

EVENT

Kids' Annual Hoop Shoot Free-Throw Contest set for Dec. 6

DPNews@DominionPost.com

The Morgantown Elks Lodge #411 will host the annual Hoop Shoot Free-Throw Contest on Dec. 6 at Steppingstones at 400 Mylan Park Lane. Registration will start at 6 p.m. and the shooting will begin at 7 p.m. There is no cost for youngsters to participate in the contest.

Boys and girls ages 8-13 from

Monongalia and Preston counties are encouraged to come out and have fun shooting free throw shots (25 free throws), with the best scores winning and advancing to the District Level.

Participants are divided into different age groups, ensuring fair and competitive matchups. The Hoop Shoot competition fol-

lows a free-throw format, where participants attempt to score as many baskets as possible from the free-throw line. Each participant gets multiple attempts, and the one with the highest number of successful shots in their age group advances to the next round. The competition starts at the local lodge level and progresses through the district,

state, and national levels, with the goal of reaching the Elks National Hoop Shoot Finals.

The Elks Lodge Hoop Shoot not only provides young athletes with an opportunity to showcase their basketball skills but also instills values such as discipline, perseverance and sportsmanship. The competition encourages participants to push their limits, work hard

and strive for excellence. It also fosters a sense of camaraderie and friendship among the participants as they bond over their shared love for the game.

For any questions, contact Hoop Shoot Director Jon Kline at BPOElks411@gmail.com. Additional information can be found at <https://www.bpoelks411.org/hoopshoot>.

'MOST LOYAL'



WVU graphic

Four WVU supporters — (from left) Steve Conrad, Scott Branham, Rebecca Fint-Clark and Donna Staggs — will be honored for their records of service and commitment to the University during halftime of the WVU football game today as part of Mountaineer Week.

Four to be honored for service, commitment to WVU

WVU Today

Each year, West Virginia University recognizes a select group of dedicated Mountaineers who go above and beyond to positively impact the lives of others and make the university a special place as part of Mountaineer Week.

This year's "Most Loyal" recipients are alumni, faculty, staff and friends who embody commitment to WVU.

The 2024 honorees are Steve Conrad, Most Loyal West Virginian; Scott Branham, Most Loyal Alumni Mountaineer; Rebecca Fint-Clark, Most Loyal Faculty/Professional Staff; and Donna Staggs, Most Loyal Staff Mountaineer.

This group will be honored and recognized during halftime ceremonies of the WVU

home football game today against Baylor at Milan Puskar Stadium.

To be considered for the honor, recipients must display the loyalty, ideals and goals of WVU and the state of West Virginia through professional and civic engagement, business, service and leadership. The Most Loyal recipients are selected by a joint committee representing the WVU Foundation, WVU Alumni Association, WVU Staff Council, WVU Faculty Senate and the Mountaineer Week organization committee.

Most Loyal West Virginian

Steve Conrad graduated from WVU with a bachelor's degree in animal husbandry in 1964 and subsequently

served in the United States Navy as a fighter pilot, amassing 496 carrier landings and 129 combat missions in Vietnam. Conrad has remained highly engaged with the university since then. He has demonstrated his dedication through his service on various committees and projects, as well as financial support to establish the Conrad Farms Agriculture Scholarship.

Conrad recently served eight years as a Visiting Committee member for the WVU Davis College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and remains an emeritus member. Conrad is the eighth generation to farm his family's land in Brandywine, raising turkeys, cattle, corn, soybeans and hay. He is now retired,

and his daughter and son-in-law operate the farm.

Most Loyal Alumni Mountaineer

Parkersburg native Scott Branham's journey from student to influential alumnus exemplifies the spirit of a true Mountaineer. Branham graduated from the university with a bachelor's degree in marketing and a master's degree in business data analytics. His experience at the university fostered not only a passion for business but also an unwavering loyalty to WVU ideals.

He is co-founder and advisor of the Data Driven WV outreach center at the WVU John Chambers College of

SEE LOYAL, A-6

COMMUNITY

Operation Christmas Child sets collection week

DPNews@DominionPost.com

Mark Monday on your calendar. That's the start of National Collection Week, which runs through Nov. 25. During that time, more than 4,500 locations will open to collect Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes for the Samaritan's Purse project.

Operation Christmas Child has been collecting and delivering shoeboxes filled with school supplies, hygiene items and fun toys for children worldwide since 1993.

Find a step-by-step online guide by simply searching "how to pack a shoebox" in your internet browser. The online lookup tool is searchable by city or ZIP code. Local collection sites and their hours of operation are:

The Christian & Missionary Alliance Church, 308 Elmhurst St., Morgantown

Monday: 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Tuesday: 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
Wednesday: 4-8 p.m.
Thursday: Noon-5 p.m.
Friday: Noon-5 p.m.
Saturday: 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Nov. 24: Noon-4 p.m.
Nov. 25: 9 a.m.-noon

Fresh Harvest Assembly of God, 278 Canyon Road Morgantown

Monday: 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
Tuesday: 10 a.m.-noon
Wednesday: 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
Thursday: 4-6 p.m.
Friday: 4-6 p.m.
Saturday: 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
Nov. 24: 2-4 p.m.
Nov. 25: 9-11 a.m.

Mill Chapel Church, 6732 Kingwood Pike, Reedsville

Monday: 6-8 p.m.
Tuesday: 6-8 p.m.
Wednesday: 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Thursday: 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Friday: 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Saturday: 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Nov. 24: 9:30 a.m.-noon
Nov. 25: 8:10 a.m.-noon

First Church, 303 W. State Avenue, Terra Alta

Monday: 10 a.m.-noon
Tuesday: 10 a.m.-noon
Wednesday: 10 a.m.-noon
Thursday: 10 a.m.-noon
Friday: 10 a.m.-noon
Saturday: 10 a.m.-noon
Nov. 24: 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Nov. 25: 8-10 a.m. Central United Methodist Church, 301 Fairmont Ave., Fairmont

Monday: 10 a.m.-noon
Tuesday: 6-8 p.m.
Wednesday: 10 a.m.-noon
Thursday: 6-8 p.m.
Friday: 10 a.m.-noon
Saturday: 10 a.m.-noon
Nov. 24: 1-3 p.m.
Nov. 25: 8-10 a.m.

First Baptist Church, 110 Clarksburg St., Mannington

Monday: 3-6 p.m.
Tuesday: 3-6 p.m.
Wednesday: 9 a.m.-noon
Thursday: 3-6 p.m.
Friday: 3-6 p.m.
Saturday: 9 a.m.-noon
Nov. 24: 9-11 a.m.
Nov. 25: 7-9 a.m.
Truth Assembly Chap-

el, 10651 Mason Dixon Highway, Burton

Monday: 10 a.m.-noon
Tuesday: 10 a.m.-noon
Wednesday: 6-7 p.m.
Thursday: 10 a.m.-noon
Friday: 6-7 p.m.
Saturday: 6-7 p.m.
Nov. 24: 2-4 p.m.
Nov. 25: 8-10 a.m.

Grafton, WV - First Baptist Church, 2034 Webster Pike, U.S. 119 S, Grafton

Monday: 8 a.m.-1 p.m.
Tuesday: 8-10 a.m.
Wednesday: 8-10 a.m.
Thursday: 8-10 a.m.
Friday: 8-10 a.m.
Saturday: 8 a.m.-noon
Nov. 24: 8-10 a.m.
Nov. 25: 8-10 a.m.

CONNECT

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The Dominion Post

LEADERSHIP

Former West Virginia University vice president rejoins athletic department

Associated Press

Rob Alsop, a key figure in West Virginia University's wide-ranging reductions to academic programs and faculty positions before stepping down a year ago, has quietly returned to the school as a senior deputy athletic director.

Alsop's rehiring wasn't announced by the univer-

sity, which posted his new role on its athletic director's website earlier this month.

Alsop previously served as the university's vice president for strategic initiatives, taking an up-front role in explaining proposals and initiatives during key university meetings. During one such chaotic meeting in September 2023 as students chanted

slogans and held signs, the university's Board of Governors approved academic and faculty cuts as it grappled with a \$45 million budget shortfall.

Alsop resigned his position a month later, but stayed on through January as a special adviser to university President Gordon Gee. Alsop joined a private law firm in February and also was a man-

aging member of a firm that advised clients on mergers and acquisitions, strategic execution and government relations. But his departure lasted only 10 months.

Alsop is familiar with WVU's athletic department. He briefly served as interim athletic director after Shane Lyons was fired in 2022.

STATE

West Virginia expands education savings account program for military families

Associated Press

CHARLESTON — A program that incentivizes West Virginia families to pull their children out of K-12 public schools by offering them government-funded scholarships to pay for private school or homeschooling is expanding to cover military families that temporarily relocate out of state.

The Hope Scholarship Board voted Wednesday to approve a policy to allow children of military service members who are required to temporarily relocate to another state remain Hope Scholarship

eligible when they return to West Virginia, said State Treasurer Riley Moore, the board's chairman.

"A temporary relocation pursuant to military orders should not jeopardize a child's ability to participate in the Hope Scholarship Program," Moore said in a statement.

Moore, a Republican who was elected to the U.S. House representing West Virginia's 2nd Congressional District this month, said he is "thrilled" to offer greater "access and flexibility" for military families. The change takes effect immediately, he said.

Passed by the Republican-controlled Legislature in 2021, the law that created the Hope Scholarship Program allows families to apply for state funding to support private school tuition, home-schooling fees and a wide range of other expenses.

As of now, families can't receive the money if their children were already homeschooled or attending private school. To qualify, students must be slated to begin kindergarten in the current school year or have been enrolled in a West Virginia public

school during the previous school year.

However, the law expands eligibility in 2026 to all school-age children in West Virginia, regardless of where they attend school.

Going into the 2023-2024 school year, the Hope board received almost 7,000 applications and awarded the scholarship to more than 6,000 students. The award for this school year was just under \$5,000 per student, meaning more than \$30 million in public funds went toward the non-public schooling.

COURTS

Trial begins for the man accused of killing Georgia nursing student Laken Riley

Associated Press

ATHENS, Ga. — A Venezuelan man "went hunting for females on the University of Georgia's campus" earlier this year and ended up killing nursing student Laken Riley after a struggle, a prosecutor said Friday. The man's lawyer, though, said the evidence is circumstantial and doesn't prove his client is guilty.

Jose Ibarra, who entered the U.S. illegally, is charged with murder in the February killing, which helped fan the immigration debate during this year's presidential campaign. Ibarra waived his right to a jury trial, meaning his case is being heard and decided by

Athens-Clarke County Superior Court Judge H. Patrick Haggard.

Prosecutor Sheila Ross told the judge that Ibarra encountered Riley Feb. 22 while she was running on the University of Georgia campus in Athens. Riley, 22, was a student at Augusta University College of Nursing, which also has a campus in the city that is about 70 miles (113 kilometers) east of Atlanta.

"When Laken Riley refused to be his rape victim, he bashed her skull in with a rock repeatedly," Ross said, adding that the evidence would show that Riley "fought for her life, for her dignity."

As a result of that fight,

Ibarra's DNA was left under her fingernails, Ross said. Riley called 911 and, in a struggle over her phone, Ibarra's thumbprint was left on the screen, she said.

That forensic evidence is sufficient to prove Ibarra's guilt, but digital and video evidence also prove that Ibarra killed Riley, the prosecutor said.

Defense attorney Dustin Kirby called the evidence in the case graphic and disturbing, but he said none of it proves that his client killed Riley.

"The evidence in this case is very good that Laken Riley was murdered," he said. "The evidence that Jose Ibarra killed Laken Riley is circumstantial."

The killing added fuel to the national debate over immigration when federal authorities said Ibarra illegally entered the U.S. in 2022 and was allowed to stay to pursue his immigration case.

Republicans, including President-elect Donald Trump, blamed Democratic President Joe Biden's border policies for her death. As he spoke about border security during his State of the Union address weeks after the killing, Biden mentioned Riley by name.

Riley's mother, Allyson Phillips, and other family members packed the courtroom Friday morning but didn't return after lunch.

STREAMING REVIEW

'Emilia Perez' swings big, but mostly misses the mark

I BELIEVE I HAVE GONE ON A JOURNEY OF SELF-DISCOVERY EVERY DECADE OF MY LIFE. Some have been personal, some have been professional, but it feels like every time I'm approaching a milestone birthday, an aspect of my life has required some level of examination and often an accompanying change. Knowing that about myself, I was interested in seeing Jacques Audiard's "Emilia Perez," which is now streaming on Netflix.

Rita (Zoe Saldana) is a lawyer in Mexico who seems unable to break through in her profession. She has resigned herself to a life of obscurity when she is kidnapped by a Mexican kingpin who confides to have been taking hormones for two years and wants Rita to find a doctor who can complete the transition to being a woman. Rita does this, takes the money, and leaves Mexico. Later, in London, she meets Emilia Perez (Karla Sofia Gascón), whom she recognizes as the same drug lord she helped in Mexico. Now, her goal is to help her ex-wife Jessi (Selena Gomez) and their sons. Along the way, Rita and Emilia find a passion to help those who have gone missing due to the drug wars.

Now, take all of that and set it to music.

One of the first things to know about "Emilia Perez" is that this movie swings for the fences. A unique storytelling method, stunning visuals and some outstanding performances can give the impression that this will be a home run. Unfortunately, when you swing like that, you often miss — and this movie was a miss.

Most of the miss is in the character development. We have no idea what drove Emilia to her transition and why she felt that she had to abandon her family to do it. We have no idea why her lawyer, who only knew her for a few moments, could recognize her, but her wife of years was not. We don't get a clear idea why she



ALISE CHAFFINS

MOST OF THE MISS IS IN THE CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT. WE HAVE NO IDEA WHAT DROVE EMILIA TO HER TRANSITION ...

has a front-facing role in her charity work when that risks her being recognized. There are questions on questions in this movie.

Nevertheless, the performances, particularly for Saldana and Gascón, are electric. This is a musical and while much of the music is kind of a mess, her spotlight piece "El Mal" is one of the best in the film. Gascón brings so much heart and soul to Emilia that she makes it easier to overlook the many flaws in the story. While Gomez feels somewhat wasted in her role, she and Gascón share a lovely moment near the end of the film that also tries to redeem much of the messiness.

Ultimately, however, this movie tackles a number of weighty issues but only does so with a cursory understanding of those topics. There are flashes of brilliance in "Emilia Perez," but there are also flashes of ignorance. What flashes the brightest will likely be in the eye of the beholder.

Alise Chaffins is a Morgantown writer who loves movies and sharing her opinions. She reviews a movie from a streaming service every Saturday, not one newly in theaters every Sunday. Find more at MacGuffin or Meaning on Substack.

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LOYAL
FROM PAGE A-5

Business and Economics, as well as an active member of the Visiting Committee. Branham also serves as a key advisor to the Chambers College Center for Career Development, providing mentorship and coaching to empower students and alumni to achieve their career goals.

Most Loyal Faculty/Professional Staff

Lifelong West Virginia resident Rebecca Fint-Clark grew up immersed in 4-H programs, which furthered her passion for

community engagement and celebrating the state's vibrant history. During her studies at WVU, Fint-Clark was named Ms. Mountaineer for her exceptional academic and extracurricular achievements. She graduated from the university with a bachelor's degree in physical education/teacher education and a master's degree in public health. Fint-Clark has continuously demonstrated her commitment to empowering the youth of West Virginia throughout her career.

She currently serves as the 4-H Extension agent in Monongalia County and

is an active member of the WVU Women's Leadership Initiative. Fint-Clark has developed and executed unique programs to instill a sense of pride in the state's history in the next generation. She has expanded the county's 4-H programs, growing youth participation and securing funds for scholarships, camps and STEM initiatives.

Most Loyal Staff Mountaineer

Donna Staggs, a program manager for the WVU College of Applied Human Sciences, has been an employee at WVU for

36 years. Staggs received her bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies with three minors — business administration, communication studies and public relations — in 2017 to be a better ambassador for the University.

She loves the state of West Virginia but especially the university, which she praises through social media and personal interactions. Staggs embodies the Mountaineer values of service, curiosity, respect, accountability and appreciation. Even with the option to retire, she continues to work due to her love for WVU and everything it stands for.

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