B-1 SUNDAY, JANUARY 12, 2025

Remembering Dr. King

If you just make the effort to open them, doors are a portal to compassion and understanding

EDITOR'S NOTE

Morgantown's Community Coalition for Social Justice (CCSJ) is celebrating this Martin Luther King Jr. Day on Monday, Jan. 20, 2025, at 2 p.m. Read more about the event and how to attend in Joan Browning's essay on Page C-1.

BY JIM BISSETT

JBissett@DominionPost.com

Thursday made for an even busier morning than usual for Joan C. Browning, the author, activist and former Freedom Rider.

There were Zoom meetings, deadline projects and time spent on telephone interviews with this newspaper and other media outlets in Atlanta.

She had missed Jimmy Carter's funeral on TV, but she was hoping to carve out time to at least stream a replay later.

During this professional tumult, something else was also happening on the other side of her door.

The beckoning of good neighbors. Good neighbors who shoveled out stretches of the road leading to her home that Winter Storm Blair had layered with ice and snow. Good neighbors who offered to go on grocery runs in the chilling cold (anything you need, Miss Joan, just give

Good neighbors who keep watch, because that's what good neighbors

"That's one advantage of being an old lady living in a double-wide trailer on a hillside in Greenbrier County," she said, with her signature, droll sense of humor.

"Nice people want to do nice things for you.'

In 1960, she was a young woman living and going to college in Milledgeville, Ga., who knew that she needed to do something.

Well, check that. Robert E. Lee Jr. - the president of Georgia State College for Women and not the Confederate general -

Hard work - and heart work

made the decision for her.

Browning grew up in economic straits in the Peach State. She and



her family worked hard as sharecroppers. By the time she was 16, the age she graduated

high school early because of her good grades, she could pick 200 pounds of cotton a day. Her knees, wrists and back ached, and the re-

At Georgia State College for Women, a sharecropper's kid previously tagged with a Poor White Trash label (though she didn't necessar-

She was busily transforming herself into a didn't fully realize that either, at the time.

proper young lady of the South. she noted with more drollery, "what some might



Clockwise from bottom left: Young Joan Browning during her time participating in the Freedom Riders, Browning speaks with friend and fellow Freedom Rider Charles Person, a very young Browning is photographed at her home in Georgia.

call an aspiration to be June Cleaver."

That was a wry reference to how females of the day were depicted on television shows.

Women on those airings always did their chores in pearls and heels, and they always had lentless Dixie sun couldn't be more unforgiving a fresh-from-the oven meal waiting on the table, without fail, as their bread-winning husbands arrived home from work.

Meanwhile, her state was also broadcasting ily know that at the time) was warming to life and stoking hate and racism against the Black community. She also had to admit that she

She toiled alongside Black people in the cot-Which meant dresses, white gloves and, as ton fields, and, truth be told, she enjoyed their

SEE COMPASSION, B-2

MCHD

Do you live in a 'radon zone'?



ARE YOU LIVING IN A REALM WITH POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS. **ODORLESS, COLORLESS GAS THAT** FORMS FROM THE BREAKDOWN OF **URANIUM IN THE SOIL?**

A radioactive gas that is undetectable to the human senses that may be seeping up from the earth and into the crevices of your floors

If so, you may have just crossed over into ... The Radon Zone.

OK, it sounds a little melodramatic, but that's what happens when you tailor information about radon in the style of Rod Serling, creator and narrator of the classic fantasy science fiction horror series "The Twilight Zone."

And because Monongalia County is in what we call the "red zone," with potentially three times the instance of radon than the national American average, it's a pun that's easy to make.

Nationally, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, 1 in 15 homes have high levels of radon.

But in Monongalia County, that figure is 1 in

Radon moves up through the bedrock, then into the soil, then up from the soil into the atmosphere. When radon comes up into the air outside, it is perfectly harmless. When radon comes up into your basement and into your house, it can become a problem.

Because radon is radioactive, exposure to high levels of radon can lead to lung cancer. The EPA estimates that radon is the No. 1 cause of lung cancer among nonsmokers more than 20,000 deaths per year.

There is good news. Monongalia County Health Department offers radon testing. A sanitarian will visit your home and set up a continuous radon monitor in the lowest living area. January, which is National Radon Action Month, is a good time to get a radon test because your home is likely going to have windows closed and be more airtight, so the test will be more accurate.

The machine will generate a report, and if the figures are high, mitigation work can be performed on your home that can vent radon outside. The average cost, according to the EPA, is \$1,500, with systems ranging from \$800 to \$2,500.

The cost for a test by MCHD Environmental Health is \$125 in Monongalia County and \$150 in surrounding areas

SEE RADON, B-2

THEATER REVIEW

'Babygirl' getting buzz, but doesn't push boundaries enough



ALISE CHAFFINS

NICOLE KIDMAN HAS BEEN WELCOM-ING US TO THE MOVIES IN ADS FOR FIVE YEARS. BUT SHE NEGLECTS TO DO THAT AHEAD OF HER NEWEST PROJECT, "BABY-GIRL," FROM WRITER AND DIRECTOR HA-LINA REIJN.

Perhaps people didn't want the magic of cinema to be muddled with the eroticism of the film, but after seeing the movie, I don't think that this movie pushed enough boundaries for that to be a real concern.

Jacob (Antonio Banderas), Romy engage with them. (Kidman) is unsatisfied with her attacks her on her way to work, what is worth protecting.

bit of a hard sell, but "Babygirl" the person who has seniority in performances on. a job, but if the younger person can destroy what the other has but again, there were times Alise Chaffins is a Morgantown film built, who really has the power? when it felt timid in its approach critic and author. She is a member How does one's religious up- to the subject matter. Rather of several critics organizations, Despite having two beautiful bringing affect their enjoyment than pushing in and allowing us including GALECA, OFTA, and IFSCA. daughters, running a successful in the bedroom? This film touch- to feel the discomfort that exists You can connect with her on social business, and having a hand- es on several genuinely fascinat- or even having wide shots that media at @AliseChaffins and on her

life. As such, when a dog nearly isn't anything to like about that allows the audience to be "Babygirl." The performances she is intrigued by the young are truly impressive. There are man who can control the ani- a number of people who weren't mal. He turns out to be Samuel on board with Dickinson, but (Harris Dickinson), a new intern I found his manner precisely at her company who is imme-right for this character. His milddiately drawn to her. When the ly off-putting manner compared two begin a torrid affair, Romy to Banderas shows that this isn't is opened up to questions about about attraction for Romy but is control, power dynamics and something more primal. Kidman shines in her role, vacillating Age-gap movies are always a between a woman exhibiting power and a woman shy and emhas some interesting ideas. We barrassed by her desires. Unforassume that the power rests in tunately, there isn't quite enough the hands of the older person or character built up to hang these

The movie is beautifully shot, some and attentive husband in ing topics but seems unwilling to could convey a sense of isola- Substack at MacGuffin or Meaning.

tion, most of the movie is filmed This isn't to say that there at a comfortable mid-length shot observers but never challenges the subject matter that the film seems to want to engage with.

> There was a moment near the end of the movie that made me think that this movie was trying to say something other than what it appeared to be doing throughout, and I got excited because it would be a truly unique twist on this genre. Once again, I was let down by the timidity of the script. "Babygirl" had multiple opportunities to be a challenging film, but in the end, it settled for being a titillating one.

CONNECT

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RADON FROM PAGE B-1

up to 50 miles outside of Morgantown. How often should you get one? Every elusive, with one house measuring a high level

few years. Radon can be while the one next door is OK. One year, your house can be fine. A few years later, the radon level can

be higher.

The fact that Rod Serling of "The Twilight Zone" was a chain smoker is a convenient coincidence in this context. Exposure to too much radon is the No. 2 leading cause of lung cancer in the United States, next to smoking. In a given year, about 21,000 Americans die from lung cancer caused by high levels of radon. Serling, who could often be seen on camera with smoke billowing beside him, a cigarette in his hand, died of the disease at the young age

So, submitted for your

approval: Radon, an invisible, odorless gas, might be skulking and lying in wait in your home. But we can detect it, and it can be mitigated. A case to be filed under Rn — for radon.

For more information or to make an appointment for a test, call MCHD Environmental Health at 304-598-5131.

For more information, check out MCHD's radon web page at https://www. monchd.org/services/ radon and a video we created (featuring a local actor playing Rod Serling!) at https://www. youtube.com/watch?v=zsuYTYpBess&t=5s. It can also be found by going to YouTube.com, searching for Monongalia County Health Department and radon and clicking on the Rod Serling lookalike.

Mary Wade Burnside, the public information officer for Monongalia County Health Department, can be emailed at MaryWade.Burnside@

EXPOSURE TO TOO MUCH RADON IS THE NO. 2 LEADING CAUSE OF LUNG CANCER IN THE UNITED STATES, NEXT TO SMOKING. IN A GIVEN YEAR, ABOUT 21,000 AMERICANS DIE FROM LUNG **CANCER CAUSED BY HIGH LEVELS OF**

WVU MEDICINE

Nursing education program set to accept applications in mid-January

WVU Medicine

(CNE) will begin accepting online applications for the spring 2026 cohort of its new nursing diploma program at 9 a.m. on Jan. 15.

The 21-month program offers prospective students a quality, hospital-based nursing education with an option for a full tuition waiver in exchange for a three-year work commitment in any WVU Medicine hospital upon graduation. The first cohort - for fall 2025 - received more than 650 applications.

The CNE will be housed in a state-of-the-art facility within the WVU Innovation Corporation. Renovations are ongoing but are expected to wrap up in early 2025, with the CNE opening its doors in the spring.

school will showcase innovative learning and enced by many students, dry facilities, a food bank, each year. and lactation rooms.

"As we celebrate the visit arrival of our fall 2025 co- CNE.

hort this August, we are The WVU Medicine Cene equally thrilled to conter for Nursing Education nect with our applicants for spring 2026," Tanya Rogers, Ed.D., M.S.N., assistant vice president of nursing education for the CNE, said.

"Whether you're a firsttime applicant or reapplying, we encourage you to explore our website for updates, reach out for tips on strengthening your application, and take the first step toward a rewarding career in healthcare. We've made exciting changes to streamline the process and make it easier to navigate."

To be eligible for enrollment, interested students must have a high school diploma, GED, or TASC equivalent by Oct. 1, with a C average or higher in high school or college algebra. chemistry, and English.

The program's application and all necessary ma-When completed, the terials must be completed and submitted by March 1 for admission to the sectraining spaces along with ond cohort of students, amenities to address bar- which will begin classes riers to education experi- in January 2026. Application cycles will open in such as study rooms, laun- January and August of

> For more information WVUMedicine.org/

Volunteer Services accepting applications for 2025 **Health Careers Academy**

WVU Medicine

Academy participants will gain hands-on experience in various departments, including the Emergency Department, the WVU Rocke-Neuroscience feller Institute, Surgical Services, and others.

Students interested in participating must be between the ages of 16-18 by June 23, write a 500-word essay about why they want to be a Medicine.org/Volunpart of the Academy,

demonstrate tic ability as evidenced by a GPA of least 3.0, and provide their high school transcript and two letters of recommendation from teachers or guidance counselors.

Those selected for the program must provide immunization records and complete computer-based learning modules.

To apply visit WVUteers.

BUSINESS

Meta nixes diversity and inclusion program

Associated Press

MENLO PARK, Calif. Joining companies such as John Deere and Walmart, Facebook and Instagram's parent company Meta Platforms Inc. is getting rid of its diversity, equity and inclusion program that includes hiring, training and picking vendors, a company spokesperson confirmed on Friday.

The move, which was first reported by Axios, comes on the heels of the social media giant's decision to end its third-party fact-checking program and scale back policies on hate speech and abuse.

The company will also end its "diverse slate approach" to hiring, which meant that a diverse pool of candidates was considered for every open position.

COMPASSION

FROM PAGE B-1

and kinship company more.

On a sun-dappled Sunday morning in Milledgeville, she crossed the line.

Well, she crossed the street to worship at the African Methodist Episcopal church in town. She enjoyed the experience and became a faithful congre-

"I just thought I was accepting an invitation to go to church," as she recalled. "I apparently caused a little bit of a stir."

Waiting (not) for Robert E. Lee

An nour south of Atlanpresident's mansion on students. her campus done out in

man architecture, made for a nice postcard.

gentility, though, there could be. was also an underlying frequency of institutional racism, given the tenor of lent sit-in that didn't stay the time.

Jim Crow.

Dr. Lee delivered an ultimatum. College or church. One or the other.

If she kept attending this particular church, he decreed, she would on campus, even if she was an honors student. The school was receiving threats, he said.

She made her choice.

That same year, 1961, she had also traveled to

It was a gathering

the requisite, classic Ro- which showed her how his 'preacher mode' that and cities along the way. dangerous being in the Civil Rights movement be-With all the outward low the Mason-Dixon line his principles of nonvio- a handful of fellow riders

> The Black students in attendance staged a non-viothat way. The organizer of the sit-in was stabbed in the chest and almost died.

> Ironically, he stepped in to protect one of the white attendees who was being threatened.

Browning said goodbye no longer be welcome to Milledgeville and its mansion-dwelling college president.

The interpretation of **Dreams**

Augusta, near the South a month later, where on others on the front lines. Carolina state line, for a one evening, she attended ta, Milledgeville, with its Christian conference that a lecture at Spellman Collady," King would hail her, tidy, tree-lined trees and included white and Black lege delivered by Martin in daily greeting. "How Luther King Jr.

"Dr. King wasn't in

night," she remembered.

lence. He didn't pound the pulpit, but he spoke with This is someone I need to pay attention to."

that night and signed on with the ever-growing Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, a group of idealistic college students ready to put those principles into prac-

Browning stuffed envelopes, ran the mimeograph machine and got to She moved to Atlanta know Julian Bond and the

"Good morning, your are you today?"

With other volunteers, on themselves by sitting more known. at the back of the bus, and frequenting

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Two weeks before

'This was a lecture on Christmas in 1961, she and Albany, Ga., where she besuch quiet intensity and friended Charles Person, nals over the years. eloquence that the man the reason for those Atday.

Browning and Person She got his autograph were among the younger of the Freedom Riders and were around the same

the age of 82 in Georgia.

They had stayed in contact all these years. It's be- it a year, and here we are." cause of him, Dr. King and

Country roads ...

Meanwhile, a job and white and black, she volunteer outreach work fanned out across Georgia at Emory University in ers bus tours, where the Browning's history in civwhites turned the tables il rights became more and

She's traveled the coun-Only" areas in the towns man rights at schools from

INTRODUCTORY PROGRAM:

includes uniform!

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Alabama to California, and she has written extensively about her years in the civil rights movement, spent 10 days in jail, in contributing to several books and scholarly jour-

Her skills in marketing, burned. I said to myself, lanta phone calls the other business development and writing brought her to the Mountain State in 1969, for an appointment at now-West Virginia State University.

That school began its Twenty-four hours be- life as one of the original fore Browning's very busy historically Black colleges morning in Greenbrier and universities founded County, Person passed at in the nation after the Civil War.

"I said then that I'd give

Community developother kindred souls, she ment jobs and freelance said, that she soldiered on writing jobs followed in the Greenbrier County region, in those years since.

Miss Eva (and Miss Ella) have their say

In 2005, WVU's Center and Alabama, as part of the 1960s turned into for Black Culture and Rethe famed Freedom Rid-speaking engagements as search honored her with its annual Martin Luther King Achievement Award for Service.

> Most recently, she was "Coloreds try since, lecturing on hu- involved in the publication of the graphic novel, "West Virginians' Experiences in Civil Rights: How we have been connected all along," which was written, designed and illustrated by Eve Faulkes, a graphic design artist and professor in WVU's School of Art and Design, who has long been lauded for her work in civil rights across the

> > Browning helped compile the stories of West Virginians involved in the Civil Rights Movement and shared editing chores with Barbara Howe, a professor emeritus at the university.

> > The 132-page book is available on Amazon and local bookstores, she said, which is heartening to her. meanwhile,

Doors, remain a constant in Browning's life. There are good neighbors who knock on them in Greenbrier County.

And there's also what Miss Ella Baker, another Freedom Rider, had to say about those physical and metaphorical portals, back in their inaugural days in the movement.

"Miss Baker always told me, 'Honey, if you want to change the world for the better, you don't have to be heroic. Just step outside your door each morning and do the good work you find there."

NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY FOR THE RECOVERY HOUSING PROGRAM

Date of Publication: January 15, 2025 West Virginia Department of Economic Development (Community Advancement and Development) WVCAD 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East

Building 3 Suite 700 Charleston, WV 25305 304-352-4135

The West Virginia Department of Economic Development (WVDED) announces the availability of funding for the Recovery Housing Program (RHP). WVDED will make Fiscal Years (FY) 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023 funding available for eligible applicants. RHP funds are allocated by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development to allow states to provide stable, transitional housing for individuals in recovery from a substance use disorder. The RHP is a program within the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) programs, with rules modified by Federal Register Notice FR-6225-N-01. Approximately \$9 million in FY 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023 funding will be made available to eligible applicants, including public and private nonprofit organizations and local governments as described in the RHP Action Plan.

Grant Application Cycles and Submission

The application cycle will open on January 15, 2025, and close on April 4, 2025. Applications may be submitted electronically to: rhp@wv.gov or mailed to: Community Advancement and Development, 1900 Kanawha Boulevard East, Building 3, Suite 700, Charleston, WV 25305.

Mailed or electronic applications must be received by 5:00 p.m., Eastern Time on Friday, April 4, 2025.

Applicants for Phase 2 projects are required to attend an application workshop which will be held February 3, 2025 at the above address or online. Applicants for Phase 3 projects are required to consult with WVDED for a mandatory Technical Assistance

The application along with submission requirements and instructions, program guidelines and other relevant information are available on WV CAD's website at https://wvcad.org/.

Phase 2 Application Workshop:

WVDED will hold a webinar/in-person workshop on February 3, 2025, to provide an overview of the grant process and technical assistance to complete and submit an application for the Recovery Housing Program. The webinar will be held via Google Meets or you may call-in at (US) +1 816-944-1376 PIN: 509 092 735#. The link and call-in-information will also be available on WVCAD's website at wvcad.org prior to the webinar. For questions or requests for technical assistance regarding the Recovery Housing Program, and submission of an application, please email rhp@wv.gov or call (304) 352-4168.

It is a policy of the above agency not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, and handicapped status in employment or provision of services.

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