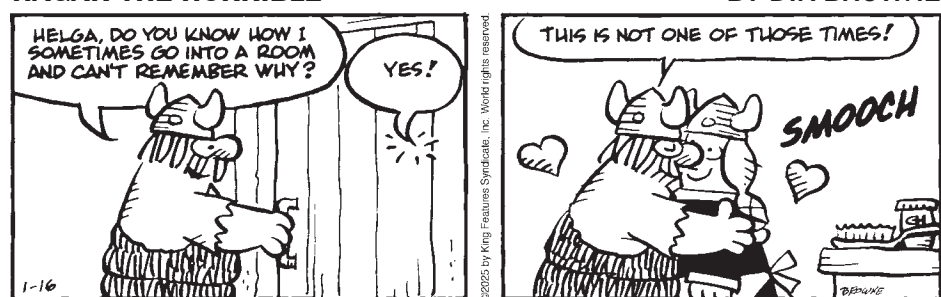
BORN LOSER

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).

5 6 4 1 3
 7 2 8 1
 1 3 6
 7 9 2 5
 5 7 1 3
 1 2 8 7
 3 2 4
 7 4 5 2
 9 3 6 5 7

Rating: BRONZE

Solution to 1/15/25

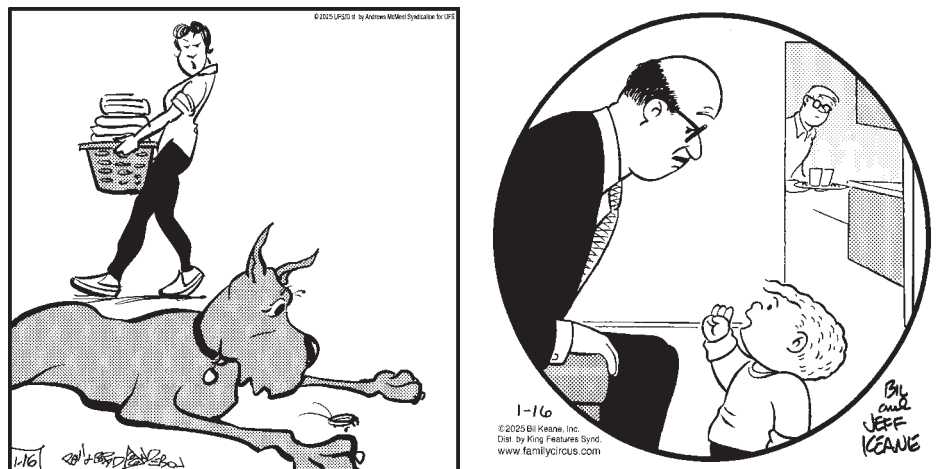
4	2	1	9	5	3	7	6	8
7	3	8	1	4	6	9	5	2
9	6	5	2	7	8	1	3	4
1	4	7	5	3	9	8	2	6
6	8	3	4	2	1	5	9	7
2	5	9	6	8	7	3	4	1
8	9	4	7	6	5	2	1	3
5	7	2	3	1	4	6	8	9
3	1	6	8	9	2	4	7	5

MARMADUKE

BY BRAD & PAUL ANDERSON

FAMILY CIRCUS

BY BIL KEANE



BLONDIE

BY DEAN YOUNG & JOHN MARSHALL



GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS



MUTTS

BY PATRICK MCDONNELL

