

# WVDN JUL 14, 2021



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# Harold L Morton

By WV Daily News | WVDN JUL 14, 2021



## **MORTON**

Mr. Harold L Morton passed away on November 23, 2020. He was born January 21, 1928 in Cowen, WV.

His father, Harold L Morton died when he was only 10 months old. His mother, Genevieve Morton, moved with Harold and his sister, Muriel, to live with Mabel (Genevieve's sister) and Everett Squires.

Harold went to WVU and received his degree in education. Later, he received Master's degrees at University of Maryland and WVU.

Harold served in the Korean War. He went to officer's candidate school and served as a signal officer.

He returned to Cowen to teach and later became the principal of Cowen High School. He and his mother moved to LaPlata, MD, where he served as principal of several high schools. They returned to West Virginia, settling in Lewisburg. He served as principal of the Greenbrier High School and later as vice principal at the junior high school. He retired at age 57, due to a heart attack.

Harold had many hobbies, including hunting, fishing, reading, and especially golf.

Harold had been a Mason for over 63 years, receiving the Legion of Honor from the Greenbrier Lodge #42 A.F. & A.M.

He is survived by his niece, Colleen Newing and her husband, Ted; his nephew, Bill Davin and his wife, Mary Ellen; his nieces, Keight Newing and Sarah Davin; his nephew, Jason Davin and his wife, Jessica; and his dear friend, Georgia Smalley.

His Memorial service will be at the McCraw Funeral Home in Lewisburg, July 24th at 11 a.m. Internment will immediately follow at the Morrison Cemetery, Sutton, WV.

McCraw Funeral Home in Lewisburg is in charge of the arrangements.

## **Teen arrested 3 months after WVa prep athlete fatally shot**

By The Associated Press | WVDN JUL 14, 2021

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — A teenager has been arrested in connection with the fatal shooting of a West Virginia high school athlete, police said.

Dekotis Elijah Thomas, 19, of Charleston, was arrested Thursday by authorities in Akron, Ohio, Charleston police said in a news release.

News outlets, citing a statement from the U.S. Marshals Service, said Thomas was involved in a standoff with police and set the house he was in on fire before he surrendered.

Kelvin “KJ” Taylor, 18, was shot in the chest on April 7. Taylor had played football and basketball and was set to graduate from Capital High School in May.

Police issued an arrest warrant for Thomas in late April. A Kanawha County grand jury later indicted Thomas on murder and weapons charges in Taylor’s death. The same grand jury also indicted him in a separate slaying in October 2019. The Charleston Gazette-Mail reported Thomas failed to appear for an arraignment hearing last week.

It wasn’t immediately known whether Thomas has an attorney.

## **WVa rural surgery residency program gets planning grant**

By The Associated Press | WVDN JUL 14, 2021

HUNTINGTON, W.Va. (AP) — The planning and development of West Virginia’s first rural surgery residency program now has the help of a \$750,000 federal grant.

Marshall University’s Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine received a three-year grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the university said in a news release.

The federal Rural Residency Planning and Development Program awarded nine grants to help address physician workforce shortages in rural communities. A shortage of general surgeons is expected across the

U.S. by 2025. It's the first time these funds have been awarded to plan a rural surgery residency program, the statement said.

The grant will be administered through the Marshall Community Health Consortium, which will develop curriculum, recruit faculty and address necessary clinical and learning environment needs.

The training program's goal is to attain initial accreditation in 2022 and welcome its first residents in 2023. Residents will spend at least half of the five-year training residency in a rural hospital, the statement said.

## **EPA joins review of lead water lines in Clarksburg, WV**

By The Associated Press | WVDN JUL 14, 2021

EPA joins review of lead water lines in Clarksburg, WV

CLARKSBURG, W.Va. (AP) — Federal regulators have joined West Virginia officials in reviewing lead service lines in Clarksburg for elevated levels of the toxin in drinking water.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will assist the state Department of Health and Human Resources and the Clarksburg Water System in the review, which was announced on July 2, the DHHR said in a news release. Sampling in several homes showed lead levels above a limit set by the EPA.

Lead lines were phased out in the 1950s and it's unlikely homes built after 1960 would have them. The DHHR is encouraging residents of homes built before 1950 to use bottled water for consumption and have children younger than age 6 evaluated for lead, Dr. Ayne Amjad, the state health officer, said in the statement. The issue of lead service lines was first identified by Bureau for Public Health staff during assessments conducted in the homes of children diagnosed with elevated blood lead levels.

## **What W.Va. Can Do For Hungry Residents**

By by amelia ferrell knisely the mountain state spotlight | WVDN JUL 14, 2021

Hunger in West Virginia — a complex problem tied to shuttered grocery stores, infrastructure issues and generational poverty — has increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. The problem is one that advocates say requires state-level policy and funding to supplement the nonprofits and faith-based organizations that are trying to reach those in need.

Yet, lawmakers devoted little attention to hunger during this year's regular legislative session. Last week, House Speaker Roger Hanshaw, R-Clay, announced a bipartisan legislative workgroup will start studying the issue to outline anti-hunger priorities ahead of bill drafting this winter.

But he notes it's a complicated issue, which will require lawmakers to create practical yet effective policies. Here are six initiatives the new workgroup could take on to reduce hunger and support food charities, according to West Virginia researchers, policy analysts, charitable food network employees and anti-hunger advocates:

1. Creating a state-level office to address hunger — The Legislature needs to immediately create a state-level

office focused on coordinating county feeding efforts, according to Josh Lohnes, food policy research director at West Virginia University. Hunger needs and feeding programs vary from county to county, and a state office would coordinate between state agencies addressing hunger (like the Department of Health and Human Resources and the West Virginia Department of Agriculture) and private organizations (food banks, local charities, local school nutrition offices, etc.) “This office would employ local community food security coordinators in each county to create some connective tissue around responses at the local level that are frankly often uncoordinated,” said Lohnes, who has spent years researching and writing about the state’s charitable food system and hunger. The coordinators would be focused on improving outcomes of state-backed nutrition programs, he said. Lohnes estimated the program could cost the state around \$3.5 million per year, which includes salaries for community food security coordinators and state-level oversight staff.

2. Listening to West Virginians before spending federal relief funds — West Virginia has already received half of the \$1.36 billion it’s getting through the American Rescue Plan passed by Congress in March. The federal dollars — the state will get the remaining \$677 million later this year — can be used to support COVID-19 response efforts, public health improvements (including hunger) and more. Lawmakers will have input on how Gov. Jim Justice spends the federal money after they passed HB 2014, which requires the Legislature to approve the governor’s use of any federal emergency money that is more than \$150 million. Seth DiStefano, policy outreach director at the West Virginia Center for Budget and Policy, said it is imperative that lawmakers use this time to gather information from West Virginians about what they’ve experienced with food insecurity during the pandemic. He’d like to see the workgroup hold town halls around the state to hear feedback, then lawmakers should “turn that feedback into tangible policy results,” he said.

3. Transporting food to students in need — Feeding America estimates that 19% of West Virginia kids might experience hunger this year because of the pandemic, and hunger experts in the state agree lawmakers need to address feeding gaps for students during the summer and other unexpected breaks from school. Mountain State Spotlight reported on the ongoing gaps in summer feeding and for remote learners during the pandemic due to families’ lack of transportation and schools’ inability to deliver food. While many feeding programs have resumed due to reduced COVID-19 restrictions, student feeding gaps persist. Additionally, transporting food to students could help cut down on school food waste by putting food in the hands of students or other local feeding programs who need food. “If the school and county would stop to study the root of the problem, which we know is transportation, and figure out strategies to make those deliveries happen, they most likely would cut the waste down drastically,” said Jenny Anderson, director of Families Leading Change, a statewide advocacy group focused on improving schools. One plan from anti-hunger advocates that could be resurrected is one to pay bus drivers to deliver summer food; groups had asked Justice to use CARES Act money during the summer of 2020 to address student hunger in this way.

4. Increasing state-backed funding for food charities — More than 300,000 West Virginians relied on the state’s 333 food pantries for food back in 2016, according to research from the Food Justice Lab at West Virginia. Those pantries, on average, operated on a budget of less than \$1,300 a month to pay for food, deliveries and more. Justice has for the last two years included \$1 million for the state’s two food banks in his budget. But more state funding is needed as the problem has grown. “In the last month, I’ve applied for a million dollars in grants,” said Cyndi Kirkhart, who runs Facing Hunger Food Bank out of Cabell County. The food bank feeds more than 116,000 people each year. Kirkhart said her biggest need is funding as she is working on expanding the food bank’s options to include “medically indicated food boxes” with lean and no-salt added options for people with diabetes — West Virginians die from diabetes at the highest rate in the country — and cancer patients.

5. Examining barriers to food assistance programs — Anti-hunger advocates want the workgroup to evaluate any barriers that keep West Virginians from applying for or receiving emergency food assistance programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

One of those barriers: a bill lawmakers signed off on this past session that continues a program that requires TANF applicants be screened for drugs. DHHR has drug-screened TANF applicants since 2017, when the department launched the pilot project after the Legislature mandated it; from October 2019 to September 2020, DHHR reported that out of 2,067 completed drug use screening questionnaires, only seven people tested positive for drugs. Child welfare advocates opposed the bill, saying that the program was likely to cut off West Virginia children, who make up the majority of the state's TANF recipients, from necessary food.

6. Guaranteeing free food for students — Last month, California became the first state to offer free food to students without questions asked or required forms. The state set aside \$650 million for its universal school meal program starting in 2022, according to NBC Los Angeles. In West Virginia, 47 of the state's 55 counties are already qualified and elected to serve free meals for all students, pandemic relief aside, according to the West Virginia Department of Education. Rick Wilson, program director for the American Friends Service Committee and long-time West Virginia child nutrition advocate, said lawmakers should prioritize implementing a universal free meal program in West Virginia that would continue beyond the pandemic.

Whatever policy decisions lawmakers make, the problem is large and growing: Feeding America estimates hunger now affects one in seven West Virginians, as well as one in five of the state's children.

If you're a West Virginia resident in need of food, please contact West Virginia 211 by dialing 211 or visiting [www.WV211.org](http://www.WV211.org) for assistance.

Reach reporter Amelia Knisely at [ameliaknisely@mountainstatespotlight.org](mailto:ameliaknisely@mountainstatespotlight.org)

## Dear Abby: Wednesday, July 14

By Abigail Van Buren | WVDN JUL 14, 2021

### Man's Affair With Musician Strikes A Sour Note At Home

**Dear Abby:** My husband of 49 years had an affair two years ago with a woman younger than our daughter. The affair is over now, but I no longer trust him. The "other woman" is a musician who performs with an adult ensemble that he conducts. He refuses to talk to her about discontinuing her involvement in the group, and is, in fact, including her in a tour in which many of our friends and I are involved. I find this demeaning and disrespectful, but he doesn't think there's a problem. I am dismayed, but I haven't spoken to friends or family about the affair because I don't want my children or grandchildren to be hurt. What should I do? — **Out of Tine in the South**

**Dear Out:** If the affair is really over, the young woman is an integral part of the group and you will be accompanying your husband on that tour, do nothing. (I hope it's a big bus!) If, however, the affair is not a thing of the past, schedule an appointment with an attorney to discuss what your options are and talk with your adult children. They should be warned there may be stormy clouds on the horizon.

**Dear Abby:** I recently contacted a man I dated 32 years ago when I was 17. He told me he was widowed 13 years ago after a 13-year marriage. Since then, he hasn't dated anyone, talked to anyone or had any kind of human intimacy whatsoever. He is 58. It isn't normal and it doesn't seem like anyone in his family has helped him get through this, so he is stuck. We have been talking for the last seven months. We live 6 1/2 hours apart. It seems like rather than "rock the boat," he has let other people rule his life. His children are all in their

20s. He tells me he wants to visit and vice versa, to see where things go. We both say marriage is not on the table. I can't even imagine it. His daughters have referred to me as his girlfriend when he has had me on the phone and they are in the background. Please advise. — **No Definite Plans Yet**

**Dear No Definite Plans:** You said your old beau has been living like a monk for the past 13 years. Ordinarily, I would advise you to invite him for a visit. However, in this coronavirus era, you need to know whether he has been vaccinated for COVID before you do that. Discuss this with him during one of your conversations and see how he feels about it.

**Dear Abby:** After 18 years of happy marriage, my husband came to me the other day and asked me to order some "leggings," or what I call "yoga pants." He said he had seen them on TikTok. Mind you, we're both 40. He said they're sexy and he'd love to see me in some. I'm not sure how to feel about this. I am 5'7", weigh about 115 and I have no booty. Should I order the pants or be offended? — **No Booty in New Mexico**

**Dear No Booty:** Order the pants! If he'd like to see you in them, what do you have to lose? While you may feel self-conscious about your posterior, never forget that it's the booty he married. Please, let that reassure you. (If you're unsure, consider wearing a tunic top with them.)

**P.S.** You may find them very comfortable.

*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](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.*

## Spirit of renewal fills W.Va. city that flooded 5 years ago

By the associate press | WVDN JUL 14, 2021

TINA ALVEY, The Register-Herald

WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS, W.Va. (AP) — Barely two blocks off the Spa City's now-bustling Main Street, Brad Paisley Community Park is an oasis of calm, its peacefulness punctuated by peals of laughter from a half-dozen preschoolers as their mothers quietly chat nearby.

That's the scene most days in this green space that was born out of the flood of 2016, according to Pat Harper, president of the White Sulphur Springs Main Street organization that owns and operates the park. "It's just a place to gather — to enjoy your friends and neighbors," Harper said, sitting on a folding chair in a sunny room inside the park's Community Building. "We couldn't make it happen without the city and the good citizens of White Sulphur who take such good care of this place."

Brad Paisley Community Park was a gift from the Homes for White Sulphur Springs organization to WSS Main Street. Many of the residents of Hope Village, a neighborhood built in the wake of the flood by Homes for WSS, owned homes prior to the flood on the land where the park is now situated. Those residents traded their flooded property for a lot in Hope Village and a new start in life, well above the creekside they had left behind. Homes for WSS cleared the flood-demolished houses from the low-lying areas bordering the creek and in 2017 transformed the parcels into a park, which was named in honor of country music star Brad Paisley. A native of West Virginia, Paisley raised funds and donated a substantial sum to Homes for WSS for flood relief.

Homes for WSS also renovated two flood-damaged buildings in the park — one of which is now the Community



Building — and donated the parkland and the structures, along with several other rental houses and the income from loans Homes for WSS had made to help get people back into houses, to WSS Main Street, thus creating a revenue stream for the Main Street organization.

“The park is a big step up from what that section of town was like right after the flood,” City Manager Lloyd Haynes remarked in a telephone interview for this article.

He explained that converting the swath of properties into parkland was really the only allowable use for the land, as it is now deemed part of White Sulphur’s floodplain.

Haynes, the city’s mayor at the time of the 2016 flood, pointed out that Tom Crabtree founded Homes for White Sulphur Springs only days after the floodwaters receded, and also spearheaded the park project.

Haynes noted that the Spa City-based team behind the Barnwood Builders television show donated the labor and materials for construction of the elegantly rustic pavilion that is the park’s centerpiece.

The pavilion and Community Building, which has a kitchen and an expansive covered deck overlooking the nearby creek, can each be reserved separately or as part of a whole-park rental for community or private events, Harper noted.

Garden clubs, church groups and civic organizations are among the groups that have held events at the park on Mill Hill Drive. Birthday parties, weddings and a recent Business after Hours event are just some of the social gatherings the park has hosted in the four years since its dedication on the first anniversary of the flood, June 23, 2017.

“The park’s calendar is virtually full through August,” Harper said. “We accept rentals on an informal basis. We want to keep the price point so it’s available to all residents of White Sulphur Springs.”

In addition, the park has served as a safe neutral custody exchange site for separated or divorced parents, and the Community Building has been used as a place for residents to fill out flood-related paperwork, Harper said. Memorial services for deceased city residents have also been conducted in the serene, tree-shaded space.

A luncheon for area military veterans that was staged at the park during the city’s annual Dandelion Festival during Memorial Day weekend this year stands out as “the best event ever,” according to Harper.

Revenue raised from park rentals and the other components of the funding stream set in motion by Homes for WSS goes toward park upkeep and other Main Street programming and projects, such as a joint endeavor with downtown merchants to install whiskey barrel planters downtown.

Harper emphasized that WSS Main Street is not a city agency. It is a nonprofit and is responsible for all of the park’s expenses, including lawn mowing and paying utility bills.

“We are looking to step up to a new role in the revitalization of White Sulphur,” Harper said. “The park is part of that. It’s open to everyone when it’s not reserved for an event, and we work to maintain certain standards to ensure it’s a place where people want to come and feel safe.”

Harper voiced pride in the strides the city’s businesses have made in the flood recovery effort, as storefronts are filling up and sales are brisk in the revitalized downtown shopping district.

“White Sulphur Springs wants to fill its niche, not mimic any other small town,” she said. “We’re developing our own identity, welcoming to residents and visitors alike. People have come from all over to see what’s going on here. It’s absolutely wonderful what’s happening in White Sulphur Springs.”

She added, “Main Street is a support for all the wonderful people making things happen here.”

Acknowledging the deep sympathy townspeople will always feel for families of the seven White Sulphur residents who perished in the flood five years ago, Harper said the optimism and spirit of renewal seen in the town today are a good sign of better times to come.

“White Sulphur Springs has grieved for years,” she said. “It’s time to look forward to the revitalization. Just keep moving forward.”

# Newly Elected Rainelle Officials Ready To Make A Change

By autumn shelton | WVDN JUL 14, 2021

Changes are about to be made in the town of Rainelle.

Newly elected Rainelle officials held their first council meeting on Monday, July 12, and they came prepared with ideas to make the small community a better, safer place to live.

One major change discussed is bringing retired Greenbrier County Sheriff Deputy Doris Vandall on board to serve as a town of Rainelle police officer.

During the meeting, Mayor Robin Williams stated that she wants to revive the Rainelle Police Department and that Vandall would be a great addition to the force.

The town hired a new police chief in March, but that did not work out. The officer resigned from his position after only being employed a short time. This left the town with only one patrolman — Randy Sizemore.

Once Vandall joins the force, the town will still need a police chief. The council and mayor are currently in discussions about who may fill that position.

Additionally, several Rainelle residents were in attendance to discuss town issues.

One resident stated that she and a group of citizens have been considering filing a class-action lawsuit against the town regarding a trailer park located on Ohio Avenue.

“Nothing is being done,” she stated. She said that people are in and out at all times of the day, residents fight in the streets, there is ongoing drug activity, and the landlord does nothing to maintain the park.

“These trailers have never been exterminated. I have called the health department. I have called Senator Baldwin. I have called Shelley Moore-Capito and she said it all boils down to the town council,” she continued.

Councilmember Ron Fleshman added that the upkeep of the park is “horrible” and that the town should do something about it. He suggested that the council contact town attorney Mike Anderson to see if they could find a solution. Williams stated that she will start making phone calls to get something done.

In other council business,

— Town employees have been marking streets with white paint to get an estimate on future paving projects;

— Williams stated that the town will soon begin working with the Department of Highways to replace a drainage pipe in front of Dr. Veronneau and Hoblitzell’s office. Once the pipe is replaced, it should put an end to the roadway flooding issue at that location

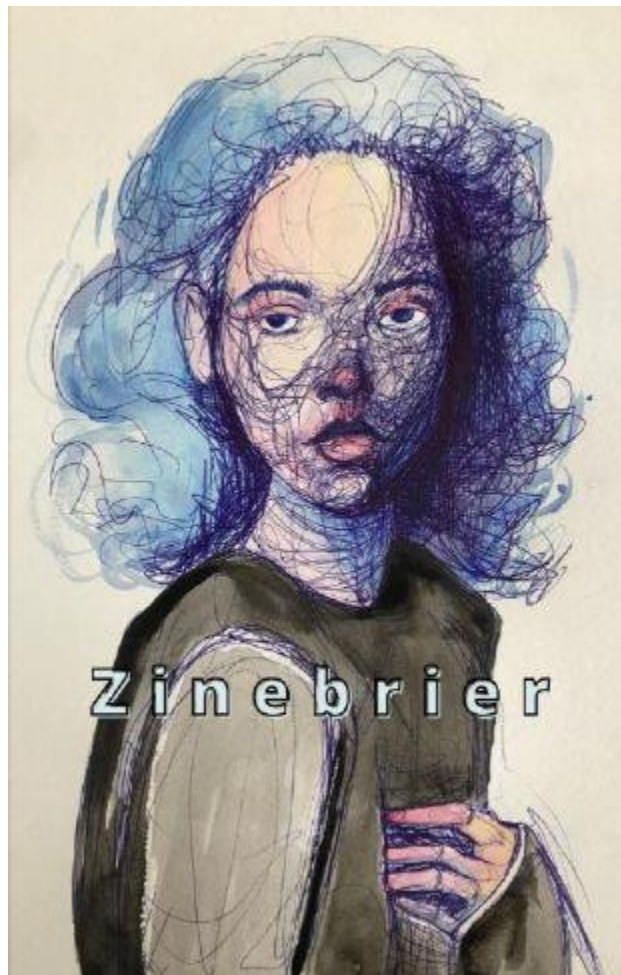
— Council decided to look into the town’s ordinance to determine if homeowners are responsible for the upkeep of sidewalks in front of their house. Williams stated that she also wants to see if the town could look into receiving more grant money to help fix the town’s sidewalks;

— Council also agreed to look at the town’s ordinance to determine how to enforce lawn mowing regulations for landowners.

The Rainelle Town Council meets on the second and fourth Monday of each month at 7 p.m. at Town Hall. Everyone is encouraged to attend.

## Zinebrier - A Grungy Arts Showcase of The Greenbrier Valley

By by bobby bordelon | WVDN JUL 14, 2021



The Greenbrier Valley now has a place to highlight the art projects that don’t end up on local shelves or walls in the community.

Claire Jarvis and Hannah Pence created Zinebrier, an easier to produce magazine highlighting work by local artists. After putting out a call for local art for the Greenbrier Valley community, Pence and Jarvis began putting the zine together with the loose themes of spring and the loosening of COVID-19 restrictions.

“The feeling behind the zine was pushed by the pandemic,” Pence explained. “We couldn’t touch each other or see each other or hold each other for so long. We all watched our lives on the internet. I wanted something

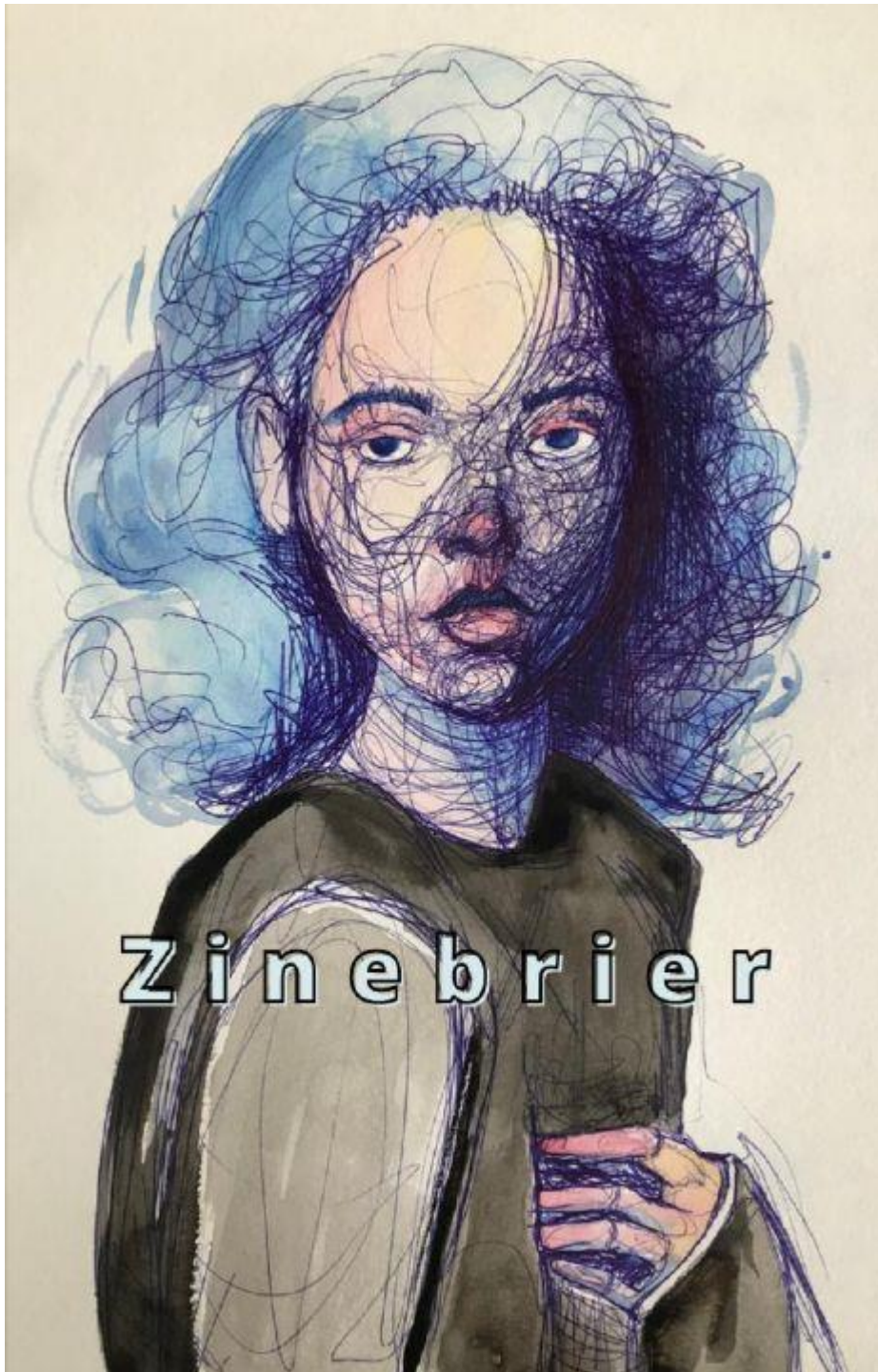
we could hold. You could hold the community in your hand. Physically in your hand.”

The goal is not to present clean art, made by highly proficient and technically perfect artists. Instead, the zine is looking to capture the grittiness of works in the process of becoming. The more casual style is built for doodles, poem fragments, photos, coloring book pages, and incomplete digital art. As a result, the many artists that contributed got to show off completed work and a peek behind the creation process.

“A lot of our friends that submitted work in the service industry and they’re all so talented,” Jarvis said. “It’s kind of disheartening sometimes when you work in the service industry, especially if you worked through the pandemic. You have people treat you like shit. You’re like ‘I’m more than this job.’ I just wanted to celebrate our friends who are talented and work hard and really showcase them.”

“We don’t really have a space for how weird we are,” Pence added. “We don’t have a gritty, grungy place for that. I always felt like it was missing from here.”

The cover art was illustrated by Emily Sullivan, but it wasn’t designed to be the cover. Pence explained that after she submitted it, it was picked for the cover for being both striking and being one of the many times Sullivan’s art style appears in the zine. Jarvis noted that “she submitted so many cool things,” and “she has a bunch of little doodles on the bottom of pages.”



### **The zine's cover**

The pair met while working with Greenbrier Community School, moving boxes from its previous location to the current location. Jarvis had previously seen an established community zine and wanted something similar to flourish in Greenbrier County.

"I worked with a zine in Greensboro, I've only lived here for two and half years," Jarvis explained. "Local bands, local restaurants, stuff like that. I saw the editor's side of that, but I didn't know what all it could entail. I wanted to start one too, but I was pretty shy about it. I wanted to see this cool thing happen, but I didn't want to be in charge of it. Because the community is so accepting, I thought that if I messed it up, no one would be that mad at me."

Pence continued, saying they “were processing the pandemic together. ... Claire mentioned she’s always wanted to do a zine here. I hadn’t lived here for five years, but this has always been my community and I wanted to do one too. We let that sit for a year, until it felt like it was okay, we’re all getting vaccinated, we’re all going to see each other soon.”

Because initial discussions began as COVID lockdowns began, when vaccinations began, the pair once again began planning the zine’s theme to highlight the return to normal. However, this did not quite stick.

“We got a lot of photos of the vaccination stations and site, but not really a lot of COVID-specific art,” Jarvis said. “I did like that it more so became spring-themed.”

The same loosely-themed feeling is also what the pair hopes to cultivate with the next issue.

“We put [the first issue] out there as the spring issue. We got a lot of things that were spring-oriented, and I think that [with the next one] if we say it’s going to be released on Halloween, it will inspire people to make it spooky. But it doesn’t have to be at all with the theme!”

The selection includes work from Keslie Tyson, Diane Hall, Magdalen Karrs, James Addison, Mark Trent, Kristen Rehak, Colter Lewis, Lyla Smith, Brehana Scott, Francis Xavier Nelle, Marguerite Kemp-Sherman, Toby Garlitz, Ender James, Tulip Parsons, Indigo Graves, Larry Berger, Diane Hall, and photos from this writer.

To learn how to donate to the next Zinebrier issue or get a digital copy of the first issue, reach out to Pence and Jarvis at [maryhannah.pence@gmail.com](mailto:maryhannah.pence@gmail.com) or [heyheyckj@gmail.com](mailto:heyheyckj@gmail.com).

## **2019 Shooting Leads To Wanton Endangerment Plea**

By by bobby bordelon | WVDN JUL 14, 2021

The man responsible for a 2019 shooting that sent one victim to Greenbrier Valley Medical Center entered a plea on Monday, July 12.

Wade Holliday was arrested in July 2019 in relation to a non-fatal shooting.

“The state would expect that the evidence would [show] that on July 6, 2019, Mr. Holliday was possessed of a firearm, that he was present in Greenbrier County West Virginia, [and] recklessly discharged that firearm in a manner that created a substantial risk of injury or death,” explained Prosecuting Attorney Patrick Via on Monday. “In fact, the discharge resulted in an individual ... being shot as a result of that, all constituting the offense of wanton endangerment involved with a firearm.”

According to the criminal complaint, officers responded to the Greenbrier Valley Medical Center, where a patient was being treated for a gunshot to the leg on Saturday.

“This trooper observed a gunshot wound to [the victim]’s right leg,” reads the criminal complaint. “This trooper was advised the shooting occurred along Caldwell Hill Loop Road.”

The complaint continues, explaining that although the victim was unable to continue with the interview due to

their condition, officers were able to interview Wade G. Holliday, and ultimately arrested him.

“The defendant stated he obtained a firearm, went to [the victim’s] residence located along Caldwell Hill Loop Road and entered the same with the intent to shoot [the victim] due to an ongoing argument between [the victim] and [their] cohabiting partner,” the complaint reads. “The defendant further stated he then proceeded to shoot [the victim].”

Holliday initially plead not guilty in the Greenbrier County Magistrate Court to both counts and posted a \$25,000 property/surety bond.

Defense Attorney Eric Francis noted Holiday was taking the best path forward by going through with the plea deal. Holiday did not contest the facts as presented by the state before entering his plea.

Via noted the victim had reviewed the plea deal and accepted it.

Holliday plead no contest to the indictment, meaning he accepted responsibility without admitting he was at fault. Greenbrier County Circuit Court Judge Jennifer Dent found him guilty as a result and the case will proceed towards sentencing.

According to the West Virginia State Code, wanton endangerment involving a firearm, which creates a substantial risk of death or serious bodily injury to another, is a felony and typically carries a sentence of one to five years in the penitentiary or fined between \$250 and \$2,500, or both.

## **WV IJDC Awards Money To Rainelle, Wyoming County**

By autumn shelton | WVDN JUL 14, 2021

The town of Rainelle will receive grant funding for two generators following the recent meeting of the West Virginia Infrastructure and Jobs Development Council.

Council approved the grant request for up to \$46,202 for the cost of two generators. One generator will be located at the water plant and the other is to be located at the Rainelle/Lilly Park Water Station. The total estimated cost for the generators is \$277,716.

The grants will be used along with matching funds from the FEMA Hazard Mitigation program to complete the project.

The council provided generator match assistance for 10 other projects throughout West Virginia.

In Wyoming County, the council approved the use of a bid overrun and provided \$100,000 to help cover the cost of the Beartown extension project overrunning bids by \$954,598.

The Wyoming County Commission has committed \$681,819 in American Rescue Plan Act grant funds to the project overrun and the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection is providing \$172,279 in additional funds through its Abandoned Mine Lands and Reclamation Grant Program. This will allow this \$10.312 million project to close.

The council was created by the WV Legislature in 1994 to serve as a funding clearinghouse for water and wastewater projects around the state. Gov. Jim Justice serves as council chairman, with Deputy Chief of Staff Ann Urling serving as his designate.

The council will meet again on August 4.

## **WV State Trooper Cadet Testing Dates Announced**

By wv daily news | WVDN JUL 14, 2021

The West Virginia State Police will be testing for their upcoming cadet class set to begin in January of 2022. Anyone interested in a career with the West Virginia State Police should apply.

Applications can be found at [www.wvsp.gov](http://www.wvsp.gov). For those who have not submitted an online application, a completed application may be brought to the testing location as a walk-on.

Applicants must be at least 21 years of age and no older than 39 prior to enlistment and possess a high school diploma or GED.

Applicants must also have a valid driver's license for two years prior to applying. Applicants may test at age 20 with the understanding that they will be 21 prior to the tentative enlisted date of January 17, 2022.

The testing will take place at the following locations on the following dates:

**WV State Police Academy** — 135 Academy Drive, Institute, WV 25064

Testing Dates: Fri., July 16; Sat., July 17; Fri., Aug. 27; Sat., Aug. 28; Thurs., Sept. 9; Sun., Sept. 12.

**Charles Town, Troop 2 Headquarters** — 409 Industrial Blvd., Kearneysville, WV 25430

Testing Dates: Fri., Aug. 6; Sat., Sept. 11.

**Morgantown Detachment** — 3453 Monongahela Blvd., Morgantown, WV 26505

Testing Dates: Sat., Aug. 7; Fri., Sept.10.

Testing will begin at 9 a.m. Applicants may arrive at the testing locations at 7:30 a.m. to fill out an application.

## **Ronceverte Selects New City Recorder**

By by bobby bordelon | WVDN JUL 14, 2021

A special session of the Ronceverte City Council was held on Monday, July 12, considering military banners



and the City Recorder position.

The previous recorder Deena Pack left her position after getting sworn in as mayor, creating a vacancy.

Councilmember Kathy King was selected to serve as a temporary recorder with a vote from council.

During Councilmember comments, King also explained that the military banners hanging throughout the city would be coming down soon. This is both to keep the city's banners changing with the seasons, but also to prevent them from weather wear and tear from destroying them in a few years so soon after the city got them.

"They're not staying up year-round, they're coming up and down according to the holiday," said King. "They will go back up before Veteran's Day. ... It's been a successful campaign event."

The military banners were one of the first sets of new banners the city acquired over the past few years. Beginning in 2020, military veterans, their families, or friends could sign up to be honored by a hanging banner in town. The program, created in part by the Ronceverte Development Corporation, was inspired by a similar banner program begun shortly before in White Sulphur Springs.

King also noted that when the banners go back up "where your banner is this time may not be where it is next time." She also noted the possibility of hanging State Fair of West Virginia banners in August.

In other business:

— E.L. Robinson representative Bob Hazelwood noted that the water line sections of Ronceverte's water infrastructure project were 85% complete. From here, more work remains on road repairs, trenching lines, and on the water tanks. Hazelwood also said, "We had a phone call meeting with Region 4, and the development office is really pleased with the progress on the project here in the town."

— The administration of both city water and wastewater projects continued, with invoices related to both considered and approved.

— City Administrator Pam Mentz noted that the "Friends of Ronceverte are doing a really good job in the park, cleaning up."

— Pack also noted the four nonverbal communication boards for Island Park and Ronceverte Elementary School could be up in the next few weeks as the manufacturer and crews finish their work.

## **Monroe County Technical Center Hosts First Aid Classes**

By rebecca stalnaker | WVDN JUL 14, 2021

The Monroe County Technical Center is hosting a "CPR and First Aid Learning Series." There are a total of three classes in the series, CPR and AED, First Aid and Stop the Blood and More. The first class was held on Monday, July 12, the other two classes will be held over the next two Mondays, July 19 and 26. Certification cards will be available for an additional fee.

Anyone who signed up early had the option of paying \$70 for all three classes. The remaining two classes are \$35 each. The cost of all certification cards is an additional fee. There are four certification options; the first option is BLS which requires the person to already be a certified medical provider such as a nurse, CNA or EMT. Next is adult, child and infant CPR, AED and choking. The third is First Aid only and the last combines First Aid and the CPR, AED and choking certification.

For certification from ASHI (American Safety and Health Institute) options one through three all cost \$6.70. Option four is \$11.50 and requires attendance to both of the first two classes. For American Heart certification, option one is \$6. Options two through four are \$25 with four requiring attendance to both the first and second class.

Registration fees are non-refundable and may be made in advance or on the night of class. Pre-registration is suggested but not required. To register online, go to [www.monroe-k12.wvnet.edu/mctc](http://www.monroe-k12.wvnet.edu/mctc) and click on the tab marked "Adult Education Programs." Child care is available during classes.

In addition to these first-aid related classes, Monroe County Technical Center is also hosting a series of Garden to Table classes. The next class will be held on Tuesday, July 20, and will be on the topic of freezing foods. Each of these classes is only \$5 a piece.

These classes are available to anyone over the age of 10 and are instructed by Stephen Sowers CCP (Critical Care Paramedic).

For more information visit the above website or the Monroe County Schools Facebook page. Monroe County Technical Center can also be reached by phone at 304-753-9971

## Gbr. COVID Taskforce Update

By matthew young | WVDN JUL 14, 2021

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

**GREENBRIER VALLEY MEDICAL CENTER:** We have zero COVID patients in house currently. Visitation hours are 11am-8pm for patients.

**GREENBRIER COUNTY SCHOOLS:** Our summer programs are ongoing at multiple schools. We sent vaccination info to all students/parents for consideration over the summer. There have not been any positive cases at summer school among students or staff. Stay tuned for detailed information very soon from Greenbrier County Schools on reentry protocols for the fall semester.

WVSOM. Students are returning to town now and will begin the fall semester in the coming weeks.

**ROBERT C BYRD CLINIC:** COVID testing continues daily from 9am-1pm in the mobile clinic unit (parking lot of the east entrance). In August, that will switch to 9am-12pm. Our vaccine clinics continue on Thursdays. You can also call to make an appointment anytime. You do not need to be a regular patient to receive a vaccine.

**RAINELLE MEDICAL CENTER:** We are doing free COVID testing daily from 10am-12pm. We are doing rapid testing but that requires office visit. Vaccines continue every Thursday 9am to 5:30pm. We have had no positive cases lately.

**COMMITTEE ON AGING:** We have reopened our senior centers for meals and services. Slowly over time, we are adding back activities for senior citizens. We continue to allow grab & go meal options also.

**HIGH ROCKS:** We continue to offer meals four days per week. That will continue over the summer. If you'd like to order a meal, please call 304-647-4994. The cafe is also open weekdays from 9am-3pm.

**SENECA:** We just received a \$2 million grant, allowing us to increase our case management and crisis management services out in the community. We also expanded our telehealth services for those who have difficulty coming into our facility. Crisis cases continue to be on the rise, and we want to do our part to help the community.

**CELEBRATION:** Mark your calendars for July 28, 2021, when we will recognize all those in the community who volunteered to protect public health during the course of the pandemic. It runs from 5-7pm at the Clingman Center by Hill & Holler. Light refreshments will be served by several restaurants who provided meals during the pandemic. (Setup is at 10am that morning for those who would like to help.) If you have questions, please contact Jennifer Mason at [Jennifer.Mason@dinsmore.com](mailto:Jennifer.Mason@dinsmore.com).

## **WVa starts new competition for student, teacher vaccinations**

By The Associated Press | WVDN JUL 14, 2021

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — The West Virginia Department of Education has a new program to encourage students, teachers and staff to get their COVID-19 vaccinations.

The "I Got Vaxxed Competition" will award \$5,000 each to a high school, a middle school and an elementary school for having the highest percentage of eligible people vaccinated, the department said in a news release Monday. The winners will be announced the week of Oct. 3.

School participation is voluntary.

"We know that students and staff lost so much more than instructional days during the pandemic, and this is just a way to try and restore some normalcy and recognize the importance of vaccinations," state Superintendent of Schools W. Clayton Burch said. "Children need the benefits of a consistent school year to regain some of those lost experiences which, in turn, support their social-emotional needs."

Students ages 12 and older and all teachers and staff are eligible for the vaccine.

## **Biden picks ex-West Virginia health official as drug czar**

By The Associated Press | WVDN JUL 14, 2021



By ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden is nominating West Virginia’s former health commissioner as the nation’s top anti-drug official, tapping a doctor who served on the front lines of the nation’s opioid epidemic. The White House said Tuesday that Dr. Rahul Gupta will be the first physician to lead the Office of National Drug Control Policy, also known as the “drug czar.”

The nomination drew bipartisan praise from West Virginia officials. Republican Gov. Jim Justice called it “great news,” and Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin said the pick “means someone with firsthand knowledge of the opioid crisis, especially in West Virginia, will be coordinating the national fight against the drug epidemic that continues to ravage our nation.”

“Dr. Gupta will bring over a decade of extensive experience combatting the drug epidemic to ONDCP - the office charged with addressing the drug epidemic that has killed over 90,000 Americans just last year,” Manchin said in a statement.

Gupta most recently served as the chief medical and health officer at March of Dimes.

## **West Virginia governor dismisses vaccine**

# conspiracies

By The Associated Press | WVDN JUL 14, 2021

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice confronted outlandish conspiracy theories about the coronavirus vaccine Tuesday and set higher targets for vaccinating residents age 50 and older.

He said at a news conference that he recently had a meal with a group of people who believed in the baseless conspiracy theory that “there was something in the vaccine that would enable the federal government to track us.”

The governor dismissed it and urged more people to get vaccinated against the coronavirus.

“To come up with the idea that there’s a chip or something like that in the vaccine and it will go in our body and they’ll know where we’re at, it’s just a stretch beyond what I can believe,” he said.

Justice noted that the phones people carry around with them has more potential for tracking them.

West Virginia lags behind five bordering states in total vaccine doses administered per 100,000 people, according to federal data. The more transmissible delta variant is leading to a nationwide rise in cases again after months of decline.

State data show that more than 58% of all residents have received at least one dose of the vaccine.

Justice set a new goal of vaccinating 85% of residents 50 and older, a group that currently has 81.4% coverage. He also wants 90% of those age 65 and older to receive a shot, while 88.7% currently have one.

Hospitalizations in the state are up 54% since July 4 to 80 COVID-19 patients. Officials warned the delta variant is slowly beginning to spread in the state.

## Morrisey Rejects Purdue Bankruptcy Plan

By matthew young | WVDN JUL 14, 2021

West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey announced his intention to vote “no” on confirming Purdue Pharma’s bankruptcy plan.

If you have any questions, please call (304) 590-5026 or email [Curtis.M.Johnson@wvago.gov](mailto:Curtis.M.Johnson@wvago.gov).

Thanks,

Curtis Johnson

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Curtis Johnson

Phone: (304) 590-5026

Release Date: July 13, 2021

Attorney General Morrisey Rejects Purdue Pharma Bankruptcy Plan

CHARLESTON — West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey announced his intention to vote “no” on confirming Purdue Pharma’s bankruptcy plan.

The Attorney General discussed Purdue Pharma's bankruptcy plan, gave an update on the state's opioid litigation and detailed the office's efforts to fight fentanyl abuse in West Virginia during a press conference Tuesday.

The Attorney General expressed his opposition to the way the multibillion-dollar settlement with Purdue Pharma may be divided among states.

"I remain vigorously opposed to a proposed allocation formula that would distribute settlement funds largely based on a state or local government's population - not intensity of the problem," Attorney General Morrisey said. "Any such allocation formula fails to recognize the disproportionate harm caused by opioids in our state. I look forward to arguing our case in court this August."

The Attorney General contends that the proposed settlement fund allocation plan, which is largely based on population, does not address the disproportionate harm that has been caused by opioids in West Virginia.

In April, the Attorney General filed his objection in U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of New York, arguing that Purdue's failure to disclose how its multibillion-dollar proposal would be split among states undermined its desire to avoid court challenges to an inherently inequitable arrangement.

Purdue Pharma responded by disclosing publicly the once-closely held Denver Plan, which the Attorney General opposes since it would distribute settlement funds largely based on population - not intensity of the problem.

Attorney General Morrisey filed suit against Purdue Pharma and former chief executive Richard Sackler in May 2019. The lawsuit alleges Purdue Pharma created a false narrative to convince prescribers that opioids are not addictive and that its opioid products were safer than they actually were.

The lawsuit contends Purdue Pharma proliferated a deceptive marketing strategy with reckless disregard for compliance enforcement. It also alleges company sales representatives routinely claimed that OxyContin had no dose ceiling, despite assertions by federal regulators that OxyContin's dose ceiling was evident by adverse reactions.

The lawsuit marked West Virginia's second against Purdue Pharma. The first, filed in 2001, resulted in a \$10 million settlement in 2004. However, that case involved an earlier version of the opioid than the reformulated, so-called tamper-resistant OxyContin that debuted in 2010.

The Purdue matter is one of the West Virginia Attorney General's pending lawsuits against five opioid manufacturers and other national chain distributors.

Read a copy of the Attorney General's objection at <https://bit.ly/2QTWYq5>, as well as the Denver Plan disclosure brought to light as a result of the objection at <https://bit.ly/3xrCS2j>.

## **Summer camps hit with COVID outbreaks — are schools next?**

By The Associated Press | WVDN JUL 14, 2021



By HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH, KANTELE FRANKO and LINDSEY TANNER Associated Press

The U.S. has seen a string of COVID-19 outbreaks tied to summer camps in recent weeks in places such as Texas, Illinois, Florida, Missouri and Kansas, in what some fear could be a preview of the upcoming school year.

In some cases the outbreaks have spread from the camp to the broader community.

The clusters have come as the number of confirmed cases of the coronavirus in the U.S. has reversed course, surging more than 60% over the past two weeks from an average of about 12,000 a day to about 19,500, according to data from Johns Hopkins University.

The rise in many places has been blamed on too many unvaccinated people and the highly contagious delta variant.

Gwen Ford, a 43-year-old science teacher from Adrian, Missouri, was cautiously optimistic when she eyed the dropping case numbers in the spring and signed up her 12-year-old daughter for the West Central Christian Service Camp in Missouri.

But one day after her daughter got home from a week of playing in the camp pool, worshipping with friends and bunking in a dormitory, Ford got an email about an outbreak and then learned that her daughter's camp buddy was infected.

"And we were like, 'Oh, my gosh. This was someone you were around quite a bit,'" she recalled, adding that her daughter ultimately tested negative. Ford said she definitely plans to get her daughter vaccinated. "It was very nerve-wracking. It kind of seems like we finally felt comfortable and it happened."

A note posted on the camp's Facebook page showed that the camp nurse and several faculty and volunteers were among those infected. Staff members at the camp did not return a call for comment.

JoAnn Martin, administrator of the public health agency in surrounding Pettis County, lamented the difficulty in getting people to take the virus seriously and get vaccinated.

"It has been a challenge since the first case," she said. "You have people who still say it is not real. You have



people who say it is a cold. You have people who say what is the big deal. You have people who say it is all a government plot.”

Dr. William Schaffner, a Vanderbilt University infectious disease specialist, said he isn't surprised by the outbreaks as camps reopen this year after being closed last summer. He said he had his doubts that some camps “thought through all the implications of camping during COVID.”

Ideally, he said, camps would require vaccinations for adults and for campers who are old enough, and would take other measures such as serving meals in shifts, putting fewer youngsters in the cabins and requiring anyone unvaccinated to wear masks indoors.

In the Houston area, health officials said more than 130 youth and adults tested positive for the virus in cases connected to a church camp attended by several hundred young people.

The pastor of Clear Creek Community Church in League City, Texas, said the outbreak happened in two waves, first at the camp and then when people returned home in late June and spread the virus to their families.

“In some cases, entire families are sick,” pastor Bruce Wesley said on the church's Facebook page.

In Illinois, health officials said 85 teens and adults at a Christian youth camp in mid-June tested positive, including an unvaccinated young adult who was hospitalized, and some people from the camp attended a nearby conference, leading to 11 additional cases.

The Illinois Department of Public Health said all the campers were eligible for the vaccine, but only “a handful” of campers and staff had received it. The camp didn't check vaccination status or require people to wear masks indoors, according to the department.

The health department in Leon County, Florida, which includes Tallahassee, tweeted this month that an increase in cases there also was tied in part to summer camp outbreaks.

And in Kansas, about 50 people have been infected in an outbreak linked to a church summer camp held last month not far from Wichita.

Elsewhere the situation is better. The roughly 225 overnight camps and thousands of day camps run by local YMCAs are mostly open this summer, though with slightly reduced capacity, said Paul McEntire, chief operating officer for YMCA of the USA.

McEntire said he is aware of a few cases of Y camps where people tested positive for the virus, but no instances of significant spread. He said many camps are taking precautions such as serving meals in shifts or outside and trying to keep youngsters in separate groups. Most are requiring masks indoors, but he acknowledged it can be a challenge.

“To be frank, there are some parents that didn't want to send their kids unless they were assured that masking was being used indoors,” he said. “There were others that took the exact opposite viewpoint.”

Ahead of the school year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention updated its guidance last week to say vaccinated teachers and students don't need to wear masks inside and 3-foot distancing of desks is not necessary for the fully vaccinated.

Summer camp outbreaks “certainly could be a precursor” to what happens when youngsters return to classrooms in the fall, said Dr. Michelle Prickett, a pulmonary and critical care specialist at Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago. The outcome will depend on vaccination rates and which virus variants are prevalent, she said.

“We just need to be vigilant,” Prickett said.

Schaffner said he thinks schools won't face similar outbreaks because they tend to be more structured and disciplined than camps and most got used to making adjustments over the past year and a half. But he said the best way to reduce the risk is to get most people vaccinated.

“There are many parts of the country that simply have not grasped this,” he said.

The COVID-19 vaccine in the U.S. is authorized for people as young as 12. It could be several months before regulators make a decision on authorizing shots for children younger than that. Studies on youngsters under 12 are still going on.

Ford, the teacher whose daughter narrowly escaped getting COVID-19 at a Missouri summer camp, is worried. “With the uptick in cases, I am concerned that we won't be able to go back to normal, and we will have to ask



people to mask and stuff,” she said, “and I have a feeling that there is going to be a huge argument.”

## Police patrol Havana in large numbers after rare protests

By The Associated Press | WVDN JUL 14, 2021



By ANDREA RODRIGUEZ Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — Large contingents of Cuban police patrolled the capital of Havana on Monday following rare protests around the island nation against food shortages and high prices amid the coronavirus crisis. Cuba’s president said the demonstrations were stirred up on social media by Cuban Americans in the United States. Sunday’s protests marked some of the biggest displays of antigovernment sentiment in the tightly controlled country in years. Cuba is going through its worst economic crisis in decades, along with a resurgence of coronavirus cases, as it suffers the consequences of U.S. sanctions imposed by former President Donald Trump’s administration.

Many young people took part in demonstrations in Havana. Protests were also held elsewhere on the island, including in the small town of San Antonio de los Baños, where people objected to power outages and were visited by President Miguel Díaz-Canel. He entered a few homes, where he took questions from residents. Authorities appeared determined to put a stop to the demonstrations. More than a dozen protesters were

detained, including a leading Cuban dissident who was arrested trying to attend a march in the city of Santiago, 559 miles (900 kilometers) east. The demonstrators disrupted traffic in the capital for several hours until some threw rocks and police moved in and broke them up.

Internet service was spotty, possibly indicating an effort to prevent protesters from communicating with each other.

"We've seen how the campaign against Cuba was growing on social media in the past few weeks," Díaz-Canel said Monday in a nationally televised appearance in which his entire Cabinet was also present. "That's the way it's done: Try to create inconformity, dissatisfaction by manipulating emotions and feelings."

In a statement Monday, U.S. President Joe Biden said Cuban protesters were asserting their basic rights.

"We stand with the Cuban people and their clarion call for freedom and relief from the tragic grip of the pandemic and from the decades of repression and economic suffering to which they have been subjected by Cuba's authoritarian regime," Biden said.

The U.S. urges the Cuban government to serve their people "rather than enriching themselves," Biden added.

U.N. deputy spokesman Farhan Haq on Monday stressed the U.N. position "on the need for freedom of expression and peaceful assembly to be respected fully, and we expect that that will be the case."

The demonstrations were extremely unusual on an island where little dissent against the government is tolerated. The last major public demonstration of discontent, over economic hardship, took place nearly 30 years in 1994. Last year, there were small demonstrations by artists and other groups, but nothing as big or widespread as what erupted this past weekend.

In the Havana protest on Sunday, police initially trailed behind as protesters chanted, "Freedom!" "Enough!" and "Unite!" One motorcyclist pulled out a U.S. flag, but it was snatched from him by others.

"We are fed up with the queues, the shortages. That's why I'm here," one middle-age protester told The Associated Press. He declined to identify himself for fear of being arrested later.

Later, about 300 pro-government protesters arrived with a large Cuban flag, shouting slogans in favor of the late President Fidel Castro and the Cuban revolution. Some assaulted an AP videojournalist, smashing his camera. AP photojournalist Ramón Espinosa was then beaten by a group of police officers in uniforms and civilian clothes; he suffered a broken nose and an eye injury.

The demonstration grew to a few thousand in the vicinity of Galeano Avenue and the marchers pressed on despite a few charges by police officers and tear gas barrages. People standing on many balconies along the central artery in the Centro Habana neighborhood applauded the protesters passing by. Others joined in the march.

About 2 1/2 hours into the march, some protesters pulled up cobblestones and threw them at police, at which point officers began arresting people and the marchers dispersed. AP journalists counted at least 20 people who were taken away in police cars or by individuals in civilian clothes.

Although many people tried to take out their cellphones and broadcast the protest live, Cuban authorities shut down internet service throughout the afternoon Sunday.

On Monday, Cuban authorities were blocking Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and Telegram, said Alp Toker, director of Netblocks, a London-based internet monitoring firm.

"This does seem to be a response to social media-fueled protest," he said. Twitter did not appear to be blocked, though Toker noted Cuba has the ability to cut it off if it wants to.

## **Black female WWII unit hoping to get congressional honor**

By The Associated Press | WVDN JUL 14, 2021



By MICHAEL CASEY Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — Maj. Fannie Griffin McClendon and her Army colleagues never dwelled on being the only Black battalion of women to serve in Europe during World War II. They had a job to do.

The 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion was credited with solving a growing mail crisis during its stint in England and, upon their return, serving as a role model to generations of Black women who joined the military.

But for decades, the exploits of the 855 members never got wider recognition — until now.

The Senate passed legislation that would award members of the battalion, affectionately known as the Six Triple Eight, with the Congressional Gold Medal.

The bill is awaiting action in the House, but is already too late for most 6888 members. There are believed to be only seven surviving, including McClendon.

“Well, it would be nice but it never occurred to me that we would even qualify for it,” McClendon said from her home in Tempe, Arizona.

“I just wish there were more people to, if it comes through, there were more people to celebrate it,” said McClendon, who has met with her local congressman to press for passage of the bill.

The 6888th was sent overseas in 1945, a time when there was growing pressure from African-American organizations to include Black women in what was called the Women’s Army Corps and allow them to join their white counterparts overseas.

“I think that the 6888th, the command inherently knew that their presence overseas meant more than clearing that mail backlog,” said Retired Army Col. Edna Cummings, who was not a member of the 6888th but has been advocating to get them greater recognition. “They were representing opportunity for their sisters at arms back in the United States who were having a hard time dealing with the racism and sexism within the

ranks.”

The unit dodged German U-boats on their way to England and scrambled to escape a German rocket once they reached a Glasgow port.

They were deployed to unheated, rat-infested airplane hangars in Birmingham, England, and given a daunting mission: Process the millions of pieces of undelivered mail for troops, government workers and Red Cross workers. The mountains of mail had piled up and troops were grumbling about lost letters and delayed care packages. Thus their motto, “No Mail, Low Morale.”

“They kept hollering about wanting us to go overseas so I guess they found something for us to do overseas: Take care of the mail,” McClendon said. “And there was an awful lot of mail. ... They expected we were gonna be there about two or three months trying to get it straightened out. Well I think in about a month, in a month and a half, we had it all straightened out and going in the right direction.”

The 6888th toiled around the clock, processing about 65,000 pieces of mail in each of the three shifts. They created a system using locator cards with a service member’s name and unit number to ensure mail was delivered. Sometimes, they had to resort to detective work when a parcel only had a common name or a service member’s nickname.

Despite their achievements, the unit endured questions and criticism from those who didn’t support Black women in the military.

Housing, mess halls and recreation facilities were segregated by race and sex, forcing them to set up all their own operations. The unit commander, Maj. Charity Adams, was also criticized by a general who threatened to give her command to a white officer. She reportedly responded: “Over my dead body, sir.”

They cleared out a backlog of about 17 million pieces of mail in three months — twice as fast as projected.

The battalion would go on to serve in France before returning home. And like so many Black units during World War II, their exploits never got the attention afforded their white counterparts.

“It is sad to say. They came back to Jim Crow America,” Cummings said. “Not only the 6888th but a lot of our minority soldiers who returned from the war were not recognized or appreciated until years later. The Tuskegee Airmen, Montford Point Marines. There are so many stories of units of color who were not recognized until decades after the war.”

Still, Cummings said the time overseas with the Army left a lasting impression on the women, many of whom dismantled barriers in their professional lives.

Elizabeth Barker Johnson was the first female to attend Winston-Salem State University in North Carolina on the GI Bill. She took part in the school’s graduation ceremony at the age of 99 — 70 years after getting her degree.

McClendon joined the Air Force after the military was integrated and retired in 1971. She was the first female to command an all-male squadron with the Strategic Air Command. Another unit member, the late Doris Moore, became the first Black social worker in New Hampshire, her family said.

The unit’s story has also started gaining wider recognition. A monument was erected in 2018 at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, to honor them, and the 6888th was given the Meritorious Unit Commendation in 2019.

A documentary “The Six Triple Eight” was made about their exploits. There is talk of a movie.

A bill would rename a Buffalo, New York, post office after the battalion’s Indiana Hunt-Martin, who died last year.

And there is the push for the Congressional Gold Medal.

“These women were trailblazers, and it is past time that we officially recognize them for their incredible contribution to our troops during World War II,” said U.S. Sen. Maggie Hassan, a New Hampshire Democrat who co-sponsored the Senate bill.

Like McClendon, Moore’s family said she would be honored but not enamored by the award. She rarely talked about her time with the 6888th when she was alive, preferring to let those achievements speak for themselves.

“She would have said, ‘This is an amazing, wonderful honor and I’m very proud to have served.’ Then she would have went on with her life,” said Moore’s niece Elizabeth Pettiford, who grew up next door to Moore in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. “I just don’t think she would have made a huge thing about it because that was



her personality. She kept a lot of things in.”

—  
This story has been corrected to show the name of the battalion is the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion not the 6888th Central Directory Postal Battalion.

## US COVID-19 cases rising again, doubling over three weeks

By The Associated Press | WVDN JUL 14, 2021



HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH and JOSH FUNK Associated Press

The COVID-19 curve in the U.S. is rising again after months of decline, with the number of new cases per day doubling over the past three weeks, driven by the fast-spreading delta variant, lagging vaccination rates and Fourth of July gatherings.

Confirmed infections climbed to an average of about 23,600 a day on Monday, up from 11,300 on June 23, according to Johns Hopkins University data. And all but two states — Maine and South Dakota — reported that case numbers have gone up over the past two weeks.

“It is certainly no coincidence that we are looking at exactly the time that we would expect cases to be occurring after the July Fourth weekend,” said Dr. Bill Powderly, co-director of the infectious-disease division at

Washington University's School of Medicine in St. Louis.

At the same time, parts of the country are running up against deep vaccine resistance, while the highly contagious mutant version of the coronavirus that was first detected in India is accounting for an ever-larger share of infections.

Nationally, 55.6% of all Americans have received at least one COVID-19 shot, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The five states with the biggest two-week jump in cases per capita all had lower vaccination rates: Missouri, 45.9%; Arkansas, 43%; Nevada, 50.9%; Louisiana, 39.2%; and Utah, 49.5%. Even with the latest surge, cases in the U.S. are nowhere near their peak of a quarter-million per day in January. And deaths are running at under 260 per day on average after topping out at more than 3,400 over the winter — a testament to how effectively the vaccine can prevent serious illness and death in those who happen to become infected.

Still, amid the rise, health authorities in places such as Los Angeles County and St. Louis are begging even immunized people to resume wearing masks in public. And Chicago officials announced Tuesday that unvaccinated travelers from Missouri and Arkansas must either quarantine for 10 days or have a negative COVID-19 test.

Meanwhile, the Health Department in Mississippi, which ranks dead last nationally for vaccinations, began blocking posts about COVID-19 on its Facebook page because of a “rise of misinformation” about the virus and the vaccine.

Mississippi officials are also recommending that people 65 and older and those with chronic underlying conditions stay away from large indoor gatherings because of a 150% rise in hospitalizations over the past three weeks.

But the political will may not be there in many states fatigued by months of restrictions.

In Michigan, Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer is facing a drive to repeal a law that she used to set major restrictions during the early stages of the pandemic.

And Republican Gov. Kay Ivey of Alabama pushed back against the idea that the state might need to reimpose preventive measures as vaccinations lag and hospitalizations rise.

“Alabama is OPEN for business. Vaccines are readily available, and I encourage folks to get one. The state of emergency and health orders have expired. We are moving forward,” she said on social media.

Dr. James Lawler, a leader of the Global Center for Health Security at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha, said bringing back masks and limiting gatherings would help. But he acknowledged that most of the places seeing higher rates of the virus “are exactly the areas of the country that don't want to do any of these things.”

Lawler warned that what is happening in Britain is a preview of what's to come in the U.S.

“The descriptions from regions of the world where the delta variant has taken hold and become the predominant virus are pictures of ICUs full of 30-year-olds. That's what the critical care doctors describe and that's what's coming to the U.S.,” he said.

He added: “I think people have no clue what's about to hit us.”

President Joe Biden is putting a dose of star power behind the administration's efforts to get young people vaccinated. Eighteen-year-old actress, singer and songwriter Olivia Rodrigo will meet with Biden and Dr. Anthony Fauci on Wednesday.

While the administration has had success vaccinating older Americans, young adults have shown less urgency to get the shots.

Some, at least, are heeding the call in Missouri after weeks of begging, said Erik Frederick, chief administrative officer of Mercy Hospital Springfield. He tweeted that the number of people getting immunized at its vaccine clinic has jumped from 150 to 250 daily.

“That gives me hope,” he said.

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Associated Press writers Leah Willingham in Jackson, Mississippi; Ed White in Detroit; Jay Reeves in Birmingham, Alabama; Sophia Tareen in Chicago; and Darlene Superville in Washington contributed to this report.

# At Least 8 Dead In China Hotel Collapse

By jaine schmidt wyatt | WVDN JUL 14, 2021

BEIJING (AP) — Rescue workers were digging through the remains of a collapsed hotel in eastern China looking for any survivors of a disaster that has killed at least eight people and left nine missing, authorities said Tuesday.

The workers in the city of Suzhou searched through the night, using rescue dogs, cranes, ladders and metal cutters, after the building collapsed Monday afternoon, the city government said in social media posts. Photos showed orange-suited rescuers with helmets working through the ruins of the building, which had been reduced to girders and rubble. The cause of the collapse is under investigation.

At least 23 people were trapped when then hotel collapsed. Six people were rescued and eight people were confirmed dead, leaving nine people unaccounted for.

Authorities said 18 of those trapped were identified through check-in records, apparently hotel guests. The identities of the other five was unclear.

The 54-room Siji Kaiyuan Hotel opened in 2018, according to Ctrip, a Chinese online booking app.

More than 600 people including earthquake rescue teams and 120 vehicles were mobilized for the operation, the city government said.

Suzhou, a city in Jiangsu province near Shanghai, is a popular tourist destination known for its historic canals and traditional Chinese gardens.

# Officers On Scene Of Apparent Robbery At Rupert Bank

By autumn shelton | WVDN JUL 14, 2021



Officers are on the scene of an apparent robbery at Summit Community Bank in Rupert.

According to an official at the Greenbrier County 911 center, the call came in at 12:15 p.m.

Members of the West Virginia State Police will be leading the investigation.

More details will be provided as they become available.

# State Police Looking For Suspect In Rupert Bank Robbery

By by autumn shelton | WVDN JUL 14, 2021



Members of the West Virginia State Police need help identifying the suspect in the armed robbery that took place at Summit Community Bank in Rupert.

The robbery happened around noon on Wednesday, July 14.

If anyone knows who the person in this photo is, or has any information about the incident, contact Sgt. S.A. Murphy or J.W. Gilkeson at the Rainelle detachment of the West Virginia State Police by calling 304-438-3000. You may also contact the Greenbrier County 911 center at 304-647-7911.

Unconfirmed reports state that a large amount of money was taken from the bank.