

WVDN APR 14, 2021



Table of Contents

- Fun Day Planned For Dogs And Their Families 1**
- Dandelion Festival Returns in 2021 2**
- WVSOM Community Remembers Lives Lost To COVID-19 3**
- Courthouse Farmers Market Returns For New Season 5**
- Mother-Daughter Fight Leads To Threats Of Leaving Home 6**
- W.Va. High School Basketball 8**
- Lady Spartans Win Last Three of Regular Season 9**
- An Open Letter To Our Citizens 12**
- Rainelle Hires New Patrolman 13**
- Greater Greenbrier COVID-19 Task Force April 13 Meeting 16**
- West Virginia governor makes plea for more shots in arms 17**
- WVU pauses Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine amid concerns 19**
- Roy “Wally” “Gator” Wallace Bowyer 19**
- Betty Jane Runyon Holliday 20**
- WV 311 Bridge, I-64 Westbound Ramp 20**
- Guest Commentary: The Back Pew (4-14-21) 21**

Fun Day Planned For Dogs And Their Families

By Theresa Flerx WVDN | WVDN APR 14, 2021



The first-ever Fun Dog Show will be held at the Sweet Springs Resort Park on Sunday, April 18.

Adults and children may enter their canine friends to vie for a Best of Show trophy or 1st, 2nd, or 3rd place ribbon; best costume, best trick, dog/owner look-a-like, longest kiss with your dog, loudest dog, biggest dog, smallest dog, find the rat, and an agility course.

Terri Browne and Paula Mann will be judging the event.

Children under 12 years of age must be accompanied by an adult. No aggressive dogs will be permitted.

Registration will be held from 12-12:30 p.m. for the 1 p.m. start. The entry fee is \$7 for the first dog and \$10 for two dogs.

Face masks and social distancing will be observed. Door prizes will be offered.

For more information, call 304-832-6532.

Bring a chair to watch the fun, or participate, either way, help make this show a success to ensure the event comes back year after year.

Dandelion Festival Returns in 2021

By Rebecca Stalnaker | WVDN APR 14, 2021



After being canceled in 2020 due to the ongoing pandemic, the Dandelion Festival is coming back to White Sulphur Springs in May 2021.

While there are going to be some differences this year, festival-goers can expect much of the same events. This includes a parade, live music, veteran's services, and children's activities.

However, according to Katherine Shelton, the vice president of the West Virginia Dandelion Festival Committee and pageant director, there are a few things that will not be back until 2022. One of the primary events this affects is the art show.

Shelton said that she is excited to be "able to safely allow folks to get out and enjoy all of the beautiful updates that have been happening to downtown White Sulphur Springs. It is amazing! The energy in White Sulphur Springs and the ongoing efforts to keep traditions alive while staying current."

There are many things that make this festival special. According to Shelton, one is that "every year our festival includes a free luncheon for all veterans and their families followed by a memorial service honoring those residents who served our country over the years."

Shelton went on to say that she felt the luncheon is a beautiful way to "round out our weekend events."

Honoring and remembering.”

The festival, which takes place on Memorial Day weekend, May 28-30, will also include fun events for both children and adults. There will be multiple free children’s activities throughout the weekend event.

For adults, there will be an event taking place on the first day of the festival, May 28, called a Sip and Stroll at Valley View Country Club Golf Course on Big Draft Road. There will be wine and beer tastings at every stop as well as some non-alcoholic beverages. Shelton said, “the dollars raised go to a great cause.” She also said that tickets for this event are available at the Valley View Country Club Golf Course.

In addition to all of the activities geared toward either children or adults, there are also activities for the entire family to enjoy. This includes shopping specials from downtown merchants, a cruise-in and more. There is something for everyone at the West Virginia Dandelion Festival in White Sulphur Springs.

For more information, keep a check on the “WV Dandelion Festival” Facebook for updates.

Dandelions, while considered weeds by most, are actually fascinating plants. According to Healthline, they have several health benefits. For example, dandelion greens contain vitamins such as A, C, K, E and a small amount of B vitamins as well as folate. In addition to this, dandelions are also full of antioxidants. Because of this, dandelions are so much more than just a “weed.” Celebrate the humble plant while enjoying a fun weekend at the 2021 West Virginia Dandelion Festival.

WVSOM Community Remembers Lives Lost To COVID-19

By WV Daily News | WVDN APR 14, 2021



LEWISBURG, W.Va. – West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine (WVSOM) students and employees spent “A Night to Remember” reflecting on the lives that have been lost to the COVID-19 pandemic and those who have been personally affected.

The luminaria event, which took place April 12 at the parade field on WVSOM’s campus in Lewisburg, W.Va., was organized by the school’s Stress Relief Task Force, a group through which students can make WVSOM administrators aware of their pandemic-related concerns.

“A lot of people have been affected by the loss of family members and friends. This is a simple way we could address and support those people,” said Julianna Quick, a WVSOM learning specialist and student counselor who organized the event.

About 700 bags were lit and placed along the perimeter of the parade field, and bags that spelled out the word “hope” were placed on the steps of the school’s amphitheater.

First-year student Austin Martin attended the event to honor his grandfather who passed away on Dec. 19 from COVID-19, just two days after classes ended for the holiday break. He paid tribute to his grandfather — a cancer survivor — by wearing his hat and jacket, and assisting with filling luminaria bags with sand and lighting their candles.

Martin was able to spend his grandfather’s final days with him, an experience he said he thinks will make him a more empathetic doctor.

“I think being there in his final days will influence how I interact with patients’ families,” he said. “I think it will amplify my compassion for patients and their loved ones.”

Abundance Hunt was another first-year student who attended the event. Before medical school, she worked at an outdoor COVID-19 testing unit at the Robert C. Byrd Clinic in Lewisburg.

Serving the community in which she grew up and witnessing the pandemic on the front lines was a valuable experience for an incoming medical student, she said.

“It opened my eyes to what I’d be doing and how this is an ever-changing and fluid career,” Hunt said. “I’m excited to be part of the change that’s going to come from it.”

Courthouse Farmers Market Returns For New Season

By autumn shelton wvdn | WVDN APR 14, 2021



The Courthouse Farmers Market is returning for another season at the WV State Fairgrounds.

Josh Peplowski, agriculture and natural resource agent at the Greenbrier County WVU Extension Service, said opening day for the popular market will take place on Saturday, April 17, from 8 a.m. until noon.

About 12-15 vendors selling a variety of goods including lamb, pork, greens, eggs and more will set up in the free parking lot area of the fairgrounds, Peplowski said.

Because of Covid, more people have become interested in eating local foods, Peplowski continued. As a result, the market continues to grow. This year, the market will feature new vendors.

“I think this season will be better than ever before,” Peplowski added.

Additionally, customers can visit the Courthouse Farmers Market Facebook page to see local vendors, reach out to them and place orders for items.

A menu will be placed on the group’s page as soon as possible, Peplowski noted.

The Courthouse Farmers Market is organized by members of the WVU Extension office, the Greenbrier County Commission and others.

The market will take place every Saturday until the season ends in October.

Mother-Daughter Fight Leads To Threats Of Leaving Home

By abigail van buren | WVDN APR 14, 2021



Dear Abby: My best friend (since we were babies) and I are having a disagreement. She had two kids when she was 16 and 17 who are now in their early 20s. One of them still lives rent-free under her roof.

My friend struggled her whole life but got a college degree, bought a house five years ago and owns two cars all on her own. She has recently started having friends over on the weekends and drinking. While I don't do that, I understand she had kids early and wants to have a little fun now in her 40s. She's very responsible and pays her bills.

The other day I walked in and her daughter started screaming at me that I need to tell her mom to stop and saying that she was moving out. I was shocked that she spoke to me that way.

My friend started crying because she loves her daughter and doesn't want her to move. I say, let her go. She needs to learn to respect her elders, and she'll soon realize living on her own isn't easy. My friend didn't agree and hasn't said anything to her daughter about how she spoke to both of us. I want to help my friend because she comes to me for advice, but I don't know how. — **Disapproving**

Dear Friend: People often say things in the heat of anger. You walked in on a fight between your friend and her daughter. You have no idea what started it, and you shouldn't have inserted yourself. When you tried to "help," your input was rejected.

You have already said enough. Now, resist the impulse to stir the pot and step back so your friend can handle this herself.

Dear Abby: I come from a family with incest and physical and psychological abuse. I need to talk with my little sister about it. How do I get through it without breaking down before I can help her? My little brother died by suicide six months ago. I have been having nightmares over it. How do I go about getting through to her about it all? — **Bad History In Idaho**

Dear Bad History: Before attempting to do that, it's important that you talk with a licensed therapist about what happened to you in that unhealthy environment. Once that is done, ask if you can bring your little sister to some sessions.

It is tragic that your brother was so damaged by the abuse he received that he could not go on, and I respect you for wanting to prevent something similar from happening to your sister. Groups such as the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (afsp.org) offer counseling referrals after a family member takes his own life. You may be able to find a qualified referral there.

Dear Abby: I usually send special occasion flowers to my wife at work. I was wondering if it could make some co-workers who do not receive flowers from their partner or husband feel neglected, and worse, cause friction between them and my wife. If you feel this could be a potential problem, I can have the flowers delivered to our home. — **Excluded In Florida**

Dear Excluded: If receiving flowers at her job has caused any tension in the past, you probably would have heard about it. However, you should ask your wife what she would prefer because she may enjoy the public gesture of husbandly love.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

W.Va. High School Basketball

By The Associated Press | WVDN APR 14, 2021



Monday's Scores

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL

Buckhannon-Upshur 93, Grafton 88

George Washington 56, Parkersburg South 44

Hampshire 60, Frankfort 41

Keyser 45, Petersburg 39

Linsly 67, John Marshall 48

Martinsburg 87, Jefferson 81

Nicholas County 80, Sissonville 53

Pendleton County 62, Harman 41

Point Pleasant 83, Wayne 70

Richwood 58, Midland Trail 50

Ritchie County 68, Calhoun County 33

River View 67, Meadow Bridge 51

Shady Spring 73, Independence 55

St. Marys 64, Webster County 52

Williamstown 55, Clay County 44

Wyoming East 42, Mingo Central 37

POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS

Tug Valley vs. Man, ccd.

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL

AA

Region 3

Section 1

Summers County 42, Bluefield 27

AAA

Region 2

Section 2

Elkins 52, Liberty Harrison 36

Region 3

Section 2

PikeView 74, Independence 21

Shady Spring 38, Westside 23

Region 4

Section 2

Lincoln County 61, Scott 47

Lady Spartans Win Last Three of Regular Season

By brandon baker wvdm | WVDN APR 14, 2021



The Greenbrier East Lady Spartans finished their season on a high note and won their last three regular season games amidst a little adversity as well.

The Spartans defeated Doddridge County 57-49 on Thursday, April 8, and then beat Chapmanville 50-39 on Saturday morning and defeated Lincoln County 54-41 Saturday afternoon.

Yes, the Spartans played a doubleheader on Saturday due to a cancellation of a game on Friday night.

East started off on the right foot against Doddridge County (DC). Cadence Stewart, Layla Pence and Brookelyn Morgan each scored a bucket and put the Spartans up 6-0 early.

And it continued to be all Spartans from that point. Pence took a nice feed from Stewart and scored again, Allie Dunford hit a short jumper and Stewart then followed a Brooke Davis free throw with a three-pointer, and the Spartans led 19-6 after one quarter.

Stewart then scored the first seven Spartan points of the second period, but after a Lora McComb three for DC, Davis answered with a trey from the corner and East held a 29-15 lead at that point. Taylor Boswell came on late in the quarter and scored two baskets for the Spartans as they took a 35-17 lead into halftime.

Davis drained a three-pointer to start the second half, but Doddridge County started to chip away at the lead after that.

Rylee Spurlock hit a couple jumpers and Carrie Boyd scored a little later to trim the Spartan lead to just nine points at 40-31.

But two possessions later, and DC still with all the momentum, freshman Marley Patterson hit an open three to put East up by 13, and Kenna Sheppard scored a bucket to end the third with a 46-35 East lead.

Pence, Stewart and Davis kept East in front in the final quarter as they held off another minor run by DC and the Spartans sealed the victory.

Stewart led East with 21 points and Davis had 12. Pence scored eight points and hauled in nine rebounds.

Abigail Nicholson led DC with 14 points and nine rebounds.

East was then forced to lace the shoes up at 9:30 a.m. Saturday morning and the way the game started, it appeared the time may have affected them a bit. Stewart put East up 2-0 with the game's first basket, but the Lady Tigers of Chapmanville went on a quick 7-0 run and took a five-point lead thanks in part to Jaiden Mahon and Hollee Blair, and you could just tell this game was going to be a good one.

Dunford and Davis had back-to-back layups that tied the game at 7-all, but Chapmanville went right back up by four after two impressive buckets from Blair.

It was then Dunford that decided enough was enough. The junior point guard hit a three-pointer, then got a steal and went coast-to-coast for an easy basket and just like that the Spartans were ahead 14-11 after one quarter.

Head Coach Jim Justice went with all reserves in the second period due to the SSAC rules that a player cannot play more than five quarters of basketball in one day's time. So, the governor had to make some lineup adjustments carefully.

The second unit played well. Nay Garrett scored off an offensive rebound then on the next Tiger possession she got a steal and assist to Aubrey Glover. Boswell followed with a pull-up jumper for two, but Chapmanville kept the lead the rest of the half, although Josie Patterson's basket near the end of the half played a huge momentum role.

At the break, The Tigers led 23-22.

Stewart, Davis and Dunford sat out the third quarter also so they could be fresh for the fourth, and once again the role players played their role to perfection. After Blair scored inside, Ari Gil Edo got a point from the free-throw line for East and Sheppard scored a transition 3-pointer and the score was knotted at 26-all.

Gil Edo would drain a trifecta later in the quarter, Pence scored on a driving layup and Josie Patterson hit two go ahead free throws to end the period with the Spartans leading 33-31 and four starters set to return.

Those starters began the fourth in style. Stewart hit a three from the corner and followed with another basket. Then Morgan knocked in a jumper and East led 40-31 and began to pull away.

Blair and Claire Dingess did what they could for Chapmanville, but Stewart, Dunford and Morgan were too much and East raced to another win.

Dunford took home player of the game honors with a team-high 12 points, seven steals and four rebounds. Stewart added 10 points in two-quarters of play. Davis had eight steals. Josie Patterson had a good game also with six points, four rebounds and three steals.

Blair was good for the Tigers and finished with 19 points and 13 rebounds.

Chapmanville had 30 turnovers which led to 27 Spartan points.

Stats were not made available at the time of this writing for the game against Lincoln, but the Spartans won it convincingly. The Spartans finish the regular season at 12-5.

East will played the Princeton Tigers Tuesday, April 13, to begin Sectional Tournament play. Tipoff was scheduled for 7:00 p.m.

Stats courtesy of Oldies 93.3

An Open Letter To Our Citizens

By Lewisburg Mayor Beverly White | WVDN APR 14, 2021



It's been another trying time again as I try to figure out why it's so difficult for people who are different are targeted with hate.

Why Asian-American children are taunted as they walk home from Hollowell Park. Why our Fire Chief Thomas is blasted on Facebook because mental health providers asked to have a safe place to give out Narcan in order to save someone's child when that next child may be yours.

Everybody is somebody's child. How do you want your child to be treated? Please ask yourselves when spewing hate against those who don't look like you. What if that was your child? How would you feel if the non-white, LGBTQ communities and others who don't look like you or love like you, turned the tables and began behaving like you?

What if they started making laws that made it more difficult for you to vote? Or telling you, you couldn't wear your hair a certain way in order to be employed or play sports?

What if you were told that someone won't rent a home to you or sell a home to you because of who you are and who you love?

What if they refused to bake you a wedding cake or make a flower arrangement because of who you are and you love?

While you are at it take a look around your homes and take out everything that is not made in AMERICA! The very people that are being targeted, supply a whole lot of products to this United States of America.

Liberty and justice for all? Or just you? The right to live and breathe, only you?

Help me understand why your rights and privileges cannot be those of the people who don't look like you. Help me understand, why those who are not you having those same rights and privileges bothers you so much that you will go to any lengths necessary to suppress those rights and privileges.

What are you really afraid of?

Help me understand how you explain to your children that God loves only them and not those who are different. Help me understand how you teach your children to live in a diverse world that is so different from what they are being taught at home and how you will answer them when the time comes.

Others being blessed does not diminish God's ability or willingness to bless you. God's goodness and mercy are unlimited and always available. The rights and privileges of others should be too.

I will say it again, our children are watching us and listening to us! What will they hear and learn?

Sincerely,
Lewisburg Mayor Beverly White

Rainelle Hires New Patrolman

By autumn shelton wvdn | WVDN APR 14, 2021



The Town of Rainelle has a new police officer.

In addition to newly hired Police Chief John Sergeant, Patrolman Randy Sizemore introduced himself to the Rainelle Town Council during their April 12 meeting.

Sizemore stated that he is from White Sulphur Springs and formerly served as a police officer in North Carolina.

"I am anxious to help Rainelle get back to the glory it used to be," Sizemore said.

Members of the town council discussed plans to have a meet and greet with the new officers in the near future.

"I don't want them to be strangers," acting Mayor Bill Bell said of the new officers. "I want to invite them into our community. I am grateful to have these guys."

The meet and greet will be announced at a later date.

In other business, LZ Rainelle Veterans Reunion Chair Molisha Samples discussed plans for the annual Memorial Day program in May.

According to Samples, the Run for the Wall event has been canceled, but a small group of riders still plan to come to town on May 27 at noon. Plans are currently being made to place 11,478 flags in the town to honor West Virginians who lost their lives, to host a free concert by The Carpenter Ants at city hall on May 29, and to hold a candlelight vigil and a fireworks display.

Members of the council agreed to have the Rainelle Police Department accompany riders into the town and for LZ Rainelle to use city facilities for the event.

Council also approved another festival to be held in the town.

Robin Williams, coordinator for Down on the Farm Festival, stated that this festival will take place at Rainelle City Park on June 19 from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m.

Little Critters Petting Zoo, the band Harmony Creek Junction, food vendors and more will be in town that day to provide entertainment.

"I am still working on other things, but we plan to have a nice day for the kids and adults as well," Williams said.

Additionally:

- Council agreed to discuss a plan with the town's attorney to allow a Rainelle resident to lease a town lot for placement of a water tank;
- Zac Wright, with Thrasher Engineering, asked the council for a resolution to approve a scope change request for the town's ongoing stormwater drainage project. Wright said that he has been working with FEMA and WV Homeland Security to keep the project alive, but a draft change request needs to be made as soon as possible.

Community Development Block Grants have been earmarked for Greenbrier County, Wright explained, but the town should address specific issues such as storm drain improvements that need immediate attention before creating a report for a levee that would handle a 2016-type flood.

"The smaller the project, the more likely it is to get funding faster," Wright said. "We will help you explore those and find ways to move forward. We want to keep the project alive for the town."

Plans for a storm drainage channel for the Meadow River and Sewell Creek area were recently canceled after it was decided that the channel is not an effective solution to mitigate damage from flooding.

"I don't know that anything will take care of the flood that we had in 2016, but I do know that if we build levees and dams, which is basically what we are doing, and a 2016 like flood comes, we harm other communities instead of just our own," Bell responded.

Councilmember Martha Livesay stated that before the council votes on approving the resolution, they should discuss the matter and get a second opinion.

Council agreed to meet in a special session on Friday at 6 p.m. to make a decision to move forward;

- Dave Lunsford with the Meadow River Valley Association (MRVA) delivered a presentation for plans on the old Rupert School Building and the goal of working with Rainelle to establish a trail system that will begin in Rupert and continue to Rainelle.

Plans for the building include constructing an area for the Robert C. Byrd Clinic on the first floor and low-income senior housing on the second and third floors, Lunsford said. As for Rainelle, he stated that the MRVA would like to help the town train grant writers and answer questions regarding how to best apply for grants that will benefit the town;

- Council approved a special session at town hall for Tuesday, April 20, to discuss the town's 2021 budget.

Greater Greenbrier COVID-19 Task Force April 13 Meeting

By WV Daily News | WVDN APR 14, 2021



The Greater Greenbrier COVID-19 Task Force met this morning via conference call and reports the following information.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT. Greenbrier County has 1,740 confirmed cases, 3 suspect cases, 838 probable cases, 2,460 recovered cases, 58 active cases, 0 hospitalized, and 63 deaths. (These numbers will be updated this afternoon.)

VACCINE FINDER. There's a website which can connect citizens to vaccines via all local sources including pharmacies. Check out www.vaccinefinder.org to use that tool.

VOLUNTEERS. GGLTRC continues to provide volunteer recruitment and coordination to the Greenbrier County Health Department for their weekly vaccine clinics at the WV State Fairgrounds. Anyone who would like to volunteer can sign up on www.ggltrc.org/covid or at [www.Facebook.com/GGLTRC](https://www.facebook.com/GGLTRC). Vaccination is not required to volunteer. Volunteers must be at least 15 years of age. We'd love to have you!

WVSOM. We are proceeding with an in-person, outdoor graduation ceremony in May with CDC guidelines in place.

RCB CLINIC. We are doing a vaccine clinic this Friday. If you need a vaccine, please just give us a call. We received a message from the WV Joint Interagency Task Force this morning that WV will initiate a pause of Johnson & Johnson vaccines until more information is available.

RAINELLE MEDICAL CENTER. Free Covid testing M-T-W from 10:00 to 12:00, by appointment. Testing everyday by appointment and insurance billed, or sliding fee applied. We have regular Covid vaccines on Thursday at RMC. We will be administering about 92 booster doses of Pfizer. Anyone that would like the vaccine can call the front desk to schedule an appointment at 304-438-6188. Vaccinations have begun at Meadow Bridge High School last week, Midland Trail High School on Monday and will be giving 56 boost doses on Wednesday. Vaccine consents have been given out to 10th, 11th & 12th graders at East and West High Schools. Vaccines to take place next week. We continue to screen all patients at the front door. Masks are required by everyone, even if they have been vaccinated, and if any symptoms or exposure concerns are noted, then patients are asked to wait in their car and will be given instructions for visit completion.

MEALS FOR VACCINE CLINIC WORKERS. We are supplying free meals provided by local restaurants and paid for by local donors for all county health department vaccine clinic workers each week. The Local is providing the meal this week. Amy's Cakes & Cones is doing so next week. Many thanks to Jen Mason for coordinating, Kelly and the State Fair for hosting the clinics, Kayla with GGLTRC for coordinating volunteers, and all local partners making these meals possible!

VACCINES FOR SENIOR CITIZENS. If you know a senior citizen who needs help getting a vaccine (either a ride or getting registered), please call 2-1-1 and Katie with United Way will assist you. Volunteers with Shepherd's Center, the Committee on Aging, Rainelle Medical Center, and United Way will assist with transportation when needed. Also, the PSD office (in the old Kentucky Fried Chicken building in Fairlea) is happy to help senior citizens sign up for a vaccine using their office computers. Just stop by the office!

THE GREENBRIER. We are hosting a vaccine clinic tomorrow, April 14, at the Sports Performance Center for employees and community members. Appointments are required. Please call 304-536-7831 to get an appointment. (We are not administering the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.)

Submitted by Senator Stephen Baldwin, chair of the Task Force.

West Virginia governor makes plea for more shots in arms

By Cuneyt Dil Associated Press | WVDN APR 14, 2021



CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice on Monday urged more people in his state to get vaccinated against the coronavirus and made a plea for residents to trust medical experts.

Justice said more than 75% of residents age 65 and older have received at least one vaccine dose, but he has a goal of at least 85% coverage. The state opened up vaccine eligibility to all residents 16 and older last month.

“We’re constantly looking for arms to put vaccines in,” Justice said at his regularly scheduled coronavirus news briefing. More than 90% of total doses currently in the state have been administered.

About 37% of West Virginia’s 1.78 million residents have received at least one vaccine dose, state data show. Nearly 26% are fully inoculated against the illness that has killed 2,745 people in the state so far.

Justice addressed people who may be holding out on rolling up their sleeves: “You may be sitting there and thinking, ‘Well, now that there’s been a bunch of people to get vaccinated, I can slide by and just not get vaccinated.’”

“Oh, what a chance you’re taking,” he added, mentioning the danger of coronavirus variants that are more infectious and deadly.

The county home to West Virginia University in Morgantown announced Monday that it has nearly 200 identified cases of coronavirus variants. Officials in Monongalia County said there are 164 cases of the California variant and 32 cases of the U.K. variant.

“These variants of concern are both more infectious, and the U.K. variant is associated with an increased risk

of death,” Dr. Lee Smith, the county’s health officer, said in a statement.

Confirmed positive virus cases in the state dropped 1% in the past week after falling 5% the previous week. Active cases hit 7,470 on Sunday, the highest since Feb. 26. Virus-related hospitalizations rose to 271 on Friday, the latest date available. Hospitalizations peaked at 818 on Jan. 5, then bottomed out at 151 on March 12.

Justice made a plea for continued mask-wearing, saying “they are for all that we know a lifesaver.” A statewide mandate remains in effect, while most restrictions on businesses and public life have been lifted.

“We have got to listen to our medical experts,” he said.

WVU pauses Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine amid concerns

By Bill Frye | WVDN APR 14, 2021

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. (AP) — West Virginia University announced Tuesday it will temporarily stop administering the COVID-19 vaccine manufactured by Johnson & Johnson.

The announcement came hours after the U.S. [recommended a “pause”](#) in using the single-dose vaccine to investigate reports of rare but potentially dangerous blood clots.

Dr. Clay Marsh, who is the state’s coronavirus czar and vice president and executive dean of WVU Health Sciences, noted that the federal recommendation occurred amid an investigation of unusual clots in six women between the ages of 18 and 48. One person died.

“The fact that CDC and FDA are acting out of caution for 6 clotting episodes in 6.8 million doses given should reassure West Virginia residents that we are watching any and all associated findings in those vaccinated to make sure safety is our priority,” Marsh said in a statement.

Until the cases are reviewed, WVU will pause the use of the Johnson & Johnson vaccines on all campuses out of abundance of caution, the statement said. The university will work with people scheduled to receive the Johnson & Johnson doses to enable them to receive doses for Pfizer and Moderna vaccines based on availability.

WVU said it administered 846 Johnson & Johnson doses during an April 8 clinic on the Morgantown campus. All other clinics held at WVU have administered doses of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccine.

Earlier Tuesday, West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice ordered the use of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine to stop until further notice. The state’s health agency has received no reports of clotting events in West Virginia involving residents who have received the vaccine.

Roy “Wally” “Gator” Wallace Bowyer

By WV Daily News | WVDN APR 14, 2021

BOWYER

Roy “Wally” “Gator” Wallace Bowyer, 72, of Alderson passed away Monday, April 12, 2021 at Greenbrier Valley Medical Center. Born February 5, 1949 at Alderson, he was a son of the late Roy Marshall and Virginia Mae Persinger Bowyer.

Wally was a Vietnam Army Veteran and was a maintenance worker for the Greenbrier Manor.

Wally is survived by three sisters, Wanda Morgan of Lewisburg, Charlotte Anderson, and Teresa Hedrick both of Williamsburg; brother, Roger Lee Bowyer and wife, Susan of Alderson.

Funeral services will be held on 11 p.m. on Saturday, April 17, 2021 at Lantz Funeral Home in Alderson with Pastor Mike Tubert officiating. Burial will follow in the Alderson Cemetery.

Visitation will be held Friday, April 16, 2021 from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m. at the funeral home.

In lieu of flowers, donations of sympathy may be made to the Lantz Funeral Home to help with the bill.

Online condolences may be made at Lantzfuneralhome.com.

Lantz Funeral Home in Alderson is in charge of arrangements.

Betty Jane Runyon Holliday

By WV Daily News | WVDN APR 14, 2021

HOLLIDAY

Betty Jane Runyon Holliday, age 78, of Alderson, WV, passed away on Monday, April 12, 2021 at her home in Alderson.

Online condolences and memories may be shared with the Holliday family at www.lobbanfh.com.

Arrangements by Lobban Funeral Home, Alderson, WV.

WV 311 Bridge, I-64 Westbound Ramp

By WV Daily News | WVDN APR 14, 2021



Greenbrier Count, W.Va. — West Virginia Division of Highways announces the closing of the WV 311 Bridge over I-64 and the I-64 Westbound entrance ramp, according to Greg Hylton, District Nine Construction Engineer.

WV 311 Bridge along with the Westbound entrance ramp at mile marker 183, Crows exit will be closed for approximately 30 days starting on Monday, May 3. The closing will begin at 7 a.m. for concrete deck replacement on the WV 311 bridge.

Detours will be in place to access I-64 westbound. Motorists are asked to observe all traffic control signs and devices and use extreme caution while traveling around the work zone.

The anticipated completion date for this project is June 4, 2021. However, please be advised that inclement weather or unforeseen circumstances could change the project schedule.

Guest Commentary: The Back Pew (4-14-21)

By Sen. Stephen Baldwin | WVDN APR 14, 2021



It's done. The 2021 legislative session ended at midnight on April 10. Here's a quick rundown of where several major issues landed.

PERSONAL INCOME TAX. The proposal to raise the sales tax to at least 8% and reduce the income tax failed in the House. Gov. Justice pledged to go on the road, taking his case directly to the people as to why it's a good plan. The supermajorities pledged to continue talking about options. I imagine there will be another effort to eliminate it in a special session this fall.

BEST BILL? Several folks asked me what the best thing passed this year was? That's easy for me — the veteran's nursing home in Beckley! We finally got it done. With the state funds in place, we gain access to federal funds. Now, our veterans will be able to stay in southern WV to receive the care they earned.

BROADBAND. Before the session, the supermajorities declared that 2021 would be the year of broadband. They pledged \$1 billion over the next ten years. When it was said and done this year, we passed one broadband bill and put no money in the budget for it. The bill, as I wrote last week, does some good things with consumer protections and mapping. But the best thing it did, requiring "open access" on fiber lines built with public dollars, was cut out at the last minute. Why? Because the companies who've had a monopoly over broadband in WV for years lobbied the supermajorities to remove it, since it would have broken their monopoly. They are a powerful lobby we must break through if we are ever going to build a real broadband network.

50/50 CUSTODY. One of the session's most contentious bills was HB2363. As originally introduced, it required a presumption of 50/50 custody in all family court cases and reopened all past family court cases for new custody arrangements. The Senate Judiciary Committee removed both of those provisions. Instead, they passed a bill that reinforces that all custody cases should be decided based on what's in the best interest of the child and that shared parenting is beneficial to children if circumstances allow it. The final bill did pass both houses just before midnight.

REMOTE WORKERS. In what I predict will be the only passed this session to recruit new people to West Virginia, the remote worker program is in motion. Lewisburg is one of three initial pilot cities for the program. Funded privately by WV native Brad Smith, the program pays people \$12,000 cash and grants them \$8,000 worth of outdoor recreational fees to move here and work remotely. While some criticize the program,

population loss is a root problem for us. Until we have more people here, we will never get ahead.

ELECTION REFORM. A controversial election reform bill, which I wrote about some six weeks ago, died in the House. It would have, among other things, ended voter registration via the DMV, removed the final Saturday of early voting, and purged voter rolls every two years. I opposed the bill for those reasons, and House leadership chose not to let it die for those reasons.

BUDGET. On the final night, we did pass a budget. Remember how I wrote a few weeks ago that the numbers just didn't add up? That's still the case. Consider these facts. One, we've had a good financial year in WV. We will end up with a surplus approaching \$300 million. Two, the budget we passed cut all higher education institutions including WVSOM, WVU, and Marshall. Three, the budget contains \$72 million in unappropriated funds. Why would we cut one of our best — higher education — when we have a surplus and unappropriated funds? It's kind of like letting your savings sit in a no-interest bank account; it just doesn't get you anything.

TELL IT LIKE IT IS. Tensions ran very high this year. As a lady at the gas station said to me this week, "It beats all I ever saw the way they came after you this year." It's the oldest political trick in the book. When the message isn't good for you, attack the messenger. No worries, friends. I'll keep telling it like it is, fighting the good fight.

That's the view from the back pew, where it is my privilege to serve you!

Senator Stephen Baldwin is the Minority Leader and a local pastor. Reach him at 304-357-7959 or stephen.baldwin@wvsenate.gov. Follow him on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram @BaldwinForWV.