

Governor, First Lady Send Joyful Holiday Wishes



*Governor Joe Manchin III and
First Lady Gayle C. Manchin*

The holiday season is here! This time of year holds a special meaning for everybody. For Gayle and me, the holidays mean spending time with our families, sharing the joy of the season with others, and being thankful for our many blessings. We are truly fortunate to be able to celebrate with our immediate family, and with our extended family – the people of the Mountain State.

With special holiday events such as “A Joyful Night,” and the Governor’s Mansion and State Capitol Complex being adorned with lights and decorations of the season, we look forward to spreading the holiday spirit across West Virginia.

Gayle and I wish your family peace, happiness, love, and prosperity during this holiday season and the New Year. We hope you are able to take this time to enjoy spending it with your family and friends.

With warmest regards,



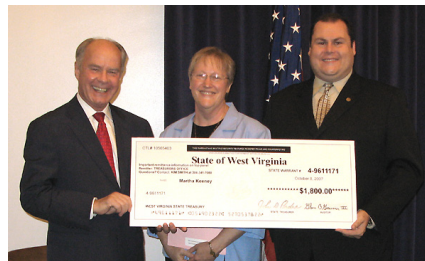
Joe Manchin III
Governor

The \$1,800 Check Came from the Mail!

Martha Keeney is the most recent recipient of an award from the State Employee Suggestion Program.

Keeney realized that forms and other documents mailed by the State Tax Department didn’t always have the same postage on them. Among the problems was the fact that mail was being kicked out of the bulk mail system because extra characters or designs were showing through the envelope address windows. Keeney developed several suggestions that included establishing guidelines for metered mail to insure the lowest possible postage, redesigning forms and documents to prevent them from being kicked from the bulk mail system, and mailing forms and documents at the same time to take advantage of bulk mail rates.

Keeney’s suggestions were implemented by the State Tax Department in 2005, saving them \$9,000 a year. For her insight and suggestions, Keeney received a check for 20 percent of that amount – \$1,800 – at a ceremony on October 8, 2007. Well done!



*L-R: , Department of Revenue
Cabinet Secretary Virgil Helton,
Martha Keeney, and Committee
Chair, Delegate Locke Wysong.*

Stroke Risks are High for African Americans

An article published in the Philadelphia Inquirer (Kristin E. Holmes, Staff Writer, May 6, 2007) reports the serious frequency of strokes and their consequences for African Americans:

“... African Americans are four times more likely than others to have a stroke between the ages of 35 and 54 because of a genetic predisposition, said Emil L. Matarese, director of the Primary Stroke Center at St. Mary and a representative for the American Stroke Association. ... Nearly 80 percent of African Americans who have a stroke die of complications, compared to 52 percent of all people who have strokes.”

Full article: www.philly.com/inquirer/local/pa/bucks/nabes/7327931.html

Signs of a Stroke: www.cdc.gov/stroke/signs_symptoms.htm

BPH Commissioner Curtis Wins NALBOH Award

Information and photo provided by Teresa Mace of the Department of Health and Human Resources.

West Virginia Bureau for Public Health (BPH) Commissioner Chris Curtis was recently awarded the National Association of Local Boards of Health's (NALBOH) Director's Award for the Mid-Atlantic Region.



Commissioner Chris Curtis

Director of the Office of Community and Rural Health Services, and has served as the BPH's Commissioner for the past five years.

Curtis' nomination came from the Mid-Atlantic regional director after he received a request from the Beckley-Raleigh County Board of Health, that was later supported by at least six additional Boards of Health.

Curtis received the award in September at the 15th Annual NALBOH Conference, held in Anchorage, AK. She began her State government career as the Assistant

West Virginia Center for the Book Announces 2007 Awards

Article and photo contributed by Lori Smuthkochorn of the West Virginia Library Commission.

Henry Louis Gates, Jr., the 2007 Appalachian Heritage Writer-in-Residence at Shepherd University, has selected the winner of this year's West Virginia New Writers Fiction Competition – Ann Claycomb of Morgantown for her story, *Proof of a Candid Photo, 1969*. Gates presented Claycomb with her award and a check for \$500 at the Scarborough Lecture on October 3, held at the Frank Theater at Shepherd University. Dr. Gates delivered his anticipated keynote lecture, *Speaking of Race and Appalachia*.

Other winners in the competition include Jim Koenig of Harpers Ferry for his story, *Love 1968*, second-place winner in the competition; and third-place winner Barbara Townsend of Springfield for her story, *Dan*. Gates also awarded two honorable mentions to John Shumate of Morgantown for his story, *My Lil' Reminder*, and D. C. Gallant of Harpers Ferry for *The Coin Purse*.

The West Virginia New Writers Fiction Competition was established to encourage novice writers whose talent and ability in creative writing is distinctive and promising. The competition fosters an appreciation of Appalachian



Ann Claycomb of Morgantown is the 2007 New Writers Fiction Competition first place winner.

Nov. is Nat'l Adoption Awareness Month

Contributed by Margaret Molitor of the Department of Health and Human Resources.

This November, the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources will join thousands of individuals, government agencies, and child advocacy organizations across the country to promote the National Adoption Month 2007 campaign.

Since 1990, the nation has proclaimed November as National Adoption Month to focus attention on the children in the child welfare system waiting for placement with families. Currently, there are approximately 513,000 children in foster care nationwide, 114,000 of whom are waiting for permanent families. Last year, the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources completed 419 adoptions statewide.

The goal of the campaign, *Answering the Call: You Don't Have to Be Perfect to Be A Perfect Parent*, is to spread awareness to recruit and retain foster and adoptive parents for our nation's waiting children. To help raise awareness of the need for adoptive parents, this year during National Adoption Month a public service advertising (PSA) campaign from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, AdoptUsKids, and the Ad Council is running on television, in print outlets, and on radio stations around the country. The PSAs encourage prospective parents to realize that they "don't have to be perfect to be a perfect parent," by addressing prospective adoptive parents' fears and convincing them that they have the ability to be adoptive parents.

For more about the National Adoption Month Campaign or to view information on children who are available for adoption, make a visit to www.adoptwvchild.org or www.AdoptUsKids.org.

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West Virginia Fire Safety Resource e-Guide Available Online

Contributed by Carol Nolte of the State Fire Marshal's Office.

West Virginia consistently ranks among the top 15 states in the nation for fire fatalities, but many of these fires – and deaths – are preventable.

To address this issue, the State Fire Marshal's Office developed the West Virginia Fire Safety Resource e-Guide. This project was made possible by a Community-Based Initiatives (CBI) grant awarded by the West Virginia DHHR Office of Epidemiology and Health Promotion.

The e-Guide was developed as a training tool to provide resources and guidelines to keep West Virginians safe, and to create awareness of the need for fire safety and related emergency preparedness. It addresses the specific needs of people with disabilities and older citizens.

In collaboration with the WV State Fire Marshal's Office, the e-Guide is available on the Mountain State Centers for Independent Living website (www.mtstcil.org/eguide) as part of their online skills training for people with disabilities. The website is also a valuable resource for families and caregivers.

pumpkin points

Pumpkins are fruits, not vegetables, and are 90% water.

Pumpkins are low in calories, fat, and sodium, and high in fiber. They are good sources of Vitamins A and B, potassium, iron, and protein.

Pumpkins are indigenous to the western hemisphere, originating in Central America, and have been grown in North America for 5,000 years.

Top pumpkin producing states are IL, OH, PA, and CA. Illinois is the top producer, providing 90-95% of our supply; total U.S. production in 2006 was \$101.3 million.

Pumpkin flowers and seeds are edible.

Carving Jack-o-Lanterns came from the Irish, who originally used turnips and potatoes.

Fire safety information ranging from basic everyday fire prevention to smoke alarm placement can be found on the website, along with downloadable home safety assessment checklists.

Nancy Massey (www.massey.net) has developed the e-Guide to be maximally accessible for use by all people with disabilities.

The e-Guide is dedicated to Joseph J. Szilvasi, one of nine people who died from smoke inhalation during the Emmons Jr. Apartment fire in Huntington on January 13, 2007.



IS YOUR KITCHEN SAFE?

The holidays are approaching and that means a lot of time in the kitchen pre-paring yummy treats and meals to share with family and friends. Now is a great time to "ready" your kitchen, making it safe to reduce the risk of fire and personal injury.

Home cooking fires kill hundreds and injure thousands each year, not to mention the enormous cost of property damage. About a third of all house fires begin in the kitchen, and the number one cause is unattended cooking.

To make your kitchen safe, follow these suggestions:

- * Stay in the kitchen and never leave cooking food unattended.
- * Wear short, close-fitting clothing, and keep curtains, towels, paper, and solvents away from hot surfaces and heat sources.
- * Clean cooking surfaces frequently to prevent food and grease build-up.
- * Use a timer when baking or simmering, and set it at intervals to remind you to check the food.
- * Turn pan handles inward to prevent spills and cook on back burners when possible.
- * Clean out your toaster regularly to remove crumbs and debris build-up.
- * Keep hot items away from counter edges, and have plenty of pot holders on hand.
- * Set your hot water tank to 120° or less.
- * Don't overload electric outlets, and make sure you have ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI's). Contact an electrician to make updates.
- * Follow microwave instructions for acceptable containers/cooking vessels.
- * Watch kids closely! Keep knives/sharp objects out of reach, and consider establishing a 3-foot kid-free zone around the stove (mark it with masking tape).
- * Be sure to have an approved, working kitchen fire extinguisher within reach.

HAPPY 52nd BIRTHDAY TO THE HOME MICROWAVE OVEN!

The first home model was introduced Oct. 25, 1955 by the Tappan Company, at a cost of \$1,200. It boasted cooking eggs in 22 seconds and bacon in 90 seconds.



So why didn't we see them commonly in our homes until many, many years later?

Using Consumer Price Index calculations, \$1,200 in 1955 is equal to approximately \$9,000 as of 2006 – a bit pricey for the average Joe.

Note: Graphic is a generic image for illustration purposes only and not a representation of a Tappan microwave.

AWARDS – Continued from Page 2

culture and values represented in the diverse writing of the region. The competition is judged each year by the Shepherd University Appalachian Heritage Writer-in-Residence and the Residency Fiction Competition Committee, with chair Ethan Fischer and local writers Alan Tinker and Charlotte Henning. The program is supported by the Shepherd University Foundation, the West Virginia Center for the Book, and the Phi Kappa Phi Society.

Hosted by the West Virginia Library Commission in partnership with the West Virginia Humanities Council, the West Virginia Center for the Book is located in Charleston, WV. It celebrates the rich literary heritage of West Virginia through its projects and programs. It was established in 2001 as an affiliate of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress.

For information about the competition, contact Dr. S. Bailey Shurbutt, Shepherd University, at sshurbut@shepherd.edu or see the competition website at www.shepherd.edu/ahwirweb/new_writers.html. For more about the program in West Virginia, contact Karen Goff at 304-558-3978 or visit the Center's website at www.wvcenterforthebook.lib.wv.us.



Don't Panic Over MRSA

Some staph bacteria, including MRSA, are *resistant* to antibiotics. MRSA isn't new – it's been around for a long time in health care settings. A new community strain is sensitive to antibiotics and is a common cause of skin infections in the U.S. It's transmitted mostly by skin-to-skin contact. **Prevent MRSA by utilizing good hygiene, especially good handwashing.** Cover wounds/abrasions with a bandage; use a barrier between skin and exercise equipment, and wipe things down before and after use; don't share personal care items; and seek treatment for any wound that doesn't appear to heal properly. Look for a pimple or boil that may be red, swollen, painful, or have pus or other drainage. Often, the area can be mistaken for a spider bite. Other serious infections include pneumonia and bloodstream, surgical, and other deep infections. But please note: **most staph and MRSA infections ARE treatable!** There's more information available from the WV Infectious Disease Epidemiology Program:

www.wvdhhr.org/idep/pdfs/idep/staphylococcus/MRSA_for_schools_parents_07.pdf

Lottery Approves Poker Games for Racetracks

Lottery Director John Musgrave has announced approval for Mountaineer and Wheeling Racetracks to proceed with offering poker games to the public.

His decision came after stringent observation, review, and evaluation at both racetracks during two days of rigorous practice runs. Both facilities became eligible to offer poker games as of October 19, 2007.

According to Musgrave, the Lottery is a regulatory agency which serves to protect both the interests of the State and the interests of the players. He states that Lottery staff were onsite for days to ensure the tracks can operate the games flawlessly.

Musgrave further states that in addition to creating new jobs, table games in West Virginia's Northern Panhandle racetracks will help the area compete for its share of the tourism market.

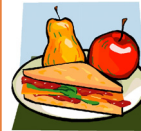


Eights and Aces – that's a "Dead Man's Hand" in poker – named for the hand held by Wild Bill Hickok when he was shot to death by Jack 'Crooked Nose' McCall on Aug. 2, 1876. In Hickok's hand were two eights and two aces, debatably all black cards, and a fifth card, the value of which is also disputed.

Pencil In ...



The Capitol Snack Bar has moved from the East Wing of the Building 1 to Room WB3 in the West Wing. The Capitol Snack Bar serves Buildings 1, 3 and 9 (Cultural Center) on the Capitol Complex and even offers delivery services to employees in those particular buildings. For employees working in other buildings around the complex, the Vendeteria remains located in the lower level of Building 7 and another Snack Bar is located on the first floor of Building 4.



The Consolidated Public Retirement Board is moving effective November 13, 2007. The new address is:

4101 MacCorkle Ave., SE
Charleston, WV 25304

Phone and fax numbers remain the same.



Inspiration Station



The only people with whom you should try to get even are those who have helped you.

John E. Southard

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