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W.Va. medical industry choosing corporate profits over local farmers

Marshall to travel to Louisiana Tech

Wellness Center recognizes World Mental Health Day

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Page Edited and Designed by Brittany Hively | Hayes100@marshall.edu
Secretary of State Mac Warner encourages students to vote

By SEQUOIA WARE
REPORTER

W.Va. Secretary of State Mac Warner visited Marshall last week and discussed the importance of students and young people participating in the political process.

"We are encouraging young people to vote by making it easy, using new technology, and making it safe," Warner said.

To make sure that every voting precinct is safe and secure for voters and poll workers, Warner is working with county clerks to secure personal protective equipment, cleaning supplies and hand sanitizer for all 1,708 precincts statewide.

Recently, Anheuser-Busch produced and donated more than 43,000 ounces of hand sanitizer to be used at polling locations across West Virginia for this November’s General Election.

Warner said, "We are more ahead of schedule than we were in the primary election. We had a highly successful primary, perhaps the best primary in the nation, here in West Virginia, and we’ve even gotten better for the general election, so people should feel comfortable coming to vote."

According to Warner’s team, no cases of coronavirus were traced back to the June 3 primary election, but they are still encouraging to vote absentee ballot if you are uncomfortable going to the polls.

So far, Warner and his team have tried to get people of all ages to request a ballot by using a smartphone or computer.

Warner also said West Virginia is the first and only state so far to allow all voters to request an absentee ballot directly from a phone or computer.

"The key component is good communication with the county clerks," Warner said. "When they tell me not to send out applications on paper and that they would rather have an electronic form than a paper form, then West Virginia comes up with a solution. We are the first in the United States of America to allow you to make ballot requests from your cellphone."

Warner said his campaign has been working to unclog voter rolls and has registered 205,000 new voters, and 58,000 of those voters are students.

“We should see voting percentages go up because we are using good and new data,” Warner said.

Warner said he wants people to choose their own level of comfort.

“If you have someone in your family, or you have a weak immune system, cast your vote as soon as possible, but if you don’t have COVID concerns, then wait to vote at the polls in November,” he said.

The deadline to register to vote in West Virginia was Tuesday, Oct. 13. The deadline to request an absentee ballot is Oct. 28. Absentee ballots must be returned in person by Nov. 2 or postmarked by Nov. 3.

Spotlight: Counseling Center Director Candace Layne

By JONATHAN STILL
REPORTER

Candace Layne is the Director of the Marshall Counseling Center on campus and has been serving in this position since June of 2018.

Layne received her bachelor’s degree in psychology in 2004, her master’s degree in mental health counseling from Marshall University in 2006, and her doctorate of education degree from Argosy University in 2013.

“I knew when I started at Marshall in 2001 majoring in psychology that I wanted to help others,” Layne said in an email.

Layne said she started working with youth and adolescents when she graduated with her master’s and got the opportunity to teach as an adjunct professor in a lifespan psychology course at Mountwest CTC.

“I then taught full-time and did counseling part-time in the community,” Layne said in an email. “I then started my work as a mental health specialist at a college and then a director of another university counseling center in the state.”

As an alumna of Marshall, Layne said when she saw the director position posting, she knew she wanted to get the job and be at home with Marshall.

“I thought it’d be amazing to work at Marshall where I went to school and I’m so glad I got the job a little over two years ago,” Layne said in an email.

Layne said students struggling with their mental health should reach out and let someone know they are hurting or struggling.

“I also encourage everyone to check on others, ask about mental health and safety, and don’t be afraid to seek help,” Layne said in an email.

Layne said there is counseling available on campus, and it is free for all part-time and full-time students.

Jonathan Still can be reached at still3@marshall.edu.
MU to host “We are Marshall” drive-in

By ALEX JACKSON
REPORTER

Marshall University’s Alumni Association is partnering with The Greater Huntington Park and Recreation District to host a drive-in movie showing of “We Are Marshall.”

The showing will take place on Friday, Oct. 23rd at Altizer field, with parking opening at 5pm and the movie starting at dark.

“We thought incorporating this event, especially with the 50th anniversary of the plane crash, would be something really touching for the community. Just adding this event into our homecoming offerings is going to unite Marshall and Huntington together,” said Kasey Stevens, the assistant director of Alumni Membership and Technology for the Alumni Association.

The Greater Huntington Parks and Recreation district has been showing drive-in movies throughout the year and saw this as an opportunity for a partnership and were excited to do something and partner with the park,” Stevens said.

The admission fee for the event is a food donation to the Thanksgiving Food Pantry drive.

“This is a great opportunity to stay involved with the local community,” Stevens said. “People may not know about the Facing Hunger Food Bank in Huntington and having this as a donation option really brings awareness to the food drive.”

Stephanie Moore, a Marshall fan and member of the local community, said showing the movie is a way to honor the 75 people who lost their lives in the 1970 plane crash.

“I think the showing of this movie is essential in maintaining the story of the Marshall Football program,” Moore said. “Working with local pantries makes it a win-win. Remembering those of the past and helping those in the present. It makes my heart full.”

This movie showing is part of the Homecoming 2020: Herd at Home virtual series. For more information on other events during Marshall’s homecoming week, students can go to the Marshall Alumni Association website.

Alex Jackson can be contacted at jackson418@live.marshall.edu.

Spotlight: Department of Military and Veteran Affairs

By JONATHAN STILL
REPORTER

The Department of Military and Veteran Affairs provides support with students by offering educational benefits and various programs.

Jonathan McCormick, the Director of Military and Veteran Affairs, said before the coronavirus pandemic, the office would host representatives from the VA to assist veterans with filing their VA disability.

“The office also serves as an advocate on behalf of the student in situations involving the university,” McCormick said in an email.

The Military and Veterans Affairs office, located in Gullickson Hall, also helps run the Veterans Lounge and Computer Lab where student veterans can study, relax and decompress from campus life. The students can also chat and get to know other veterans as well. The lounge also offers free printing services for their students.

“Our computer lab provides printing services for our veterans and their dependents,” McCormick said in an email.

The Veterans Upward Bound Program is also located in the Veterans Affairs Office. It is a state-sponsored program that assists veterans with the processes of starting back at school.

“They assist veterans in applying for their educational benefits and provide courses to better prepare them for starting their college career,” McCormick said.

Lora Varney, a Veteran Certification Official, said that if a veteran registered for classes, they must fill out a registration form every semester when the student registers for classes.

“Once your enrollment is certified to the VA, you will receive a confirmation email,” Varney said in an email. “If there are any concerns about your schedule, I will contact you to resolve any questions.”

In order to get into contact with the office, student veterans can contact the office at veterans@marshall.edu or call 304-696-2364 or 304-696-5767.

Jonathan Still can be contacted at still3@marshall.edu.

Police Blotter

By CARTER TRUMAN
REPORTER

D.U.I.

On Thursday, Oct. 1, at 2:35 a.m., Police officers stopped a white Jeep S.U.V. after they said they witnessed the vehicle swerving while traveling westbound on the 2300 Block of Third Ave. The vehicle was also reported, by the Police, to have no rear lights. After the vehicle came to a stop in the west stadium parking lot, Police identified the driver as a 26-year-old female. Police said they could smell alcohol’s odor on the driver, who Police said, admitted to drinking white claw and liquor shots. Police said the driver exited the vehicle and performed three standardized field sobriety tests, of which she failed all three. The driver was then placed under arrest and taken to the State Police Headquarters, where Police said her blood alcohol content was checked and found to be a B.A.C. of .211%.

D.U.I. Second Offense

On Oct. 3, at 3:07 a.m., Police officers witnessed a maroon Ford F-150, traveling at a high-speed rate with a West Virginia registration. The vehicle drove through a red light at the intersection of Fifth Ave. and John Marshall St. Police initiated a traffic stop at the 1800 Block of Fifth Ave. Police said they identified the driver as a 30-year-old male, and they smelled alcohol. Police administered three standardized field sobriety tests, which they said the driver failed...

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W.Va. medical cannabis industry is choosing corporate profits over local farmers, jobs and businesses

By DOUGLAS HARDING
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Since April 2017 when Gov. Jim Justice signed West Virginia’s initial medical cannabis legislation, concerns surrounding the eventual formation of the industry have grown increasingly prominent. For one local hemp farmer, those very fears now have turned to harsh reality.

“I can’t tell you how many people have called me wanting a job here, hoping that we got that license,” said local hemp farmer Mike Weaver. “Now some out of state corporation got it.”

Weaver, who runs the Redbud Hill Naturals hemp farm, said his primary aim when preparing and applying for licensing to produce medical cannabis was to create jobs for the local economy and to help prevent West Virginians being forced to leave their home state to find a decent job.

However, after years of preparation, hundreds of thousands spent on application fees and several months waiting for a response, Weaver learned recently that two of his three license applications were denied, and most—if not all—licenses will be issued to out-of-state corporations.

“Most of the 10 licenses will go to out-of-state companies, and, to my knowledge, I’m the only individual who even applied,” Weaver said. “I had a financial backer, but I had an agreement with them that their maximum investment would be 10 percent, so my business would have been at least 90 percent West Virginia-owned, and all the jobs would have been local jobs.”

Weaver said the state will issue up to 10 growing licenses, 10 processing licenses and 100 dispensary licenses. He said that to his knowledge, the state currently has received about 40 growing applications, 40 processing applications and 200 dispensary applications.

The fees for applying for the required licenses to participate in the state’s forthcoming medical cannabis industry are nearly impossible for local farmers and businesses to meet, Weaver said.

Weaver said the grower and processor applications cost $10,000 individually, and the licensing fees cost $50,000 each. The dispensary application includes a $2,500 fee and a $10,000 licensing fee. In addition to fees, applicants must also have $1.5 million in assets, at least $500,000 of which must be in cash or in the bank. All fees must be paid up front, he said.

Marshall students, faculty celebrate World Mental Health Day

By XENA BUNTON
REPORTER

Providing resources and crafts for Marshall students and faculty, both Marshall’s Wellness Center and Suicide Prevention Education Across Campus programs celebrated World Mental Health Day in the Memorial Student Center Plaza Oct. 9., one day before the national celebration.

“It makes me feel safe and welcome that there are centers who care about my mental health and that I am not expected to keep my feelings bottled inside,” Katherine Fauber, sophomore English major, said.

The Wellness Center passed out homemade stress balls, made from tie-dyed balloons filled with Orbeez balls, and indoor garden kits to go along with the center’s partnership with the Gro Marshall program, nature-based fellowships.

Jeannie Harrison, Wellness Center coordinator, said connecting with plants can improve mental health significantly, making the Gro program a success for students.

“I have cared for plants for about a year,” Fauber said. “And I never expected this to happen, but it’s almost like they are my children since I feed them and give them water and sunshine.”

If students and faculty downloaded the app, WellTrack, to track and educate mental health, the SPEAC program gave World Mental Health t-shirts, along with a tote bag full of snacks, lip balm, stress ball, pamphlets, and a pen if students filled out a mental health screening.

During a time of awareness, Paula Rymer, a faculty member in the social work program, said she wants students to know they have access to resources, including 3 centers and clinics on campus. These centers include the Counseling Center, Psychology Clinic, and the Behavioral Health Center.

The Counseling Center, first floor of Prichard Hall, includes 24/7 health crisis assistance free to students with mental health, academic, career and personal needs.
IT encourages students, faculty to protect personal devices

By XENA BUNTON REPORTER

During Cyber-Security Awareness Month, Marshall Information Technology faculty provides tips and resources in October for students and faculty to create a safe online environment.

According to the Cyber-security and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), cyber-security awareness continues to encourage individuals and organizations to be responsible for their role, primarily personal accountability and taking proactive steps to enhance security for the past 17 years, since the awareness month started.

"Cyber-security is everyone’s responsibility," Marshall IT client engagement manager, Crystal Stewart said. "Especially at an institution like Marshall, it is important that we keep our information, student or employee data, safe and secure so the ‘bad guys’ can’t use it against us."

Will Skaggs, Marshall IT consultant, said students on campus will often dismiss the possible results of their Marshall account being hacked. He said this information allows the hacker to have access to Social Security number (SSN) and other personal information through tax forms that could eventually lead to accessing a bank account.

"Protecting your information online is important because there are always people out there trying to steal and use it maliciously in some way," Skaggs said.

Frequent password changes are one of the first recommendations by IT and security professionals to maintain security.

"You have to always be cautious. The short-term goal is to have a secure password, your long-term goal is a plan to change that password. I try to change my password every year," Stewart said. "Just because you think you have secure internet; you still need to be aware of what websites you are on and even people asking for specific information."

In terms of complex passwords, Skaggs said the recommended password may be difficult to remember, but a password should consist of a mixture of uppercase and lowercase letters as well as numbers and special characters. He said your social media accounts should not have the same password as your bank account.

Marshall’s Information Technology team will be posting cyber-security tips on their social media pages throughout the awareness month.

Xena Bunton can be contacted at Bunton2@marshall.edu.

CAB to host Marco’s Mysteries event on campus

By CARTER TRUMAN REPORTER

Marshall University’s Campus Activities Board is hosting a mystery solving event to help students familiarize themselves with campus.

Marco’s Mysteries, a game in which students solve riddles relating to campus locations to win a prize, will be taking place on Oct. 21, from 11-2 p.m.

The event will start on the plaza, with students going from there to solve all the riddles given to them by CAB members.

President of CAB, Emilie Christenberry, said students will have to find the location corresponding to their specific riddle, then take a photo and post it on either Instagram or Twitter. "They have to take a picture, use the hashtag Marco’s Mysteries, and then they come back to the plaza," said Christenberry. "They show us that they completed all the riddles, and then they win a prize."

The event will be held outside, with CAB taking measures to ensure the event is compliant with social distancing requirements and that the students stay safe.

"We are actually going to send people off in separate groups," said Christenberry. "They have to start off at a table on the plaza, where CAB members will be."

Christenberry said that as more people show up to the event, they will make sure that they do not send multiple groups to the same location, by giving some groups one riddle and giving other groups a different puzzle.

Coronavirus restrictions have made campus events rare; this event aims to bring some fun to the campus and get students out of their rooms.

"I hope it’s just something fun, and it’s also a good way to get to know the campus a little better," said Christenberry.

Christenberry said she hopes students will discover interesting campus locations that they may have previously not known about.

CAB requires that mask be worn to the event and kept on when around others, to minimize health concerns.

Carter Truman can be contacted at truman18@marshall.edu.
Coming off a 38-14 win last weekend against the Western Kentucky University Hilltoppers, the Marshall Thundering Herd football team will travel to Ruston, Louisiana to take on the Louisiana Tech University Bulldogs on Saturday, Oct. 17.

This will be the Herd’s (3-0, 1-0 Conference USA) second away game of the season and the second conference matchup.

The Bulldogs (3-1, 2-0 C-USA) are coming off a 21-17 conference win against the University of Texas at El Paso Miners last weekend.

Captains for this week’s game are redshirt senior linebacker Tavante Beckett, redshirt junior defensive lineman Koby Cumberlander on defense, redshirt junior running back Sheldon Evans and redshirt senior offensive lineman Josh Ball on offense.

Marshall head coach Doc Holliday said it’s tough to travel during this time right now due to the coronavirus.

“Leadership is so important when going on the road and toughness,” Holliday said. “It’s going to be a great challenge for us. Our kids have to handle it the right way. This week can’t be any different.”

Redshirt freshman quarterback Grant Wells said it’s important to stay on pace on the offensive side.

“Staying on pace is one of the biggest things,” Wells said. “Taking the big shots during the game and taking it one at a time and taking what the defense gives us while in conference play on the road.”

Wells said third down conversions are a big focus in the quarterback room when deciding what plays to go with compared to the opposing defense that is being presented to him and the offensive line.

“We take big pride in the quarterback room on third down. That’s one of the main downs when defenses like to come after me. One thing that (Offensive Coordinator Tim) Cramsey takes seriously is pace. As long as we stay to those guidelines and stay on pace, we’re going to be just fine.”

Kickoff is set for 6 p.m. EST / 5 p.m. CST at Joe Alliet Stadium on CBS Sports Network.

Taylor Huddleston can be contacted at huddleston16@marshall.edu.
Athletes of the Week
The offensive line, football

Left Tackle: Josh Ball, redshirt senior (6-8, 309)
Left Guard: Alex Mollette, redshirt senior (6-3, 294)
Center: Alex Salguero, redshirt senior (6-4, 324)
Right Guard: Cain Madden, redshirt senior (6-3, 313)
Right Tackle: Will Ulmer, redshirt senior (6-5, 314)

Primarily due to their performance against Western Kentucky and secondarily because of the sustained success in the three games this season, all five starting Marshall offensive lineman have earned athlete of week honors.

Leading the way for 181 rushing yards and four touchdowns on the ground, the senior laden O-line took it to the Western Kentucky front, getting a great push along the line of scrimmage for much of the game.

Holes opened by the offensive line were present as early as the second play of the game when Knox found the gap on the inside zone play between center Alex Salguero and left guard Alex Mollette and burst for a 45-yard TD run.

SEE ATHLETES ON PG. 10
EDITORIAL: The criminalization of truth-telling

For years, Australian journalist Julian Assange has been locked up, tortured and spied upon while battling legally with the U.S. government, which under two presidential administrations, has attempted to prosecute him for revealing American war crimes in Iraq.

Two ongoing criminal trials involving Assange and the U.S. government have revealed even more stunning treatment of Assange by governments and officials wishing to prosecute him under the Espionage Act, posing a grave threat to journalism around the world.

As revealed by Grayzone journalist Max Blumenthal, the case in London, England involving Assange recently showed that a man named David Morales and his company called UC Global were contracted by the CIA to harass and violate the rights of Assange and his contacts.

“Two former (UC Global) employees in London testified that they were asked to poison Julian Assange and to consider kidnapping him, in addition to spying on him with hidden microphones and secret cameras and spying on everyone else, including journalists and friends, who came to meet with him,” Blumenthal said in a recent interview. “The leading dissident in the west was targeted with a plot to kill him by poisoning by the CIA and Mike Pompeo under the watch of Donald Trump, the man the whole media supposedly hates. And, in addition, all the journalists, including journalists and friends, who came to meet with him,” Blumenthal said in a recent interview. “The leading dissident in the west was targeted with a plot to kill him by poisoning by the CIA and Mike Pompeo under the watch of Donald Trump, the man the whole media supposedly hates. And, in addition, all the journalists, including journalists and friends, who came to meet with him.”

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Yet, in response to the recent revelations, mainstream media outlets in the U.S. have long chosen to largely neglect the Assange trial, some refusing even to cover it at all, this sentiment about the role of intelligence services and governments to investigate truth-tellers is extremely dangerous.

Unaccountable intelligence agencies and all-powerful governments have no business spying upon and attempting to prosecute journalists under the outdated Espionage Act—especially not journalists known for exposing horrific war crimes of said governments. Anything else is illegal, unjust and meant solely to send a dangerous message to truth-tellers who intend to hold powerful governments accountable for their actions. For a simple explanation of these dangers, one must only look so far as the Washington Post editorial board.

In 2011, the Washington Post reported: “A conviction (of Assange) would also cause collateral damage to American media freedoms. It is difficult to distinguish Assange or WikiLeaks from journalists has been used countless times in the past by countless other journalists, including those working for major outlets such as the Washington Post and The New York Times...
COLUMN: DNA does not make the dad

By BRITTANY HIVELY
MANAGING EDITOR

Some say the teenage and college years are when one really discovers themselves and find out who they really are in life. But I would argue that we never truly finish discovering ourselves. All of our lives we are discovering who we are, what we are and are not passionate about and secrets from our past.

When I was 13 years old, I found out that my dad was not really my dad. It was life shattering at the time and something I have struggled with over the years. Even now in my late 20s I debate on who I am because of who my biological father may be, but in reality, my dad is who raised me. He will always be my dad, and no one can change that, not even DNA.

Recently I connected with someone from high school who I had never really knew beyond social media. What connects us? Our dads.

Both of us were adopted by amazing men who raised us just like their own. In fact, anyone who knew them would tell you that they never would have known that we were not their biological daughters. They would chastise anyone who would say something about us “not really being theirs.” Sadly, we both lost our dads this year, within months of each other but their memories will forever live on in our hearts.

The likeness that comes from our dads has connected us virtually in an odd, but amazing way.

So, when I scrolled past a comment on social media that said, “your dad is John Doe, whether you like it or not,” I was infuriated. I honestly would have been for anyone who was told this.

Her dad was never around. She never met him and in fact, there is no 100 percent-for-sure person who is biologically her father.

But that does not matter. DNA does not make the dad. How can anyone have the audacity to say someone is someone else’s dad when they have never once showed up?

The only thing I have in common with my father, Jay, other than half of his DNA, is we have the same nose. I know his name and nothing else. He was never there for me growing up, I could not pick him out of a lineup, I cannot tell you anything about him and he did not teach me anything.

Now my dad, Roger, I share so much with him. For as long as I can remember until the day he passed, he made sure I knew he loved me. He taught me the value of hard work and having a strong work ethic. He took me to my first dentist appointment, and I remember him making me get shots I did not want. My dad taught me how to drive a car and to mow the lawn. He made sure I was not a girl afraid to get my hands dirty.

I have memories of shared music, movies and laughs. I was his only girl and you knew it. DNA did not make him my dad, love did.

I honestly have not found out what happened to my father or why he was not around growing up. I have heard stories upon stories from various people but have no real answers. Whether he was not around because he did not want to be or because my mother kept him away, it does not change the fact of who my dad is.

I have learned a lot of things about life and who I am as a person, but some things are not debatable.

Now and forever, Roger will always be my dad and Jay will forever be just my father.

Brittany Hively can be contacted at hayes100@marshall.edu.
VOTE cont. from 2

Warner encouraged all citizens to vote. “This is a divided country and there are a lot of issues right now. Whatever you are aligned with, whether it’s a person, party or ideology, find a campaign or party to represent your values. If you don’t vote, then you really don’t have much room to complain,” Warner said. Warner also said voter fraud may be a concern with mail-in voting, but he does not discourage students from doing mail-in voting. He advised anyone who suspects voter fraud of any kind to call the 877-FRAUDWV Hotline to report the issue.

“We have more investigators than we ever have had in this state’s history, so please use this resource if we need to investigate if you see something improper happen,” he said. Sequoia Ware can be contacted at ware53@marshall.edu.

MENTAL HEALTH cont. from 4

For individual and group psychotherapy, educational workshops and psychological assessment, the Psychology Clinic, room 335A in Harris Hall, provides resources at a low cost.

Behavioral Health Center, Gullickson Hall, accepts insurance for therapeutic interventions, individual and group therapy, cognitive behavioral support group and biopsychosocial assessments.

“As someone who wants to go into a field to help others, it is so easy to forget that I also need to help myself,” Josh Grube, senior social work major, said. “I don’t spend a lot of time working on my own mental health, so knowing other people care enough to spend their day making sure I take care of myself, it means a lot.”

Xena Bunton can be contacted at Bunton2@marshall.edu.

BLOTTER cont. from 3

The driver was placed under arrest, and Police said that they found the driver had a previous conviction for D.U.I. after further investigation. Police said they found a firearm and a knife in the vehicle; these items were later given to the driver’s brother. The driver was charged in connection with D.U.I. second offense and failure to obey traffic control device. Police proceeded to escort the driver to Western Regional Jail.

D.U.I. First Offense

On Oct. 4, Police said they saw a white vehicle traveling south on 20th St. and Sixth Ave. Police said the vehicle drove onto the sidewalk, where it almost hit a stump. The vehicle drove back onto the roadway and continued southbound on 20th St. Police said the driver turned west on Seventh Ave., they drove on the grass, almost striking a telephone pole. The driver stopped the vehicle in a parking lot on the 700 Block of 20th St. Police identified the driver as a 19-year-old female. Police said the driver was disoriented and kept stating she was coming from Sheets and that she had to go to 16th St., not realizing she had already done that. Police said they administered three standardized field sobriety tests, which the driver failed. Two other people were found inside the vehicle, one asleep in the front passenger’s seat, and the other, according to Police, was passed out in the fetal position in the backseat. Police said the driver was under the influence of marijuana, and that she was arrested in connection with a first offense D.U.I. with drugs.

CARTER TRUMAN can be contacted at truman18@marshall.edu.

TRUTH cont. from 8

The most notable usage of such journalistic practices is in the publishing of the Pentagon Papers leaks which revealed American lies and war crimes in Vietnam and were published by major news outlets across the country and around the world—and for which no journalist ever has been prosecuted, and rightfully so.

It is shameful that so few media outlets refuse to cover the Assange hearing or to do so with appropriate prioritization and valuing of the story’s importance.

As journalists, we understand the world needs more bravery and more truth-tellers willing to stand up to power, and we also understand that it is not okay for governments and intelligence agencies to violate the most personal and established rights of such truth-tellers. Every journalist, every truth-teller and everyone who values journalism, transparency and democracy ought to stand in solidarity with Assange and against the crimes of the U.S. government and its intelligence agencies.

CANNABIS cont. from 4

In addition to application fees, Weaver said he was forced to pay more than $100,000 more for various other requirements.

“The facility requirements also are tremendous,” Weaver said. “I’ve been preparing for almost two years, trying to get a hold of contractors and get quotes about security systems, and just the required security system alone was going to cost me more than $140,000. I’ve already got over half-a-million dollars into my industrial hemp operation, but I was looking at another 2 or 3 million-dollar investment to set up here for medical cannabis.”

Weaver said he also had to pay a security company and a law firm to help with writing a standard operating procedure and to meet other requirements, which cost an additional $15,000 out-of-pocket.

Weaver said it is frustrating and confusing why the state would make it nearly impossible for local farmers and businesses to be selected for the licenses.

“It’s very disappointing,” he said. “We have an existing West Virginia business here already doing essentially what needs to be done for the medical cannabis operation, and for us not to be selected and for at least four out-of-state companies to be selected over top of us—I’d like to have some answers for that.”

West Virginia Can’t Wait movement leader Stephen Smith, who recently hosted a conversation with Weaver via Facebook, said the unfair nature of the formation of the state’s medical cannabis industry should come as no surprise.

“This was built from the beginning to make it hard for local farmers,” Smith said. “We knew going in that this is what they were trying to do because we’ve got a government that is owned by corporate lobbyists. It’s the oldest story in West Virginia history: We’ve got something of value to West Virginians, and instead of keeping that wealth and value here, we’re selling it to the highest bidder.”

Smith said West Virginia’s medical cannabis industry is being set up to depend on out-of-state corporations with no connection to most people in West Virginia.

“We are making the medical cannabis industry accountable to out-of-state corporations instead of keeping the wealth local,” Smith said. “This is the last thing we need in West Virginia.”

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On most run plays, especially in the first half, the running backs would be good for at least three yards every run because of the push the O-line was getting at the point of attack. In the first half, Marshall ran the ball for 6.3 yards per carry.

The Western Kentucky defense tightened up more in the second half when they began to load the box on the Marshall ground attack. However, the damage done through the run game in the first half was too much for the Western Kentucky front to make up for in the second half.

The positive run-blocking shown in the first half by the Marshall offensive line was even more impressive considering the pedigree of the Western Kentucky defense in the landscape of Conference USA.

It is a D-line that was led by 2019 Conference USA Defensive Player of the Year DeAngelo Malone, who was kept in check by the Marshall O-line.

Not only was he and the rest of the Hilltopper D-line held in check in the running game, but their disruption was also tampered by the Thundering Herd O-line in pass protection. In fact, Marshall’s pass protection was even more impressive when called upon.

Quarterback Grant Wells was sacked one time, but that was on all-out blitz on which the man who made the sack was supposed to be blocked by the running back.

There were multiple instances where Wells had a clean pocket and deliver the ball to Willie Johnson for a first down. Ultimately, that conversion led to Marshall’s second score of the game.

Although the offensive line had a solid outing against the Hilltoppers, it may or may not have been their best performance of the season because the unit has been a key cog to the team’s success in all three games this season. On the year, the Herd is averaging 227 rushing yards per game with nine rushing touchdowns.

They put up 216 yards on the ground against Appalachian State and 282 on Eastern Kentucky.

If the O-line can continue to play up at the level it has in the first three games, or even take a step forward, Marshall will be in a good position to win the rest of its games.

Louisiana Tech, the next team on the Marshall schedule, should be one of the more difficult matchups the Herd O-line will face the rest of the season. Through four games, the Bulldogs defense is giving up 111 yards per game on the ground which is currently 23rd best in the nation.
By LUCAS MANFIELD AND AMELIA FERRELL KNISELY
MOUNTAIN STATE SPOTLIGHT

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Facing criticism from all sides – as befuddled parents, teachers and public health experts struggled to make sense of the governor’s “tweaks” to the Harvard-inspired school reopening plan – West Virginia abandoned its original metric in mid-September.

Now, the state is using what it calls the “West Virginia Model.” And rather than basing school openings solely on the number of per capita COVID-19 cases, counties can reopen by increasing the number of negative test results. According to state officials, the change is designed to promote more testing.


People did. The number of tests went up, and the virus “re-productivity rate,” a measure of the rate of virus spread, dropped. The state once had the highest rate in the nation, and now has one of the lowest.

The result? School boards have reopened classrooms, to the delight of some parents and student athletes. But teachers are furious.

And now, a system that lets counties effectively choose whether to base their reopening on the rate of new cases or the positivity rate means counties can remain “green” even with elevated case numbers. And experts say it’s just as flawed as the previous iteration.

The metric “doesn’t make any sense,” said Dr. Cyrus Shahpar, an epidemiologist and former team leader at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control’s Global Rapid Response Team. He now works at a public health nonprofit, advising local governments on how to craft policies to fight the coronavirus pandemic.

West Virginia’s original reopening plan was based on a metric devised by researchers at the Harvard Global Health Institute. They calculated the number of positive cases per 100,000 people in each county. If that number, averaged over a week or two, climbed above 10, then a county was at “elevated risk.” The state would then order schools closed.

But after the plan delayed reopening in some counties for weeks, parents and coaches were fed up. They took the battle to Kanawha County court in a pair of legal challenges, one by a parent and another by a football star.

Meanwhile, the death toll continued to climb: as of Thursday, 370 people have now died in West Virginia from the coronavirus.

Judges eventually threw both lawsuits out, but the governor bowed to pressure to accelerate the process anyway.

The new plan adds a second way for counties to reopen schools: decreasing their percentage of positive tests. This is calculated by taking the number of positive test reports and dividing it by the total number of tests administered in a county.

To move into a lower risk category – like from “orange,” where distance learning is required, to “gold,” which allows in-person school – counties must either drop the number of positive cases or reduce their positivity rate.

And just like that, more orange counties became gold.

Dr. Clay Marsh, the state’s coronavirus czar, explained the rationale behind the changes in an interview with Mountain State Spotlight. “When we were using the infection incidence rate, people just stopped getting tested, and we were only testing the people that were sick,” he said.

Now, he said, “we hope we will identify the ‘super-spreaders.’”

Gaming the system

This change in how the risk is measured led to a rapid increase in tests – a record of nearly 10,000 on Oct. 1 – but also allegations of gaming the system.

One official, a school board member in Putnam County, got tested twice in two days.

“Got both back already, I’ll go every day if that’s what it takes,” Christian Wells wrote on Facebook on Sept. 25.

Justice’s comments “manipulating” the state’s metric to move the state closer to what Justice has called the “finish line” – a full reopening.

In interviews with Mountain State Spotlight, a pair of leading public health experts also criticized the state’s decision to allow an improving positivity percentage to override data on the number of new cases.

Shahpar said the state was right to take into account the positivity percentage. But, he cautioned, it shouldn’t be the only metric.

“Probably want to wait until both numbers are good,” Tomás Pueyo agreed. Pueyo, a Silicon Valley tech executive, wrote a lengthy and prescient analysis of the pandemic in March that catapulted him into the spotlight as one of the nation’s most-cited coronavirus experts – short only, perhaps, of the CDC’s Dr. Anthony Fauci.

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