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COVID-19 IN LINCOLN COUNTY

Local cases on the rise

COVID increase follows state, national trend

By **MICHAEL RAMSBURG**
Contributing Writer

HAMLIN

Lincoln County's coronavirus numbers continued to rise last week, reaching 233 total cases on Sunday, Oct. 25.

Over the course of seven recent days, more than 20 new cases were added to Lincoln's cumulative total. The increase, while modest compared to some surrounding counties, is still in line with trends on the state and national levels.

The state total, which had reached 21,906 cases by Sunday, Oct. 25, was expected to push past 22,000 on Monday, Oct. 26. On the national level, 8.69 million cases total cases were reported on Sunday. As of Oct. 25, more than 225 thousand Americans have died from COVID-related causes — 423 of those in West Virginia, and two in Lincoln County.

On Friday, Oct. 23, the

Lincoln County Health Department released the latest community COVID data report. According to their data, Lincoln County had 25 active coronavirus cases spread over 11 communities on Oct. 23.

On Friday, Branchland had five active cases — the most active cases in one community in the county.

Harts, who has seen the most county cases overall, had four active cases and one probable case Oct. 23.

Sod had four active cases; Alum Creek had three active cases; Ranger and West Hamlin each had two active cases; and Alkol, Griffithsville, Hamlin and Sumerco each had one active case, respectively, on Friday.

A Lincoln County resident with a Tornado address was also listed as having an active case of COVID-19 on Friday's

LCHD report.

Meanwhile, the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources reported only four active cases of COVID-19 in Lincoln County Friday morning.

The discrepancy between the LCHD data and data reported on the state's coronavirus dashboard has caused some confusion. Sam Suiter, LCHD's Executive Director, notes that many factors should be taken into account when reviewing the data — including the period the data covers and the timing of the data release.

"Between Friday, Oct. 16 and Thursday, Oct. 22, our office received 20 cases," Suiter told the Journal. "At midnight tonight [Friday, Oct. 23], four of the reported 'active' numbers move to 'recovered' status."

Sometimes cases are re-

ported in one county and then transferred to another county after the data has been released to and posted by media.

"One 'active' case in Alkol was transferred to Boone County's case files," Suiter said. "His physical address was investigated and identified as being in the Julian community. Therefore, he came off of the Lincoln County list."

The individual's move to the Boone County data was made after LCHD released the numbers to the Journal, Suiter noted.

Additionally, the type of COVID test used can also affect how it is recorded in the data.

"Some clinics are administering a 'rapid' test that is yielding a test result that isn't being fully ac-

SEE COVID, PAGE 2A

EARLY VOTING

Brisk start to early voting in Lincoln

By **SEÁN O'DONOGHUE**
Contributing Writer

HAMLIN — In line with trends emerging nationally, early voting was brisk at Lincoln County's three locations last week. Through four days of early in-person ballot casting, Lincoln County's turnout rate was well ahead of not just 2018 but also 2016, the last time voters picked Pennsylvania Avenue's best known resident.

Early voting got underway in West Virginia at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, October 21, 2020. At the Election Center on Court Avenue in Hamlin, a small line had formed during the opening half hour.

Any Lincoln County registered voter can vote at any of the three early voting locations, in Hamlin, at McCorkle Community Center, or at Harts Community Center. Early voting continues until Saturday, October 31. For the remaining weekdays, the hours are 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. On Saturday, ballots can be cast from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The four-day 977 early vote total could put Lincoln

INSIDE

■ Endorsements, **4A**

■ Candidate profiles, **1B-10B**

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ELECTION 2020

Warner: 'The election's going extremely well'

By **MICHAEL RAMSBURG**
Contributing Writer

HAMLIN — Incumbent Secretary of State Mac Warner (R) says the early election process is going "extremely well" in West Virginia.

"The clerks and their team are doing a wonderful job," Warner told the Lincoln

Journal on a recent visit to our office in Hamlin.

Warner was in Lincoln County on Friday, Oct. 23 to meet County Clerk Darel Baker to discuss the election.

"They've got the absentee ballots coming in," Warner said. "They're getting them turned around and sent right back out. Early voting has been going on for several



ONLINE: Watch a video from Mac Warner's visit to Hamlin now at lincolnjournal.com

days, and that seems to be going very well."

Warner said that many areas of West Virginia have seen record early in-person voting turn outs.

"That just shows the interest in this election,"

Warner said.

The Secretary of State is encouraging citizens of Lincoln County to take part in this historic election.

"West Virginia has more options to vote than any other state," Warner said.

Voters may request an absentee ballot through today (Wednesday, Oct. 28). Those ballots must be returned by the Nov. 3 election.

Additionally, early in-person voting is open each Monday through Saturday until Oct. 31. Voters in the military, who live overseas, or who

SEE WARNER, PAGE 3A

GRAND JURY INDICTMENTS

A Lincoln County grand jury indicted 19 people on various charges. **2A**

ON THIS DAY

1492: Christopher Columbus lands in Cuba on his first voyage to the New World.

WEDNESDAY

High: **67**
Low: **56**

THURSDAY

High: **66**
Low: **45**

FRIDAY

High: **53**
Low: **37**



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LINCOLN COUNTY SCHOOLS

‘State of emergency’



State BOE unanimously recognizes problems within Lincoln County Schools

By MICHAEL RAMSBURG / Contributing Writer

CHARLESTON

At first glance, it appeared to be just one more item tucked among a handful of new business matters on the West Virginia Board of Education’s November agenda. “Lincoln County Special Circumstance Review Report,” the item read. But this was no ordinary matter of business and, as the Board would soon discover, the circumstances indeed deserved review.

Nearly an hour into the Nov. 12 regular meeting of the state Board of Education, this one agenda item had now become the focus of the Board’s nine-member panel. The group was about to discuss it in a closed-door session — but first, a Board member requested a public summary.

Matt Hicks, Director of Accountability, began to describe what a team of experts found and detailed in their 28-page special circumstance report.

“We started this process in the beginning of April 2020,” Hicks told Board members and others in attendance. “We

conducted interviews and documentation reviews to complete this report.”

The report, Hicks said, was requested by the Board in March following findings at Guyan Valley Middle School.

Now, though, the focus was not on just one school, but the entire county school system.

What Hicks divulged would raise more than a few eyebrows.

‘Opportunities for misuse or mismanagement’

First, there were the financial discrepancies.

Some purchase orders were completed and

posted after receiving the detailed invoice from the vendor for goods received and services rendered.

Half of the invoices requiring board approval did not receive prior approval from the local board to execute purchases.

Purchases requiring a competitive bid solicitation lacked documentation of bid solicitation.

And payroll?

“A general pattern of excessive overtime was noted,” Hicks told the Board. “Especially in the transportation and maintenance office with a substantial amount of time occurring on the week-

ends.”

Many of the supplemental contracts reviewed listed incorrect terms of employment, lacked the required board approval, and/or the county failed to produce documentation of a contract.

In one instance, one service personnel employee received supplemental pay amounting to a little over \$41K with no corresponding contract, Hicks said.

“Also during school closures for COVID-19, this employee was paid for

SEE BOE, PAGE 2A

COVID-19

Orange rating shutter schools

Governor issues executive orders in attempt to curtail COVID

By MICHAEL RAMSBURG / Contributing Writer

HAMLIN — For the second straight week, Lincoln County was forced to shutter in-person instruction in all county schools due to another orange rating on the Saturday, Nov. 14 School Alert System map.

The orange rating mandates the district to activate its remote learning protocols; in-person instruction is suspended until the county turns gold, yellow or green on a Saturday School Alert map again. Lincoln County Schools’ Food Service Department will continue to provide meals to students while they’re on remote learning.

An orange rating suggests heightened community transmission. It is applied to a county with a seven-day rolling average of 15 to 24.9 cases per 100,000, or when the seven-day rolling positivity rate measures 5 to 7.9 percent.

Lincoln’s orange rating comes amid a sharp rise in the number of local and statewide coronavirus cases. On Sunday, Nov. 8, a total of 304 cumulative COVID cases had been confirmed in the county. By Sunday, Nov. 15, total county cases had increased to 342 — a jump of 38 cases in just one week.

SEE COVID, PAGE 2A



ONLINE: Read the state BOE’s full 28-page report now at lincolnjournal.com

TRANSITIONS

Maynard joins Treasurer-elect’s transition team

By MICHAEL RAMSBURG / Contributing Writer

HAMLIN — West Virginia Delegate Zack Maynard, R-Lincoln, has joined Treasurer-elect Riley Moore’s transition team, Moore told the *Lincoln Journal*.

Moore, a Republican,

defeated 24-year incumbent Democratic Treasurer John Perdue in the Nov. 3 election, gaining 56 percent of the vote.

Moore, who was born in Morgantown, previously served as a member of the West Virginia House of Delegates representing the state’s 67th District. That

district encompasses part of Jefferson County, in the state’s eastern panhandle region.

Maynard, who resides in Harts, has represented West Virginia’s 22nd District as a Delegate since assuming office in 2016.

West Virginia’s 22nd House District encom-

passes the majority of Lincoln County, as well as portions of Putnam, Boone and Logan Counties. Maynard won his third term representing the district in the Nov. 3 election.

“Delegate Maynard is

SEE MAYNARD, PAGE 2A



Zack Maynard



Riley Moore

POSTSEASON SOCCER

Both the Panther Boys and the Lady Panther soccer teams received postseason awards. **6A**

ON THIS DAY

2001: Nintendo released the GameCube home video game console in the United States.

WEDNESDAY

High: **47**
Low: **32**

THURSDAY

High: **62**
Low: **41**

FRIDAY

High: **65**
Low: **42**



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DNR OFFICERS

DNR police charge two in Lincoln County

Cases currently ‘pending court action,’ officials said last week

By MICHAEL RAMSBURG
Contributing Writer

HAMLIN — Buck firearm season — West Virginia’s most popular hunting season — began on Monday, Nov. 23. But two people in Lincoln County were apparently anxious to begin the season a few weeks early and are now charged with crimes by Division of Natural Resource officers.

“On Nov. 7, Sgt. [Gary] Amick worked a spotlighting detail in Lincoln County and watched a vehicle drive slowly past his location about 10:30 p.m.,” West Virginia Natural Resources police report. “Shortly after the vehicle passed him and rounded the curve, a rifle shot rang out in that same direction.”

Shortly thereafter, the DNR officer performed a traffic stop on an SUV with two occupants inside. The occupants were later identified as local residents.

“[T]hey had an uncased shotgun and an uncased .222 rifle in the vehicle,” DNR police said in a statement. “Also found in the floor-

SEE DNR, PAGE 2A

COVID 19



Unsplash

‘This virus is as real as it gets’

Lincoln health official urges citizens to heed precautions at Thanksgiving

By MICHAEL RAMSBURG
Contributing Writer

HAMLIN

Sam Suiter, the Executive Director of the Lincoln County Health Department, has a few theories about what might be causing the spike in coronavirus cases on the local, state and national levels.

First, there’s the problem that some people deny that the virus exists, or think that it’s a mechanism in some conspiracy.

“For every person that takes the virus seriously,

there is another that believes the pandemic is a complete hoax,” Suiter said.

Mistrust of accurate information being disseminated by health officials and, in some cases, outright denial of the virus’ existence only adds fuel to the flames, Suiter said.

“Until we get past this mentality, we will never get our numbers under control,” he laments.

Then, there’s the reality of COVID fatigue.

“Face it – we are all sick of hearing about COVID,” Suiter said. “For the last eight months, all we have talked about is washing hands, social distancing and wearing face masks.

“It is a tired, dusty old message,” Suiter acknowledges. “The reality is that the best defense we have – at least until the vaccine is made available – is to follow these tried and true guidelines.”

SEE COVID, PAGE 2A

INSIDE: Lincoln records the county’s third COVID death, 2A

BUSINESS

Number of businesses up in county

Lincoln saw modest 1.86% growth in Oct.

By MICHAEL RAMSBURG
Contributing Writer

HAMLIN — Lincoln County is seeing modest new business growth despite the ongoing pandemic, according to data released by the West Virginia Secretary of State’s (SOS) office.

According to information provided on the SOS’s Business Statistics Database, Lincoln County added six new businesses in October 2020 alone, resulting in 1.86 percent growth for the county — the fifth highest county growth rate in the state for that period.

“Despite the challenges our business owners and entrepreneurs are still facing due to the pandemic, West Virginia continues to see steady growth,” West Virginia Secretary of State Mac Warner said. “The West Virginia One Stop Business Center is dedicated to providing West Virginia business owners with a simple and efficient registration process.”

Statewide, the West Virginia Secretary of State’s Office registered 1,234 new businesses in October 2020, according to Warner.

Roane County led the state in the percentage of new business registration growth for October, adding 12 new businesses during the month, ac-

SEE BUSINESS, PAGE 2A

GIVING

Local groups seek holiday donations for variety of causes

By MICHAEL RAMSBURG
Contributing Writer

HAMLIN — Several Lincoln County organizations are hosting a variety of holiday drives and benefits in the days ahead, each aimed at helping a number of local causes.

Lincoln County Opportunity Company, Inc.

The Lincoln County Opportunity Company, Inc. (LCOC) will begin its annual 25 Days of Christmas fundraiser.

Items for the fundraiser are donated by local businesses

and individuals. All proceeds from the fundraiser benefit the nonprofit organization’s senior meal program.

“We have smart TVs, a power washer, a laptop, an air fryer, an air fryer rotisserie, four random drawings of \$50 each, our grand prize of \$500, and many, many more,” LCOC

said in a Facebook post.

Those interested in participating in the annual fundraiser can see all available prizes on the LCOC’s Facebook page at facebook.com/lcocinc. Raffle tickets are available through LCOC’s office. One ticket is available for a \$10 donation, or

three tickets can be had for a \$24 donation.

More information is available by calling (304) 824-3448.

Toy Drives

Several local organizations

SEE DONATE, PAGE 2A

UNEMPLOYMENT

West Virginia’s unemployment rate has dropped for the sixth consecutive month **3A**

ON THIS DAY

1950: A heavy snowstorm and 100+ MPH winds descend upon northeastern states, killing 160.

WEDNESDAY

High: **58**
Low: **44**

THURSDAY

High: **56**
Low: **40**

FRIDAY

High: **60**
Low: **44**



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INSIDE: Remembering Lincoln County's native son Chuck Yeager, 1B

COVID-19

Total cases top 500 in Lincoln

■ Two new COVID deaths reported in county; Courthouse closed until Dec. 21

■ COVID vaccine given emergency approval by FDA

By **MICHAEL RAMSBURG**
Contributing Writer

HAMLIN — Two more Lincoln County residents have died due to COVID-19, and the county's cumulative total has now surpassed 500 cases, both state and local health officials confirmed last week.

On Monday, Dec. 7, officials with the Lincoln County Health Department announced the death of a 62-year-old male from Lincoln County. The individual's positive COVID case was first reported to the health department on Nov. 30, officials say. He died while being hospitalized at Charleston Area Medical Center (CAMC) in Charleston.


Four days later, on Friday, Dec. 11, LCHD again announced the death of a Lincoln County resident, this time an 86-year-old female. The woman's positive case was first reported to the depart-

SEE **COVID**, PAGE 5A

IN MEMORIAM

The *right* stuff

Charles 'Chuck' Yeager,
Lincoln's hometown hero and
the nation's sound-barrier
breaking aviator, dead at 97



By **MICHAEL RAMSBURG**
Contributing Writer

Brigadier General Charles "Chuck" Yeager, a Lincoln County native and World War II flying ace who would become the first human to travel faster than the speed of sound, died at a hospital in Los Angeles, California on Dec. 7. He was 97-years-old.

Born February 13, 1923, in Myra, Yeager was the son of Susie Mae (nee Sizemore) and Albert Hal Yeager. He and his family moved to Hamlin when he was five years old. A formidable athlete — "I was trained in sports," Yeager told the *Lincoln Journal* in 1985. "Sports are a big part of your life training for adulthood," — he played football and basketball at Hamlin High School. He would graduate from the school in 1941.

That same year, Yeager enlisted in

the U.S. Army just months before the U.S. entered into World War II. He was assigned to the Army Air Corps. By 1943, Yeager was commissioned a reserve flight officer. He became a pilot in the fighter command of the Eighth Air Force stationed in England.

Yeager's career fighting for the Allies during WWII would earn him the distinction of being an ace, having

SEE **YEAGER**, PAGE 5A

INSIDE:

- Local veterans honor Chuck Yeager, **3A**
- MU remembers Yeager, **5A**
- 'Yeager comes home to be honored,' **1B**
- State, national leaders react to Yeager's death, **1B**

Cover image by **Patty Prichard Robinson**

HOUSE FIRE

Lincoln man alive after officer spots house fire

By **MICHAEL RAMSBURG**
Contributing Writer

HAMLIN — A Lincoln County man was asleep at his home along West Virginia Route 34 when an officer spotted a blaze coming from the dwelling, according to multiple reports.

On Friday, Dec. 11, a West Virginia State Police Trooper was on regular patrol when he spotted the

fire around 1:30 a.m.

The resident, who has not been named, did not initially know his house was on fire, officials report. He was able to escape the fire but sustained minor burns. He also suffered from smoke inhalation. After being attended to by first responders from Lincoln EMS, he was taken to an

SEE **FIRE**, PAGE 5A



Courtesy photo

VA ABUSE LAW SIGNED

A bill aimed at enhancing VA safety and preventing abuse has been signed into law. **2A**

ON THIS DAY

1944: Nazi Germany launches a counteroffensive in Belgium, beginning the 'Battle of the Bulge'.

WEDNESDAY

High: **41**
Low: **33**

THURSDAY

High: **38**
Low: **29**

FRIDAY

High: **41**
Low: **28**



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INSIDE: Our annual Christmas Section, featuring Santa letters, stories, songs, poems, recipes and much more. 1B

COVID-19

Lincoln's 8th Covid-related death reported

Total cases top 600, active cases swell past 140 going into Christmas

By **MICHAEL RAMSBURG**
Contributing Writer

HAMLIN — An eighth Lincoln Countian has died due to the coronavirus, the Lincoln County Health Department announced Sunday.

The 67-year-old female was first reported positive to the health department on Dec. 14. She died just five days later, on Dec. 19, while being treated

at St. Mary's Medical Center in Huntington.

The 67-year-old's death came on the heels of a week that saw new positive Covid confirmations rise to just shy of 100 new cases.

On Monday, Dec. 13, the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources had confirmed nearly 546 cases in Lincoln County since the virus first entered the area.

By Sunday, Dec. 20 — just seven days later — total cases as confirmed by DHHR had risen to 641 cases. Of those, 142 cases were active on Sunday — the most ever recorded at one time.

The rapid increase in Covid cases caused Lincoln County to be listed as red on the Saturday, Dec. 19 school alert system map, barring the county's schools from opening

for in-person instruction this week. This week's rating, though, had little effect on school operations. Per Lincoln County Schools, Monday, Dec. 21 was a non-traditional instruction day, and the remainder of the week students are out for Christmas break. Five-day meal pickups were provided by county schools on Monday, and staff members were required to report.

Students are not expected to return to school until Monday, Dec. 21.

While case numbers continued to rise, the state began to distribute its allocation of federally-provided Pfizer Covid vaccines last week.

On Wednesday, Dec. 16, staff and residents at the Lin-

SEE COVID, PAGE 5A



Courtesy photo

Lincoln County physician Dr. Charles Vance receives his coronavirus vaccine on Thursday, Nov. 17. "I am in my sixties," Vance said. "I have heart disease, hypertension, high cholesterol and diabetes. All of these conditions will allow this virus to cause complications with long term effects and even death." He encourages everyone to get the vaccine when it's their turn. "This vaccine will allow many of us to get back to work and our children back in school," Vance said.

WEATHER

White Christmas? Maybe. Cold one? For sure

Lincoln Journal Staff

HAMLIN — It's beginning to look — and feel — a lot like Christmas throughout Lincoln County and around the state.

At press time, a strong

cold front was predicted to arrive by Christmas eve, just in time for the holiday.

"We are still expecting a strong arctic cold front to impact our area for Christmas Eve and Day," a spokesperson for the National

Weather Service (NWS) in Charleston, which serves Lincoln County, noted.

"The front is currently expected to arrive during the afternoon or evening hours on Christmas Eve. Widespread rain should

occur during the day on Christmas Eve. Colder air will then invade the area Christmas Eve night which will allow lingering rain to

SEE WEATHER, PAGE 5A

LINCOLN SCHOOLS

State BOE selects two to assist local district

Lincoln Journal Staff

CHARLESTON — At their regularly scheduled meeting on December 16, the West Virginia Board of Education (WVBE) approved the West Virginia Department of Education's (WVDE) recommended designees to support improvement efforts in Lincoln County Schools.

Terry Harless and Lynn Hurt will assist the county in addressing deficiencies identified during the review, leaders with the state Board of Education announced. The two bring years of experience and expertise in the areas of finance and administration.

The appointees will coordinate on-site school improvement in the county with the WVDE and the current county superintendent. The approval came after a presentation by the WVDE Office of Support and Accountability.

Harless and Hurt's appointments are a result of action from the November 11, 2020, meeting in which the WVBE declared a state of emergency in the county and directed State Superintendent of Schools W. Clayton Burch to appoint designees, which may in-

SEE LCS, PAGE 5A

AN ANGLER'S HOLIDAY

West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice has asked DNR to stock 30,000 trout in time for the holidays, **2A**

ON THIS DAY

1788: Maryland ceded an area "not exceeding ten miles square" for the seat of U.S. government.

WEDNESDAY

High: **56**
Low: **44**

THURSDAY

High: **47**
Low: **24**

FRIDAY

High: **27**
Low: **20**



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BASKETBALL

Youth basketball league to play on new floor

By PHIL PERRY
HD Media

MADISON - The Boone County Basketball League will debut their new playing surface at the Madison Civic Center when they kick off their season during the first

week of March.

"We couldn't be more pleased with the quality of product we received," said president of the youth league Kevin Harper. "The kids deserve it and we're excited with how things have worked out."

The "buddy league" struc-

ture sees pre-k through seventh grade players, as long as the youth doesn't turn 13 before September. Cheerleaders also participate in the league.

In the "school division," the league has picked up the slack left when Boone County Schools abolished elementary

school sports via a budget-related measure approximately five years ago. The school division encompasses fourth and fifth grade students.

"We have tryouts at the schools and the board has been really good to work with us and while they (kids) are a

part of our league, they are still representing their school," he said. "That has been an exciting thing on Friday nights and they fill the seats for those kids. It is really good to see. It can be more exciting with

FLOOR, 6B

FOOTBALL



Phil Perry / HD Media

Kyle Matthews (21) goes 8 yards on a sweep play versus Nitro in 2020. for Scott High. He will suit up for LCHS in 2021.

Matthews brothers bring skills to LCHS

By RYAN PRICHARD
For The Lincoln Journal

HAMLIN - For Kyle and Klay Matthews, the scenery and locale may have changed but the challenges and opportunities still remain.

Both accomplished student-athletes, the brothers transferred to Lincoln County High School from Scott this year after their father took a new teaching position at the school. Perhaps one man's loss is another man's gain.

During the 2020 COVID-riddled season, both Matthews brothers posted solid numbers on the gridiron of the Skyhawks.

Kyle Matthews rushed for 270 yards and scored two touchdowns on 56 carries and added four 2-point conversions. The 5-foot-10, 180-pound junior totaled 475 all-purpose yards through eight-game season which was shortened due to the pan-

demie.

On the other side of the ball, he racked up 53 tackles, 28 assisted tackles, three tackles for loss, broke up three passes, picked off one pass and forced one fumble. He also blocked a potential game-winning field goal attempt against Nitro to preserve a 28-26 victory.

Kyle Matthews played multiple positions for the Skyhawks including strong safety, inside linebacker and outside linebacker on defense while playing running back and tight end on offense. Kyle was selected second team for the 2020 All-Cardinal Conference squad.

Klay, a 5-foot-8, 165-pound sophomore, eclipsed the 1,000-yard barrier with 1,028 yards on 114 carries and scored seven touchdowns and added two 2-point conversions. He amassed 1,374 yards from scrimmage through



Phil Perry / HD Media

Klay Matthews rushed for 1,000 for Scott in 2020 and will play for LCHS in 2021.

BROTHERS, 6B

IN THE ZONE

Panthers get transfers, winter sports heating up

By RYAN PRICHARD
For The Lincoln Journal

HAMLIN - Well my dear and loyal Zoners, I'll be the first to admit when I'm wrong. In last week's column, I predicted that Kansas City would win the Super Bowl over Tampa Bay 31-27. I guess Buccaneers signal-caller Tom Brady doesn't read my column. The only thing I had right was the 31 points, but for the wrong team obviously.

The home-standing Bucs and the ageless one completely dismantled the vaunted Chiefs offense and won 31-9.

Again, I missed this one badly.

I thought that Kansas City may have too much speed for the Bucs defense, but it was actually more the

opposite. Tampa Bay ran the ball, moved the chains, controlled the clock, took their shots and pulled away.

It really was that simple, Zoners.

For Brady, it was Super Bowl triumph No. 7. I'm going to say he'll try to play a few more years and get to ten and then ride off into the sunset as all good heroes do.

I was also very happy for Tampa Bay offensive coordinator Byron Leftwich getting his second Super Bowl ring, too. His stock in the NFL coaching ranks is climbing at a meteoric pace and one day we may see the former Thundering Herd quarterback as a head coach one day.

The start of conditioning began last week in Lincoln County for all winter sports student-athletes and the "official" start to regular prac-

tices began this past Monday. Both the boys and girls teams have hustled and re-worked their respective schedules to try and get as many games played as possible. With the threat of inclement weather on the horizon and still dealing with the pandemic, I'm hopeful that most games will be played.

There will be hiccups along the way, Zoners.

Looking at the schedules, both squads have three to four games every week due to the compressed season. It's going to go quickly and it will be a grind, but everyone is very upbeat and positive about it at LCHS. The pulse of the players and coaching staffs is one of thankfulness and having the opportunity to play at all.

The Lady Panthers open the season at home hosting

Ripley Wednesday, March 3 at 7:30 p.m. and travel to Hurricane Friday, March 5 for a 6 p.m. tipoff and close out the week with a 1:00 p.m. home game against Poca Saturday, March 6th.

The boys open on the road at Point Pleasant on March 5 at 7:30 p.m. and host Buffalo for the home opener on March 6 at 7:30 p.m.

Busy weeks and quick turnarounds, but again, everyone is happy to be playing.

This season will be like no other but I for one am glad it's going to happen in one capacity or another, Zoners. I know you all are too.

As some of you may know, Lincoln County received a pair of transfers

ZONE, 6B

PHIL FOR THE GAME

Greetings from the press box



PHIL PERRY

Welcome to my first sports column for Lincoln County readers which will primarily focus on prep sports and promote Lincoln County High School athletics.

With the recent purchase of the Lincoln Journal/Sentinel by HD Media, local sports in Panther country will receive a much more extensive reach as your paper is now a part of the family of publications that include the Herald-Dispatch, the Charleston Gazette-Mail, the Coal Valley News, Logan Banner, Williamson Daily News, Wayne County News and Putnam Herald.

As a member of the West Virginia Sportswriters Association, I will serve as an advocate for deserving Lincoln County student-athletes on All-State squads (I vote) and my work which will include player features which will appear in editions of other HD papers.

I wanted to introduce myself and express that I'm excited to bring 26 years of journalism experience to Lincoln County. I have worked in four states in my career including a stint most recently in the Catawba Valley area of North Carolina where I covered sports coupled with state and local government, I moved back to my native Boone County in late 2016 to sink my teeth into the Coal Valley News, my hometown paper. My career has found stops at daily, tri-weekly and weekly publications.

As a 1989 Sherman High graduate, my most vivid memory of Lincoln County came at Duval on a cold, rainy and wet fall night in 1988 when running back Eric Flowers caught a pass with no time on the clock to beat us 14-13 in regulation. Flowers was a tough customer and as a lineman, I remember what a tough tackle he was to this day.

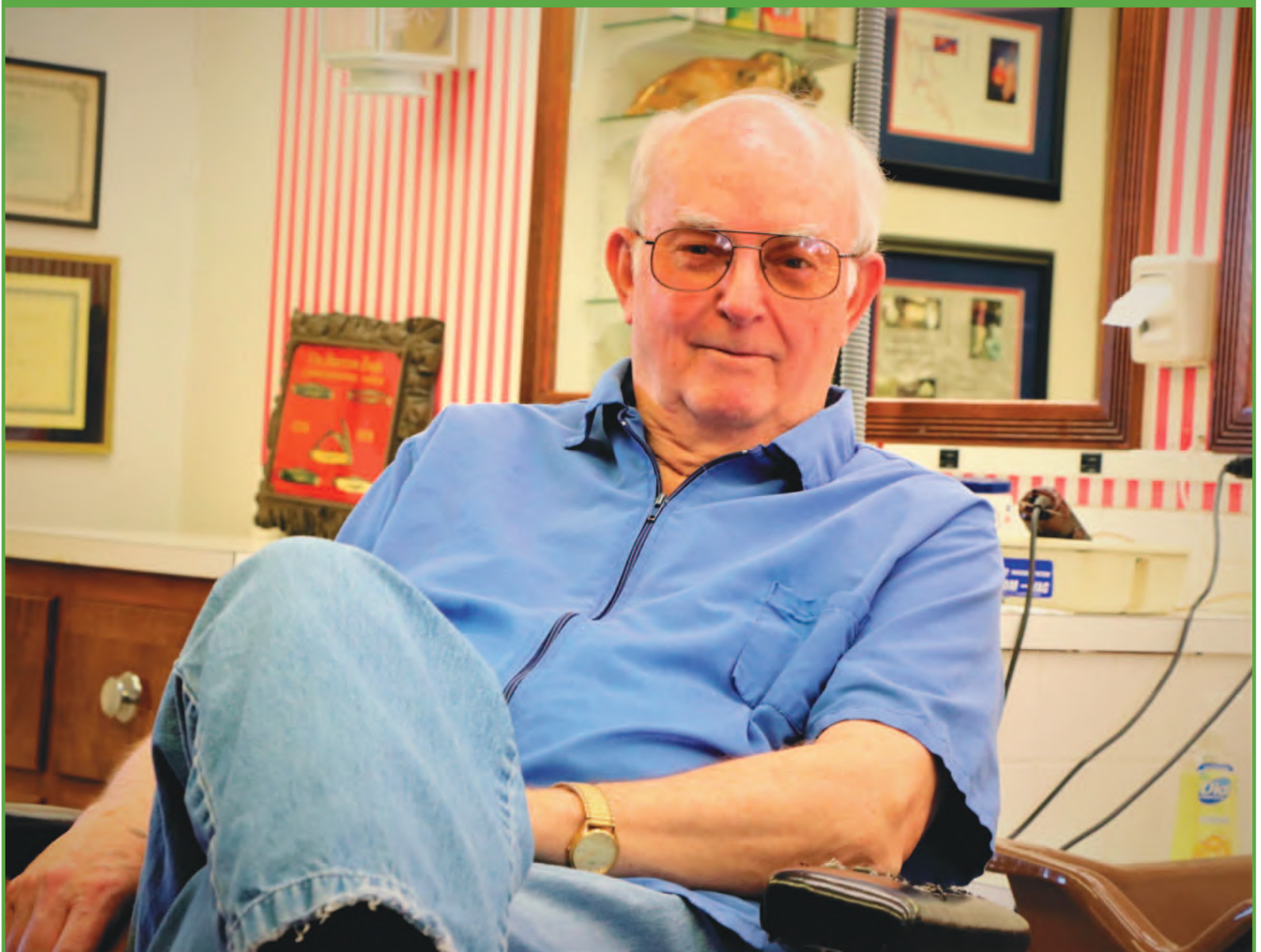
That may seem completely random but I wanted to express my ties to your community as a former prep athlete and that I'm not stranger to Lincoln County.

My wife Chanda works in Lincoln County as the Adult Education Instructor for Mountain State Education Service Cooperative in Hamlin.

I look forward to reaching out to all of our coaches and developing a relationship that will help promote your school, your kids and your community. I feel confident that a phone call to any coach at Van, Sherman or Scott High that I have worked with will find them expressing my dedication and professionalism in relation to my craft.

Currently, we are looking for a sports contributor for Lincoln County High School sports to join me in my coverage. This is a paid gig, per story. We seek someone with obvious writing skills, a penchant for

GAME, 5B



Phil Perry / HD Media

Jim Ryan has served the community for over 60 years as a barber, where he carried on the profession of his father, Sewell Ryan.

Local barber serves in Alum Creek for 60 years

By PHIL PERRY
HD Media

ALUM CREEK — In August of 1959, Jim Ryan, 80, had no idea that in 2021, he'd still be cutting hair in the same chair.

"I was 19 years-old and the man who owned it previously was in his 70s and younger than I am now," Ryan said. "The original shop was where Curry Monument is now. I built this place."

Ryan paid \$800 for the business and he still has the check that he wrote on that day. Today, it is still paying dividends as "The Barber Shop" is still open on Alum Creek.

"The first check I ever wrote was for this shop," he said. "It was down payment on the business. I went to the Bank of Danville to borrow the money."

Ryan said that he inherited an established business with clientele right from the start.

"I picked up the young customers that he didn't get because he was older, which is the same type of customers I don't get now because I'm older," he said laughing. "I had some folks who wouldn't come because they said I was too young and now they say I'm too old. What are you going to do?"

On May the 22, 1957 Ryan graduated from Duval High



In this Charleston Daily Mail photo from 1962, Jim Ryan (left) shares a laugh in front of his shop with H.G. Robinson, Harold Bias and Jake Turley.

School and on June 3 of the same year entered Huntington Barber College and later graduated.

"I needed 1,800 hours of actual time to graduate and I graduated the following March before I was 18 years-old," he added. "I had to wait to take the state board exam because you had to be 18 to take it."

Ryan came by the profession honestly.

His father, Sewell Ryan had a shop off of Route 3 in Alkol. The elder Ryan had cut hair in Morrisvale, Nellis and Griffithsville. He also spent 34 years working in the

coal mines.

"He worked as a barber before the license law went into effect in 1934," Ryan said. "That is where he ended his career in Alkol."

At one time, there were two Jim Ryans working as barbers in the Alum Creek community, of no relation.

"My father got his license in 1934 and I still have it at home to this day," he said.

Ryan said the peak for his business came in the 1960s when he cut hair every day from the moment he opened until the moment he finally

“ My children still want to come home. That is how I too measure success in life.”

— JIM RYAN, barber in Alum Creek



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STAFF

Thomas A. Robinson

Owner/Publisher

Patty Robinson

Office Manager

Michael Ramsburg

Contributing Writer & Graphics

Justina Linville

Sales

Phyllis Stowers

Lifestyles Editor

Ryan Prichard

Sports Writer

Verona Miller

Circulation

Contact us at

lincolnjournal@zoominternet.net

OPINIONS

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LETTERS

The Lincoln Journal welcomes signed letters of no more than 250 words from our readers and will consider longer guest columns. Please include name, address and telephone number for verification purposes. Mail letters to: The Lincoln Journal, c/o Letters to Editor, P. O. Box 308, Hamlin, W.Va. 25523; or email ljeditorial@zoominternet.net.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The Lincoln Journal welcomes well-meaning dialogue from readers on social media. Use #ljchatback or #lincolnwv to keep the local conversation going. Like our Facebook page by visiting facebook.com/lincolnjournal. You can also follow us on Twitter @lincolnjournal.

OUR VIEW

From sorrow's depths, a salute

Law enforcement is undoubtedly hard, thankless and dangerous work.

Recently, West Virginians were reminded of just *how* dangerous a law enforcement officer's job can be.

Last Tuesday, Charleston Police Officer Cassie Johnson responded to what should have been just another routine traffic call. But routine it was not. Though details of the incident remain limited at the time of this writing, what's clear is things escalated very quickly, ultimately costing Of-

ficer Johnson her life.

Though the incident occurred beyond Lincoln County's borders, the story hit close to home. Within hours, thin blue lines flooded local social media, and local first responders and citizens of all stripes began the process of mourning on their own.

Sometimes, we forget the inherent danger others risk for our safety.

Sometimes, we take for granted the men and women who give their lives — sometimes literally — for our

good.

But, as they say, from sorrow's showers come rays of hope.

We hope this occasion, tragic as it is, brings a wellspring of gratitude for those doing the hard, thankless work.

Thank you, Officer Johnson — and all other officers and first responders, in Lincoln County and beyond.

Those thin blue lines have been thread into one beautiful tapestry.

May each thread be a blessing in your memory.

MORE VIEWS

Thanks for a successful election

In a time when some want to question election integrity, I would like to express my gratitude to all that made our election, in Lincoln County, a success. As the Chief Election Official in the county, a County Clerk oversees the full election process. I stress that word *oversees*.

The scope of all the moving parts is immense and takes many people when you factor in years of voter roll maintenance, up keep and acquisition of voting equipment, poll worker recruitment and training. And now you can add to that list the COVID-19 pandemic, PPE acquisition and disbursement — the list can go on with everything election-related. The thanks I want to convey are to the people that make this gigantic list of moving parts in an election work.

My gratitude to:

The West Virginia Secretary of State Mac Warner and his office for training myself and my deputy clerks. They've helped with any of the long list of questions that may come up, whether it be legal, procedural or logistical. That office is the main hub that holds all 55 clerks together in our state, our resource for everything election related and is our voice nationally. They also came through in a big way with PPE not just for me but for all of the state's county clerks.

The Lincoln County Commis-



DIREL BAKER

sioners Josh Stowers, Phoebe Harless, and Charles Vance for Support in obtaining necessary supplies to run an election and to help with funds when necessary for matching costs on grants to obtain new election equipment used in this election. Mary Napier for helping Deputy Clerks with training poll workers and programing election equipment.

The County Democratic Executive Committee and Party Chair Barry Harless for careful selection of poll workers and ballot commissioners.

The County Republican Executive Committee and Party Chair Lisa Ramey also for careful selection of poll workers and ballot commissioners

The poll workers of all political parties who run the voting precincts, both early and election day, and provide the checks and balances that make "poll watchers" unnecessary as they serve this function.

The Ballot Commissioners of both political parties who carefully review ballots. They serve to oversee the ab-

sentee mailing process. They send and receive the absentee ballots to and from the voters. They ensure both voter credit and anonymity when the ballots are received and placed in the electronic ballot box.

The Board of Canvassers that help ensure every legal vote counts by making careful and well informed decisions on provisional ballots.

Deputy Clerks who assist with all these tasks mentioned above. The Deputy Clerks in Lincoln County are among the best in the country. While they may not be great in numbers they are great in experience, training, and work ethic.

Thank you Cheryl Kiser, Kim Toppins, Kyra Bias and Chelsea Burgess. And thanks to the local news affiliates for the reporting of the absentee mailing process and of the results as they come in election night and throughout canvass to help show our transparency in the entire election process.

These people all have and deserve my deepest gratitude for their work this election. Election integrity is alive and well in Lincoln County and in West Virginia because of the people that serve the people. In my view, Democracy can stand tall and proud in our county and state.

Thanks too all again.

Direl Baker currently serves as the County Clerk of Lincoln County.

ONCE UPON A LINCOLN COUNTY FARM

A Thanksgiving morning hunt

By RICHARD LACKEY
Contributing Columnist

It's a cool and breezy morning. The woods surround me. The leaves are all down and there is a total lack of green now except for moss around the base of big oaks. A crow cackles in the distance and the first grey squirrel emerges from its den and clings to the side of a big walnut upside down. He views me suspiciously.

There are clouds in the sky with breaks of blue. The sun is coming up over the mountains behind me and the first thin shafts of light streak through the woods. More birds are starting to take notice of the new day and they surround me in every direction. Sparrows, blue jays, nuthatches, wrens, a woodpecker somewhere in the distance and several red tailed hawks glide on the wind currents way overhead.

The walk was strenuous and all uphill. Every Thanksgiving morning for just about every one of the previous 30 years we have owned these farms I have made a sort of pilgrimage to this part of what we call the "old farm". This is the first farm we bought so it holds a special meaning - some of the others are perhaps prettier or larger or hold more deer - this one holds the first memories. 30 years ago there was the stress of financial obligations, a young daughter, bosses and deadlines, an uncertain future. These

woods provided a quiet reprieve from all that.

As a kid growing up my grandfather wood take me hunting with him. We would walk through big southern tracts of woods and swamps. I still vividly recall the Spanish moss hanging from all the trees, the smell of the swamp and the peace and quiet. My grandfather never really had much to say.

The "walk" from the house is about a half mile or so and there is about a 300' increase in elevation. At 63 I wonder how much better shape I was in at age 33 when I took the first walk. The farm has certainly grown in size over this time and from here I can see the top of the recently purchased Barrett farm off in the distance about a mile or so. It is incredible to believe God has blessed us with taking care of all of these trees, rocks, creeks, hills, fields and hollows. The sun continues its rise and there is a blanket of light slowly revealing more of the distant hills. The number of birds are increasing.

There were times in my life that a cloudy cold colorless day left me feeling quite lonely. The stress of walking across a college campus on a November Sunday morning and all of the other students have gone home for the weekend and you are faced with a long day of studying for an exam that might change the course of your future. A November Thanksgiving

week when there is a problem at work, a unit is down, everyone is off deer hunting and management looks to you to solve the problem as you walk through an unnatural world of pipes, valves, steel columns, concrete and mechanical noise that just grinds into the depths of your soul. A November day walking to the hospital alone knowing your daughter is in there and has been for weeks and she maybe there through Christmas. A Thanksgiving your mother clings to the last hours of life.

There are brilliant shafts of sunlight all around me. The forest floor is alive with the squirrels who have come down out of the trees searching for acorns and walnuts. Chipmunks with their brown stripes scurry about on the forest floor for what reason I don't know. A pileated wood pecker is quite busy finding insects in the bark of a big white oak over my head. It is difficult to feel lonely here. There is so much life and a feeling of confidence tomorrow will be better than today.

But at this moment, I just don't know how tomorrow can be better than this beautiful day.

There is a possibility a big buck with wall mount worthy antlers will stroll by within range. I might scope him. He will walk on by to enjoy another day of life and hopefully many more Thanksgivings in these beautiful woods.

BACK IN TIME

From the December 11, 1974 edition of *The Lincoln Journal*

1974: *The Dec. 11th edition of The Lincoln Journal reported:*

McCoy Food Market at Salt Rock hit by robbers, no one injured; \$3.2 million oil drilling project at Griffithsville; Lillie Adkins of Six Mile spent 57 years teaching from 1902-59; Deaths of two Harts area mail carriers last week



PHYLLIS STOWERS

seemed to have many twists; Two robbery suspects of Black's General Store,

Myra, held in Texas; Conrad Tabor should have stayed home to deer hunt instead of Monroe Co.

STATE POLICE / COURTHOUSE RECORDS:

17 drivers license issued Dec. 4th; Three accidents reported; 15 arrests.



ABOVE: Brig. Gen. Charles "Chuck" Yeager is seen with the Bell X-1 he used to break the Sound Barrier (Photo: John McDonnell / The Washington Post). **RIGHT:** Yeager at the 1987 unveiling of his statue in Hamlin (Photo: Steven Wayne Rotsch / Associated Press)

Yeager comes home to be honored

By **BOB SCHWARZ**
AND **ELIZABETH HOL-ROYD-DOLIN**

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article first appeared in the Lincoln Journal's Oct. 16, 1985 edition. We've reprinted it in its entirety.

"I lived my first 18 years of my life in Lincoln County," General Charles E. Yeager told a large crowd outside the Charles E. Yeager Career Center.

"That's where you're molded. The rest of the time you're working. But you're molded into what you're going to be in those first 18 years."

For someone who has not lived in Lincoln County for 44 years, Yeager sure seemed to know a lot of people. But there were many people he did not know.

"I haven't lived here since 1941," he said. "People know me who grew up since then. But I don't know them... And they expect me to know them."

He remembered the smallest details about the older people, and he chatted with them about their families, and asked questions about their loved ones. He showed great patience and interest in the older people. To one, he said "You don't look any different now than you did

40 years ago."

Yeager was patient with everyone Monday, when he faced over a thousand people who all came to see the vocational school named in his honor. He signed countless autographs of copies of his autobiography, "Yeager," and of the day's program as well. As he signed programs, he commented good-naturedly: "There must be about 2,000 of these things floating around."

When asked if he received comments about the earthy language in "Yeager," the general said "that's the way people talk when they fight a war."

Chuckling, he said his mother read the book and "threatened to kill me for saying we were raised on corn-meal mush."

Yeager said he had often milked cows in the hollow in which the career center now stands, and had hunted squirrels in nearby woods.

Asked if he had ever dreamed he might be going places during those first 18 years, he said: "No. There was no way of knowing. It hadn't happened yet, and I was never one to speculate."

Yeager also refused to speculate about what would have happened if

he had been born 10 years later.

Virginia Smith, his English teacher in those days, recalled Yeager.

"(He) was just one of the boys, and I loved them all. I never had any idea he was headed any further than the rest of them."

Smith remembered Yeager was not the best English student (Yeager himself said he was lucky to get C's), but added she heard he was excellent in science and math.

At the ceremony, Yeager told the crowd he had not thought much about the future when he was growing up.

He said he had fun as a youth flying kites and hunting squirrels in the mornings. Sometimes, he said, he would arrive at school 15 minutes after starting time, and the principal would not be too sympathetic with the explanation that he had had squirrels to skin.

Yeager recalled spending a lot of time playing football and basketball.

"I was trained in sports," he said. "Sports are a big part of your life training for adulthood."

Yeager also recalled his years in band, beginning in grade school.

When he auto-

graphed a picture taken on Mother's Day, 1938, he told former fellow band member Mrs. Froud. Spuriock to remember he traded the bass drums for the trombone, which he played for eight years. Spurlock said all the county schools were in one band when she and Yeager went to school.

Yeager recalled his own vocational training. He took two years of typing with Ruby Miller, and could type 60 words a minute.

The Ford garage and Shorty Hager's garage, he said, were the vocational schools of his day. "They turned over their garages to us. They taught us what we knew.

"A machine" he said, "will bite a person who does not understand it."

What he learned from Shorty Hager and from Carl Clay at the Ford garage he credited with keeping him alive over his flying years.

"I learned how to push a machine without it biting me," he said. Yeager toured the votech center that will bear his name during the morning, and he called it a wonderful facility.

"I only wish we had had this facility in 1937, '38, '39 and '40," he said. "It's marvelous how



A youthful Captain Chuck Yeager is seen in this photo from circa 1944. (Courtesy photo)

current technology is available to these students today...how it reaches even into the back country."

Superintendent of Schools Charles McCann introduced the program.

"He is ours," said McCann. "He is yours. Today we are honoring one of our own by changing the name of the votech center to the Charles E. Yeager Career Center.

"I'm proud that General Yeager still remembers his roots in

Lincoln County and in West Virginia."

Yeager has been an immensely popular figure in the county over the last four decades. Complemented about his great patience with the endless picturing-taking, autograph-signing, and media-interviewing, Yeager smiled and said "You learn that."

Yeager has lived his adult life in places far from Lincoln County, yet he has never distanced himself from his beginnings.

State, national leaders react to Chuck Yeager's death

"An American hero. West Virginia's native son was larger than life and an inspiration for generations of Americans."

— **Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va.**

"He embodied the

American Dream. A boy from Lincoln County would achieve what pilots then had only dreamed about."

— **Sen. Shelly Moore Capito, R-W.Va.**

"[His] daring and skill captured our imagina-

tions and expanded our understanding of what is possible. His contributions to aviation were immeasurable."

— **Bill Clinton, former U.S. president**

"He was a true legend with the right stuff."

— **Scott Kelly, American Astronaut**

"An American hero and true West Virginia legend who broke barriers and changed history forever."

— **West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice**

"A tremendous loss to our nation. Gen. Yeager's pioneering and innovative spirit advanced America's abilities in the sky and set our nation's dreams soaring into the jet age and the space age."

— **Jim Bridenstien, NASA Administrator**

"He was one of the greatest pilots in history, a proud West Virginian, and an American original."

— **U.S. President Donald Trump**

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STORY

A Lincoln County Christmas

Written by Shirley Blake as told to her by her grandmother, Lilly Harrison Sydenstricker

It was a very cold night that Christmas Eve of 1907 in Southern Lincoln County, West Virginia. Snow mixed with ice had fallen steadily that entire day. Pa and Lilly's brothers, Filmore and Everett, had been out all evening feeding and tending to the cattle and leading them inside the barn for the night.

Lilly Harrison was only five years old that Christmas Eve, with an imagination to rival most children her age! She'd heard of Santa Claus, of course, but she'd never met him. The weather was so bad she didn't think Santa would be able to get to her house. Bear in mind, dear readers, that in 1907 most people had never even seen a picture of Santa Claus!

Her mother, Charlotte, called out to Lilly, reminding her to set the

oil lamp on the newel post before going upstairs for the night. Lilly ascended up the stairs while casting long, dark shadows on the wall.

The old folks in her family were always pushing the scary tales, mostly about her home. Yes, I know children shouldn't be listening to such tales, but Lilly always did. Sometimes, she even became part of the tale which would mean, that's right, you've got it, the story would have to be true!

Lilly said they were all downstairs one day in the kitchen sewing (two months before). And for some reason, they heard a sound as if it were a cannon ball rolling across the floor in Lilly's upstairs bedroom! A ghost perhaps, thought the five-year old? Her mother certainly thought so, especially since the house had been there since before the Civil War. The old timers often told stories about how they could hear the cannons

blasting away during the war in the battle of Barboursville, in nearby Cabell County.

This caused Lilly to constantly be looking over her shoulders and peering through the darkened hallways for apparitions! As she turned to the right to go into the bedroom, Lilly heard a screeching sound coming from inside her closet and this made her blood run cold. Lilly knew that her sisters, Minnie and Estee, were downstairs in the cozy kitchen helping Ma bake cakes and pies for Christmas Day. So, what was that noise, could it have been mice, she wondered? In the meantime, her brothers were outside helping Pa with the cattle. Ma always kept a couple of cats about to take care of the mice, so that couldn't be where the noise was coming from.

Lilly decided to ignore it and try to get some sleep, even though she was becom-

ing more anxious and excited by the minute! As she knelt to pray on the yellow and green rag rug, Lilly asked Jesus to watch over her through the cold and chilly night ahead. As her small body began to retain heat beneath the many layers of handmade quilts, Lilly fell into a deep sleep.

Only minutes later to be rudely awakened by another strange noise coming this time from the corner of her bedroom. With great trepidation, Lilly sat up all at once in her bed, she could just barely make out a lone figure sitting there! Then, all at once, my readers, the figure stands up and heads towards Lilly's bed! She tried to scramble from the bed, but whoever this person was, they kept blocking Lilly from her escape.

Then, all of a sudden, the moon also rises and sheds new light into the darkened room. Lilly realized at this point not to be afraid,

because this had to be Santa Claus, her long awaited friend. But then Ma had always said to get away from strangers as quickly as you can, and let me tell you, little Lilly was on the move! She moved to the center of the bed only to be caught by her toes and dragged towards the foot of the bed. I'm telling you my readers, goose feathers went flying everywhere inside that room. It looked like snow flurries and cotton candy raining from the night sky above!

Then tentatively, Lilly whispered, "are you Santa?"

"Ho! Ho! Ho!" he replied. Then, handing Lilly a peppermint stick, Santa quietly left the room!

Lilly was so overwhelmed with exquisite joy! She knew this was the story she would someday share with her children and her children's children and other true believers all over the world!

ACTIVITY

MAGIC Reindeer Food

ON CHRISTMAS EVE BEFORE YOU SLEEP, GO OUTSIDE AND TAKE A PEEK.

CAN YOU SEE THEM? ARE THEY NEAR? IF NOT, DON'T WORRY AND HAVE NO FEAR.

THIS LITTLE BAG IS ALL YOU NEED. IT IS FULL OF MAGIC REINDEER FEED.

SPRINKLE ON YOUR LAWN TONIGHT. IT WILL HELP THE REINDEER AS THEY TAKE FLIGHT.

AS SANTA'S REINDEER FLY AND ROAM, THIS MAGIC FEED WILL HELP LEAD THEM TO YOUR HOME.



Reindeer Food Recipe

YOU'LL NEED:

- 2 Cups Oats
- 1/4 Cup Green Sprinkles
- 1/4 Cup Red Sprinkles
- OR 1/2 Cup Glitter

INSTRUCTIONS

MIX all ingredients together in a ziplock bag. Spoon into smaller bags, tie with a twist tie or ribbon. Add your Poem Tag (at left).

HAVE children sprinkle on the lawn Christmas Eve! The sprinkles/glitter will catch the attention of Santa's reindeer.

NOTE: Unless your name is Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner, Blitzen or Rudolph AND you walk on four hoofs and sport antlers, the glitter in this recipe is not safe for you to eat. So if you choose to use glitter, please don't eat it.



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HOUSE DISTRICT 16

Vacant House seat filled by appointment

Gov. Justice chooses replacement for district in Lincoln, Cabell counties

By **MICHAEL RAMSBURG**
Contributing Writer

CHARLESTON — A state House of Delegates seat vacant since the Oct. 3 resignation of a now-former delegate has once again been filled.

On Friday, Oct. 16, Gov. Jim Justice announced the appointment of Ona resident Zachary Perry to the West Virginia House of Delegates rep-

resenting the 16th District. The appointment comes nearly two weeks after former delegate John Mandt, Jr., R-Cabell, announced his resignation.

Mandt was one of three delegates elected in 2018 as a representative of West Virginia's House of Delegates District 16. The district encompasses parts of Lincoln and Cabell counties.

Mandt's term of office was set to expire this year.

In early October, screenshots with anti-gay messages allegedly written by Mandt appeared on social media. Mandt originally denied that the messages were written by him. He later resigned his position in the House of Delegates, citing personal reasons.

"Delegate Mandt and I have spoken at length over the past several months," House Speaker Roger Hanshaw, R-Clay, said at the time of

Mandt's resignation. "Earlier this year, Delegate Mandt lost his mother and is now spending significant time caring for his father, family and expanding business ventures. After our discussion, Delegate Mandt concluded that at this time it would be best to step away from public service and focus on the priority matters of

SEE **HOUSE**, PAGE 2A

ELECTION 2020

Early voting starts today



Photo courtesy of **Sen. Joe Manchin**

U.S. Senator Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., recently visited the region to encourage West Virginians to vote. Here he speaks with Phyllis Smith, the Clerk of neighboring Cabell County. In-person early voting opens in Lincoln County today and runs through Oct. 31.

SECRETARY OF STATE

SOS office announces new online service for licensing

By **STAFF, WIRE REPORTS**
Lincoln News Sentinel

CHARLESTON — Starting a business, applying for a professional license, and renewing current businesses and professional licenses have never been easier, faster, or more efficient in West Virginia history. Continuing his effort to increase online services to West Virginia customers and businesses, Secretary of State Mac Warner is announcing the quick adoption rates and success of the recently launched Secretary of

SEE **LICENSING**, PAGE 2A

GUN CRIMES

DOJ: 14,200+ accused of firearms crimes

86 charged in Southern District of West Virginia in FY 2020

By **STAFF, WIRE REPORTS**
Lincoln News Sentinel

CHARLESTON — The Department of Justice announced it has charged more than 14,200 defendants with firearms-related crimes during Fiscal Year (FY) 2020, despite the challenges of COVID 19 and its impact on the criminal justice process. These cases have been a Department priority since November 2019 when Attorney General William P. Barr announced his commitment to investigating, prosecuting, and combatting gun crimes as a critical part of the Department's anti-violent crime strategy. These firearms-related

charges are the result of the critical law enforcement partnership between United States Attorneys' Offices and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), led by Acting Director Regina Lombardo, who has made firearms-related investigations a priority.

"The number one priority of government is to keep its citizens safe," said Attorney General Barr. "By preventing firearms from falling into the hands of individuals who are prohibited from having them, we can stop violent crime before it happens. Violating federal firearms laws is a serious crime and offenders face serious consequences. The Depart-

ment of Justice is committed to investigating and prosecuting individuals who illegally buy, sell, use, or possess firearms. Reducing gun violence requires a coordinated effort, and we could not have charged more than 14,000 individuals with firearms-related crimes without the hard work of the dedicated law enforcement professionals at the ATF, our U.S. Attorneys' Offices across the country, and especially all of our state and local law enforcement partners."

"Protecting the public from violent crime involving firearms is at the core of ATF's mission," commented ATF Acting Director Regina Lombardo. "Every day the men and

women of ATF pursue and investigate those who use firearms to commit violent crimes in our communities, many of whom are prohibited from possessing firearms from previous convictions. ATF, in collaboration with the U.S. Attorneys' Offices across the nation, is committed to bringing these offenders to justice for their egregious and violent criminal acts."

"The right to bear arms pursuant to the 2nd Amendment is a critically important Constitutional right but we best protect the 2nd Amendment by enforcing federal gun laws to prevent

SEE **FIREARMS**, PAGE 2A

DIGITAL HOMECOMING

Marshall University announces this year's Homecoming will go digital with 'Herd@Home'. **3A**

ON THIS DAY

1879: Thomas Edison applies for a patent for his design for an incandescent light bulb.

WEDNESDAY

High: **80**
Low: **56**

THURSDAY

High: **80**
Low: **59**

FRIDAY

High: **76**
Low: **54**



OUTDOOR PURSUITS

Nov. 7: Bobwhite quail, cottontail rabbit, snowshoe/varying hare hunting begins | Nov. 7: Raccoon, beaver, otter trapping begins

WILD & WONDERFUL WEEKEND



Photos courtesy of Unsplash.com

Enjoy Halloween — and the Hunter's Full Moon — in the great outdoors. Chief Logan State Park, in neighboring Logan County, has a number of outdoor activities, both in daylight and darkness, for you and your family to partake in this weekend.

Halloween hikes

Chief Logan offering holiday-themed activities

By **MICHAEL RAMSBURG**
Contributing Writer

LOGAN

Ah, Halloween. The season of haunted houses, hocus pocus and haints. The neighbor's kids, costumed, pleading for sweets at your door (or car window, in this era of social-distance). Why not add haunted hikes and terrifying tales in the great outdoors to your list of traditions for All Hallows' Eve?

This weekend, Chief Logan State Park in bordering Logan County is offering a number of Halloween-themed outdoor activities for individuals and families. The activities begin Friday, Oct. 30 and run through Sunday, Nov. 1. All the events we've listed in this article are free.

On Friday, Oct. 30, Chief Logan Naturalist Lauren Cole will guide you through an Evening Guided Nature Hike. The trek begins at 5 p.m. at the park museum. Participants will hike the Cliffside Trail, an easy trail with some rocks and roots. Cole will provide information about the park's nocturnal animals and how to use your own night vision when exploring trails after dark. Participants are asked to bring a flashlight — just in case.

If you or your family prefer hiking in daylight, you might favor the WonderFALL Walk held on Saturday, Oct. 31 at 11 a.m. This hike also starts at the Chief Logan Museum, but will take the 1-1/2 mile round trip Fitness and Shawnee Trail. The walk will be leisurely, and suitable for all ages and fitness levels. The focus of the walk is fall colors and foliage.

On Halloween night, Chief Logan State Park will host From the Cabin Porch: Terrifying

Tales at 8 p.m. This family-friendly event gives you the perfect excuse to enjoy frightening fun under the full moon, which rises just an hour prior to the program's start. "The presentation includes a little history about the park and a whole lot of imagination," Chief Logan State Park said in a statement about the event. "Are the tales true or not? You'll decide."

Terrifying Tales will be held at the pioneer cabin. Participants are asked to bring a blanket or lawn chair to sit on. Physical distancing and mask wearing will be required. "We want to keep Logan County's school calendar in the green," the statement said.

If the nighttime program is a bit too late for the kiddos, your family has one more chance to enjoy a guided hike on Sunday, Nov. 1. Starting at 10 a.m., you and your family can meet Cole at the Chief Logan Museum for a slow-paced Sunday hike.

All Chief Logan State Park events and programs require the standard COVID safety protocols.

"When attending programmed activities, attendees will maintain physical distancing and wear masks when requested," the statement said.

IF YOU GO

Chief Logan State Park
376 Little Buffalo Creek Rd,
Logan, WV 25601



Friday, Oct. 30
Evening Guided Nature Hike
Meet at Park Museum, 5 p.m.

Saturday, Oct. 31
WonderFALL Walk
Meet at Park Museum, 11 a.m.

Saturday, Oct. 31
From the Cabin Porch: Terrifying Tales
Pioneer Cabin, 8 p.m.

Sunday, Nov. 1
Sunday Hike
Meet at Park Museum, 10 a.m.



OUTDOOR BRIEFS

Wild boar firearm season now open in select counties

SOUTH CHARLESTON — West Virginia's wild boar firearms season, which is open to state residents only, is now underway.

The wild boar firearms season began Oct. 24 and runs through Saturday, Oct. 31. It will include a second segment from Feb. 5-7, 2021. Boar hunting is currently not permitted for nonresident hunters and is restricted to Boone, Logan, Raleigh and Wyoming counties.

"Wild boars depend on available hard mast, and while hickory and beech production are down for 2020 in the four wild boar counties, acorn production is up," said Nick Huffman, DNR wildlife biologist. "Boars will utilize this food source and will be scattered due to abundant acorn crops, which means hunters will need to cover more terrain to find feeding areas."

To hunt wild boar, hunters must possess either a Class X, XJ, XS, AB-L or A-L license or be exempt from purchasing a license. They may also hunt boar with a Class A, AH or AHJ license if they purchase a conservation stamp and resident big game stamp.

Boar of either sex may be taken, but only one boar may be taken per year. Each harvested animal must be checked online at www.wvhunt.com, at an official DNR license agent or by calling 1-844-WVCHECK. In 2019, hunters took 88 boars during the boar firearm, archery and crossbow seasons.

Concurrent hunting of deer and bear, where legal, is permitted. Hunters are reminded that if they are hunting in a county open to firearms antlerless deer hunting, they must wear 400 square inches of blaze orange over their outer clothing during the antlerless season.

For more information about the wild boar season, check the 2020-21 West Virginia Hunting and Trapping Regulations or contact a local DNR district office. You can purchase hunting licenses and stamps at www.wvhunt.com.

Fairfax Pond Dam temporarily closed for upgrades

BURLINGTON, W.VA. — Due to upgrades, Fairfax Pond Dam at the Fairfax Pond-Rehe Wildlife Management Area in Preston County was temporarily closed to fishing, waterfowl hunting and other recreation on Oct. 20. Activities outside the construction area are still permitted.

The closure, which includes the parking lot near the dam and the area around it, will remain in effect until modifications are complete and the contractor has removed equipment from the WMA. Signs about the closure will be posted in affected areas. The upgrades are expected to take six months to complete. For more info, call 304-825-6787.

ADVERTISEMENT

OUTDOOR PURSUITS Nov. 9: The second segment of waterfowl hunting season begins; ends Nov. 14 | Nov. 23: Firearm buck deer season begins

HUNTING & TRAPPING



Rhett Noonan / Unsplash

Hunters and trappers have numerous species to choose from beginning Saturday, Nov. 7, when more than 15 game seasons are opened in West Virginia.

Open season

Hunting, trapping for several species starts Saturday

By **STAFF, WIRE REPORTS**
Lincoln News Sentinel

HAMLIN

Hunters and trappers in Lincoln County and around West Virginia will have plenty of opportunities to practice their sport this weekend when the state opens seasons for more than 15 species of small and medium-sized game.

This set of hunting and trapping begins one half-hour before sunrise on Saturday, Nov. 7. Rabbit, snowshoe hare, bobcat, red and gray fox, quail and pheasant game are all open for hunting.

West Virginia's trapping season also begins Nov. 7.

Hunters and trappers are encouraged to consult the 2020 West Virginia Hunting and Trapping Regulations booklet for information on bag limits, license requirements and more. To view a PDF version of the regulations, visit <https://www.wvdnr.gov/>.

Species	Sport	Open	Close
Bobwhite Quail	Hunting	Nov. 7	Jan. 2
Cottontail Rabbit	Hunting	Nov. 7	Feb. 28
Snowshoe or varying hare	Hunting	Nov. 7	Feb. 28
Ring-necked pheasant	Hunting	Nov. 7	Jan. 2
Ring-necked pheasant	Hunting	Nov. 7	Jan. 2
Raccoon	Trapping	Nov. 7	Feb. 28
Red fox, gray fox	Hunt/Trap	Nov. 7	Feb. 28
Bobcat	Hunt/Trap	Nov. 7	Feb. 28
Mink, Muskrat	Trapping	Nov. 7	Feb. 28
Fisher	Trapping	Nov. 7	Jan. 31
Beaver	Trapping	Nov. 7	March 31
Otter	Trapping	Nov. 7	Feb. 28
Skunk	Trapping	Nov. 7	Feb. 28
Opposum	Trapping	Nov. 7	Feb. 28
Coyote	Trapping	Nov. 7	Feb. 28
Weasel	Trapping	Nov. 7	Feb. 28

Source: West Virginia Division of Natural Resources

WILD & WONDERFUL ROADTRIP

Finish fall foliage season with a trip down W.Va. Route 20

By **STAFF, WIRE REPORTS**
Lincoln News Sentinel

If you're in the southern part of the state this week, W.Va. Route 20 from Pipestem Resort State Park to Meadow Bridge is the perfect route for leaf peeping. The drive winds through numerous scenic areas including Bluestone State Park, the historic railroad town of Hinton, and the Sandstone Falls overlook on the New River National River.

Hinton is a great place to grab a bite to eat and take in some of West Virginia's rich history. This remarkable Victorian-era railroad town has stunning buildings and architecture. The Market on Courthouse Square and Chestnut Revival both offer lighter fare, while Kirk's serves up hearty, homestyle meals. Hinton also has cozy accommodations if you're looking to spend the



Photo courtesy of West Virginia Tourism Office

night in the area—Guest House Inn on Courthouse Square and Foxwood Inn Bed & Breakfast are traveler favorites.

Continue on to Sandstone Falls— a wide, cascading series of river-wide falls that drop around 20 feet. Snap a

picture and be on your way or go for a gentle hike on the nearby trails. Continue on to Meadow Bridge or take a detour to Lewisburg. Either way, your scenic drive in Almost Heaven will be one to remember.

OUTDOOR BRIEFS

New public access site opens for boaters, anglers along New River

CHARLESTON — Gov. Jim Justice and officials with the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR) announced last week that a new fishing access site and boat ramp has opened on the New River, near Gauley Bridge.

The new site, located downstream from the Hawks Nest-Gauley Mountain Hydroelectric facility, between Gauley Bridge and Cathedral Falls along state Route 60, will give anglers access to the scenic stretch of the New River with prime fishing for smallmouth bass, walleye, and other popular species.

"I'm very proud that we continue to provide more and more opportunities for West Virginians everywhere to fully enjoy the unmatched natural wonders that we're blessed with in our state," Gov. Justice said. "This new access site could very well allow someone new to discover a love for fishing or the great outdoors, and that makes me excited beyond belief."

"I encourage all West Virginians to get outside this fall and find an adventure in the absolute paradise we get to enjoy in Almost Heaven," Gov. Justice continued.

"This new access site is going to open the door for some great fishing in the lower New and Gauley rivers," said Mark Scott, assistant chief of fish management for the WVDNR. "And with people discovering and rediscovering their love for fishing and the outdoors, this is a great time to provide additional access to West Virginia's incredibly beautiful natural resources."

The access site has parking for 10 vehicles, nine trailers (including a space for a handicap-accessible trailer), and a space for a handicap-accessible van. The property also provides a preferred take-out point for anglers and recreational boaters floating the New River between Cotton Hill and Gauley Bridge. Hawks Nest Hydro LLC donated the property.

Trails grants given to organizations, communities in coalfields region

CHARLESTON — Gov. Justice awarded five Transportation Alternatives and Recreational Trails Program (TARTP) grants last week, worth \$389,375 in total, for a variety of projects in four counties across the Southern Coalfields region of the state.

"It's just more and more goodness that's happening within our communities in West Virginia," Gov. Jim Justice said. "It's helping us drive tourism and inspire more and more people to come to West Virginia."

Projects in Lincoln, Wayne, McDowell and Kanawha counties received the grants, which will help maintain existing trails, among other things.

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KITCHEN TIP

Invest in a baking scale. Scales not only accurately measure your cooking ingredients, they also streamline the entire process.

SEASONS EATINGS



Image courtesy of McCormick

A virtual exchange

7 tips for hosting an online cookie swap

StatePoint

It may take a little extra time and creativity, but a holiday cookie exchange can be held virtually and it's worth the effort according to experts.

"There's a famous quote, 'If you do what you love, you'll never work a day in your life.' It's so true for me as I find great joy in developing easy, flavorful recipes," says Cindy Gilbert, McCormick Test Kitchen chef. "My friends have come to me for years requesting tips and tricks, and over 20 years ago, they anointed me the annual holiday cookie exchange leader. This past year has been challenging, but I knew I wanted to keep the tradition alive while following social distancing guidelines."

Here are Gilbert's top seven tips on hosting your own virtual cookie exchange, along with her favorite delicious McCormick cookie picks.

1. Keep the virtual guest list small and local. Your family and friends' safety is the most important thing, and no one wants to bake a ton of cookies. Aim for five to 10 people.

Gingerbread Men Cookies - No winter holiday is complete without gingerbread men. They're cute and can be decorated with raisins, cinnamon red-hot candies or royal icing.

2. Invite cookie enthusiasts. Invite people who enjoy being in the kitchen

and welcome sharing their recipe secrets! Tell them they're going to be sharing the story behind their choice.

Red Velvet Crinkle Cookies - This tasty recipe crinkles from the confectioners' sugar, and the deep chocolate red color and taste add up to a cookie you'll be proud to share.

3. Package cookies in separate portions. Ask participants to package each serving in individual containers or resealable bags of six cookies per serving.

Easy Lemon Cookie Truffles - This is a perfect no-bake option. Lemon extract adds a bright citrus flavor to this easy four-ingredient treat that starts with store-bought sugar cookies.

4. Arrange the exchange. About an hour before the virtual get-together, set up a table outside, in a cul-de-sac or school parking lot. Everyone can take turns grabbing their cookies quickly and safely. Or, arrange no contact porch drop-offs during a set time.

Holiday Meringue Cookies - These deliciously airy, light, and low-fat meringue cookies are the perfect confection for any holiday celebration. Add your favorite food coloring for a festive twist.

5. Request the recipes. Ask guests to provide a recipe card in their individual packages, or as the host, you can compile the recipes and share through email.

Double Ginger Gingersnaps - A per-

sonal favorite of Gilbert's, these are a ginger lover's dream! Ground ginger and crystallized ginger make the flavor pop on these cookies, which are crispy on the outside and chewy inside.

6. Share stories via video conference. Many guests like to tell the stories behind their cookies. By scheduling time to connect, you'll likely hear some heartwarming or hilarious anecdotes and maybe even some helpful tidbits.

Sugar Cookie Thumbprints with Spiced Jam - Inspired by a bakery treat, this holiday twist on a classic uses cinnamon or ginger-spiced jam.

7. Have fun. Take time to ask how everyone has been and give them a chance to share what other traditions they're planning this year. While the party is about cookies, it's also about connecting, having fun and picking up a few new recipes to try.

Pecan Cookie Balls - These buttery melt-in-your-mouth cookies, also known as Mexican Wedding Cakes, make a great addition to any holiday cookie exchange.

Find these recipes and more by visiting McCormick.com/CookieExchange.

With a little creativity and the perfect cookie recipe, you can reinvent your favorite baking traditions for a safe and festive holiday season.

GRILLING

Celebrate the holidays by the grill

StatePoint

Health experts recommend taking festivities outdoors this holiday season, which means your grill may take center stage.

"You can master some impressive culinary feats on your grill, especially with hardwood pellets that add rich, wood-fired flavor to winter dishes," says Ben Madden, product manager at Bear Mountain BBQ Woods, crafter of gourmet, hardwood pellets.

To celebrate grill-side, Madden offers these recommendations:

Smooth and Smoky

It's the ideal season to indulge in smooth, smoky flavoring. Achieve this robust flavor profile with the new Bourbon BBQ Craft Blend from Bear Mountain. Straight from barrel to BBQ, these hardwood pellets work well with a variety of meats, rubs and sauces.

BOURBON PINEAPPLE GLAZED HAM

Created by James Brown of GrillNation.

Total Cook Time: ~6 hours

Ingredients:

- 20-pound ham
- 1 cup pineapple juice
- 2-3 tablespoons mustard.
- 4-5 tablespoons Java House Seasoning

For Pineapple Bourbon Glaze:

- 2 cups brown sugar
- 1 cup bourbon
- 1/4 cup pineapple juice
- 2/3 cup pineapple, chopped
- 2 tablespoons butter, unsalted
- 4 tablespoons spicy brown mustard

Directions:

1. Thaw ham in fridge for 2-3 days, then in sink for 24 hours. Once thawed, remove both skin and silver skin. Inject ham with cup of pineapple juice. Place in fridge for 12-24 hours.

2. Place at room temperature for 1 hour. Then, cover surface with 2-3 tablespoons mustard. Season generously with Java House seasoning.

3. Set smoker to 250 degrees. Let seasoning rest on meat 20-30 minutes. Place ham in baking pan with wire rack. Place in smoker. Then, pour pineapple juice in pan.

4. Check temperature periodically. Spritz ham every 30 minutes after first 90 minutes.

5. When internal temperature is 140 degrees, make glaze. Place saucepan over medium heat for 10 minutes. Combine pineapple bourbon glaze ingredients. Simmer for 10 minutes. Remove from heat and let thicken. Glaze ham when internal temperature is 150-155 degrees.

6. When internal temperature is 165 degrees, remove from smoker. Let rest for 20-30 minutes.

More recipes can be found at grillnationofficial.com.

CHOCOLATE PEPPERMINT COOKIES

- COOKIES:**
- 1/2 cup butter
 - 1 cup brown sugar
 - 1/2 cup sour cream
 - 1 egg
 - 2 squares chocolate, melted
 - 1 1/2 cups flour
 - 1/4 tsp baking soda
 - 1/4 tsp baking powder

- FROSTING:**
- 1 cup powdered sugar
 - 2 Tbsp milk
 - 1/2 tsp peppermint flavoring, or 1/2 cup crushed peppermint stick candy

CREAM butter with brown sugar. Add sour cream and egg. Beat well. Add melted chocolate.

SIFT flour with soda and baking powder, then add to first mixture.

BAKE on greased baking sheet for 12 minutes at 325 degrees F.

WHEN frosting will hold its shape, spread on warm cookies

SNOWBALL COOKIES

- 3/4 cup butter
- 1/4 cup evaporated milk or cream
- 1/2 tsp vanilla
- 1 3/4 cups flour
- 6 Tbsp confectioners' sugar
- 1 cup coarsely chopped pecans

CREAM butter until very light and fluffy. Beat in the milk or cream a little at a time until it is all taken up by the butter. Add vanilla.

SIFT flour, then measure. Resift with confectioners' sugar and add a little at a time to the butter. Add pecans.

ROLL very small bits of dough, about 1 teaspoonful for each cookie, between palms of hands to form small balls.

PLACE on floured baking sheet and bake in a moderate oven (375 degrees F) until golden brown, about 15 minutes.

ROLL cookies in confectioners' sugar while they are still warm.

YIELD: 6 dozen small cookies.

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OUTDOOR PURSUITS

Dec. 18: Starry Saturday Night, 7 p.m., Chief Logan State Park. Observe the moon, planets, and galaxies through telescope.

CAMPING



Eddie Lawhead / Unsplash

Cold weather camping

How to camp when the weather's cool

StatePoint

It's almost never too cold to head outdoors when you're well-prepared. On your next cool-weather hike or camping trip, keep these considerations in mind for a safe and comfortable experience:

- **Between a rock and a cold place:** Not only will the addition of a sleeping pad under your sleeping bag make your tent a comfier place to get some quality shut-eye after a long day of hiking, rappelling or fishing, it will also provide an important additional layer between you and the cold ground, helping keep you warm. Lightweight and compact, many models are inflatable and pack up neatly between uses.

- **Sure-footing:** When trail conditions will potentially be slick, it's always a good idea to bring along the equipment needed to stay sure-footed. Be sure to wear waterproof hiking shoes or boots with solid traction and consider using trekking poles for further stability.

- **Tech zone:** Staying aware of shifting conditions is especially important when adventuring in the cooler months. Wearable tech, like Pro Trek watches from Casio, can help. Rugged and water-resistant up to 100 meters, these watches provide crucial information such as altitude, location, barometric pressure, as well as sunrise and sunset times. These features can help you with navigation, planning and staying on top

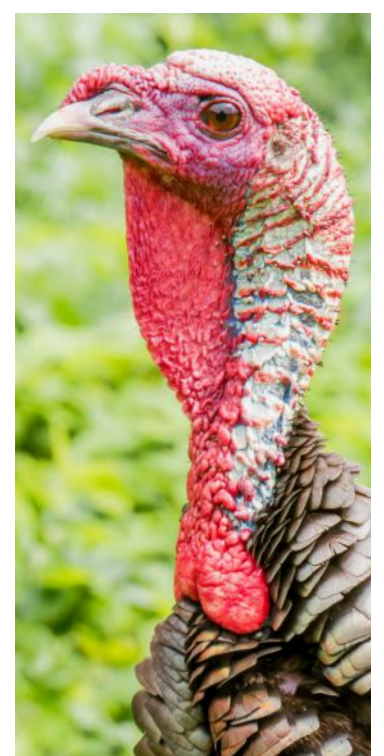
of weather conditions. Ranging in price between about \$200-\$500, it's easy to find a model that meets your needs, whether you're an angler or a white-water rafter.

- **Health and wellness:** In chilly weather, sun protection and hydration remain just as critical as they do on hot days. Be sure to wear sunscreen on any exposed skin, along with lip balm containing SPF and sunglasses offering UV protection. If drinking cold water outdoors doesn't appeal to you this time of year, heat beverages before hikes and stow them in an insulated thermos.

The temperatures may be falling, but there is no need to rule out an outdoor-oriented trip. Proper gear can help ensure a successful adventure.

HUNTING

West Virginia hunters harvest 1,038 turkeys



Dulcey Lima / Unsplash

Wire report

SOUTH CHARLESTON — Turkey hunters harvested 1,038 birds during the fall season, according to preliminary numbers provided by the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources.

Wild turkey brood observations and harvests during the fall season were similar to last year. This year's fall turkey harvest came in 6.7 percent below the 2019 season and 13.4 percent below the 10-year average.

Although this is the second year with a declining fall harvest, it is still on par with a typical fall season, said Mike Peters, a WVDNR game bird biologist.

"With statewide mast conditions 35 percent below the long-term average, I was expecting the harvest to be a little higher," Peters said. "During poorer mast years, turkeys normally need to move across the landscape more to fulfill their dietary needs, which makes them more susceptible to harvest. But 2020 has been anything but a normal year."

Hunters in Randolph County led the state by harvesting 64 birds. Rounding out the top five counties for harvested birds are Greenbrier (53), Monroe (46), Nicholas (45) and Preston (42). All counties in the top five, except for Preston, had a four-week season. Preston County had a two-week season.

WVDNR District 3 led the state in harvests with 231. District 4 hunters harvested 224 turkeys, District 1 hunters harvested 199, District 2 hunters harvested 150, District 5 hunters harvested 130 and District 6 hunters harvested 104. Harvests in WVDNR Districts 1 and 2 were slightly higher than in 2019, but remaining districts fell below last year's mark.

HIKING

Top tech to bring on your next hike

StatePoint

Hitting the trail for a hike is good for the mind and body. Fortunately, there are still plenty of opportunities to get out and do so. As you plan your next outdoor adventure, consider supporting your journey with the following tech tools and gear:

- **Lighting your path:** The sun is setting earlier these days, but that doesn't mean you don't want to pursue the same long hikes you enjoyed all summer. Maintain top visibility and light your way safely with a hands-free headlamp. Today's headlamp models offer hybrid energy options, battery life reader features and are lightweight, making them easy to stow somewhere handy in your day pack and wear when needed.

- **Keeping Time:** When you're out on the trail, it's easy to get distracted by logistics and miss out on the beauty of your surroundings. Wearable tech however, can give you the information you need to simply relax and enjoy those breathtaking vistas and fall foliage. The rugged, waterproof outdoor watches in the Pro Trek line from Casio provide altimeter, barometer, thermometer and compass metrics to help you seamlessly stay on top of your location and local



Photo courtesy of StatePoint

weather conditions.

- **Easy does it:** Weighing in at only a few pounds, an inflatable chair or couch makes for an easy addition to your day pack, and one with huge payoffs when it's time to take a load off for a picnic lunch. The latest designs offer better ergonomics, easy inflation and breathable materials for optimum comfort.

- **Fill 'er up:** A mini water filtration

system can lighten your load substantially, freeing you of the burden of having to carry all the water you'll need throughout the day. Just be sure that your route will take you past streams or other water sources so you can refill and filter on-the-go.

With the latest tech and gear, you can enjoy those crisp autumn days to the fullest before winter sets in.

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