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Commission Backs Casino Plan

A letter signed by the three county commissioners and given to the "Times" expresses support for the legislation making its way through the state Senate that would allow for the designation of Pendleton County as a rural resort community and permit casino development at the Fisher Mountain resort.

The letter was written by commission president Gene McConnell in response to Riverton resident Art Hooton. A letter by Hooton was sent to the "Times," McConnell and Senator Clark Barnes, a sponsor of Senate Bill (SB) 492.

The commissioners advised the "Times" that McConnell's letter could be used as the basis for a story about their views on the economic need for the proposed casino/resort or published as a letter to the editor.

SB 492 is on track for passage in the Senate. It moved through the judiciary committee last week and was unanimously voted out of the finance committee on Monday.

If it passes the full Senate, the legislation will go to the House of Delegates, where it may face opposition from entrenched gambling interests in the state.

SB 492 modifies the state law allowing for table gaming in historic resort hotels (The Greenbrier). One modification is elimination of the provision requiring a countywide referendum, or local option election, before casino gambling would be allowed.

The bill could be amended in the House to restore the local option requirement.

Commissioner Carl Hevener told the "Times," "I respect the views of people who don't want it, but I am going to ask them, 'What jobs can you bring to the county?' Bring your ideas to meetings of the commission or the EDA, which are open to the public."

The county commissioners met in regular session Tues-

day morning. They heard from Steve Rawlings of the Counties Risk Pool, through which the county properties are insured and which provides insurance for liability and Workers' Compensation claims.

Pendleton was one of the first counties in the state to join the Counties Risk Pool, which now represents 39 counties.

The commissioners asked about their possible liability during bucket shake fundraisers on highways. Rawlings said the county has no liability exposure for bucket shake activities on highways. The only liability the county would have is for bucket shakes or other types of fundraising when they take place on county property.

It was noted that the county commission has no authority over bucket shakes on public thoroughfares. That authority resides with the Secretary of State's office, although nonprofit organizations, such as fire departments and rescue squads, are exempt from having to obtain permission from that office.

The commissioners met with Matt Simpson, who is a certified fire investigator and has served that function in the county for several years. He has developed a working relationship with the fire investigator for the eastern

panhandle out of the state Fire Marshal's office.

Simpson was seeking clarification on current county policy for reimbursement for training and the purchase of equipment. The county budgets \$1,000 for those purposes for the fire investigator. Several years ago, the annual county allotment was \$1,500, but Simpson voluntarily asked for the amount to be lowered in order to help the county get through a rough financial patch. Darren Hedrick has also received fire investigator training.

The commissioners adjusted the county employee policy. Vacation and sick time do not accrue during the time an employee is absent from work due to a workers' compensation-covered incident.

A letter from Delegate Isaac Sponaugle reported that he and Delegate Allen Evans have presented the Dead Woman Curve petition on the floor of the House of Delegates. The demand for public safety improvements to a portion of Rt. 33 on Allegheny Mountain have been referred to the House committee on roads and transportation.

The commission's next regular meeting is on April 16 beginning at 9:00 a.m. in the courthouse.

Eston Teter:

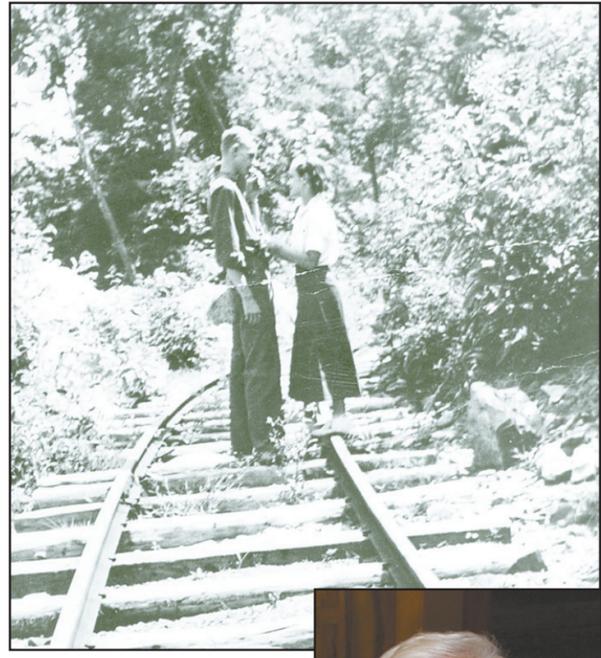
Man of Character, Man for All Seasons

Just as Jeff Bowman epitomizes much of the spirit of the county seat and Pauline Harman represents the love of county history and its preservation, Eston Teter embodies the spirit and history of the South Fork Valley.

Eston Teter was born in Fort Seybert on Dec. 29, 1918, the eldest of J. Fred and Clea Puffenbarger Teter's three children. Two years younger, his sister, Mary Alice, married an Adamson from Fort Seybert, as Eston later would, too. The "baby" in the family was H. Byrd, seven years younger than Eston and later a popular dentist in Franklin.

Asked what his father did for a living, Eston replied, "When you live in Pendleton County, you have to do a little bit of everything." J. Fred Teter started out working for the Dyer & Miller Mercantile Store in Fort Seybert, where a little bit of everything was sold and bought.

The barter business was a store's stock in trade in those days. Eston today has a four-inch thick ledger consisting entirely of barter transactions. The store bought a little bit of everything that Fort Seybert area folks grew or harvested out



THE RAIL GAUGE is 42-inch, but the romance is "standard." Above, Eston and Evelyn Teter at 18. At right, Teter today.



of the fields and forests.

When Eston was about six, his father bought the old Buckhorn Cowger grist mill. The Cowger family bought the mill from George F. Johnson in 1853. It had been the James Dyer grist mill until it was washed away in a flood in the early 19th century.

In those days, there were five mills on the South Fork. Eston started working in his father's mill almost right away, although he recalls that it burned down in 1928 or '29 and it took a year or year and a half to rebuild. The mill was powered by a water wheel measuring 24 feet in diameter.

By the time he was 12, Eston knew well the workings of every piece of machinery. A miller's ear became as finely tuned as an ensemble musician's. Eston could tell from the machinery's hum when all the parts and gears were moving harmoniously and when an individual piece needed adjustment.

There came a time, however, when the mills "started going the way of the old country store," Teter says, a time when "people's living habits just changed, when people began to buy sliced bread and didn't grow wheat." He estimates that the change became palpable during the World War II years.

In other articles in this series, it is the decade of the 1940s when life in Pendleton County became more thoroughly mod-

ern, at least in the recollections of Teter, Sadie Belle Propst, Jeff Bowman, Reid Homan, Raleigh Ruddle, Garland Mullenax, Pauline Harman and the Hedrick sisters of Reeds Creek.

Eston recalls that even as business at the mill began to fall off, there were a few dedicated customers who came "to get some corn ground." He speculates with a smile at the use to which the corn was put and calls it one of the older illicit professions. He remembers the whole wheat flour produced at the mill and considers the emphasis today on healthier foods for which folks are willing to "pay big money." He comments, "If the mill had stood long enough, it would be at the head of the line today."

For Eston Teter, another big change in the 1940s was the phasing out of one-room schools into consolidated elementary schools. Through eighth grade, he attended Locust Grove, a nearby one-room school, which washed away in the flood of 1985.

Asked about the quality of instruction, Eston answers, "It was a wonder you got anything."

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School Board Eyes Future Budgets

The Pendleton County Board of Education heard from Jack Bowers and Becky McConnell about programs and financial challenges at Pendleton County Library at the board's March 19 meeting.

A year ago, the school board allocated \$6,000 to the library. An allocation for the 2013-14 fiscal year was to be voted on at the board's April 2 meeting.

In other business, probationary contracts were approved for 14 professional staff members and 10 service employees. Probationary contracts apply to

employees with fewer than four years of employment.

Continuing contracts for employees with four years of employment were approved for four professional staff members and two service employees. Nine volunteers/chaperones were approved for Franklin Elementary.

Rod Cooper's resignation as coach of the middle school boys' basketball team was accepted.

Business manager J. P. Mowery said that the budget outlook for the short term is as good as it has been for some time and that the 2013-14 budget should

be balanced, but that there are definite concerns on the horizon.

Those concerns deal particularly with the uncertainty of federal Medicaid and forest land funding and any potential state budget shortfalls in coming years.

Federal sequestration budget cuts of five percent will cost the county about \$6,000 in the 2014 funding year. That means anticipated revenue of \$119,000 will be reduced to \$113,000 on payments from Safe and Secure Rural Schools because of federally owned forest lands in the county.

Mowery also mentioned that if the school system receives funding from the state School Building Authority (SBA) for the construction of a new FES, the reality of the \$1 million in local match funding will have to be budgeted and paid for over the next 10 years.

The \$1 million would be paid off by a combination of selling existing property, fundraising efforts and carefully watching revenues and expenditures in coming years, Mowery said.

The board approved out-of-county transfer requests for 33 students. Of those, four were new requests.

On another school matter unrelated to the board meeting, superintendent Doug Lambert notes that the state board requires all schools to engage in continuous school improvement. In doing so, schools should engage in a data-driven school climate planning process to identify needs, work to increase school safety and create a positive learning environment.

To support that process, schools will be conducting surveys to gather relevant information. Parents' opinions are needed regarding the schools their children attend. Parents will be receiving information from children regarding completion of the survey. The survey can be accessed anywhere Internet is available.

The window for completion is April 2 through April 12. Pendleton County schools will make arrangements at each school site for survey completion. For those without access to a computer, paper copies will be provided. Parents are advised to contact their children's schools if the need is present. After a paper copy is completed, return it to the school and the finished survey will be entered confidentially.

Web links for those completing the survey electronically can be found of the school system's website.

Seneca Rocks Business Named for Agri-Tourism



SMOKE HOLE OUTFITTERS owned by Josh Hedrick, above, has been recognized for innovative agritourism marketing.

The state Department of Agriculture has recognized Smoke Hole Outfitters of Seneca Rocks as one of the 2013 agritourism marketing winners.

Owned by Josh Hedrick, Smoke Hole Outfitters provides licensed and bonded guide services for fly fishing and spin casting on the North Fork River, as well as private land hunts for whitetail deer, turkey and small game.

Smoke Hole Outfitters placed second in the category of best photo depicting West Virginia

agritourism. Placing first in that category was the Clay County Golden Delicious Festival.

Agriculture Commissioner Walt Helmick said, "Marketing is a key component of a successful agritourism operation. Each year, these awards recognized the best in marketing and promotions, and encourage others to improve their communications programs."

The awards were announced during the 2013 Small Farm Conference at Waterfront Place Hotel in Morgantown on Feb. 28.

Community Focus

Post 30 To Gather

The Franklin American Legion Post 30 will meet Wednesday, April 10, at 7 p.m. at Fireside, Franklin.

Square Dance To Be Held Saturday

A square dance, in memory of Quentin P. Bennett, husband of Roberta Bennett who passed away in January, will be held Saturday, April 6, at the Clinton Hedrick Community Building, Riverton, beginning at 7 p.m.

Recycling Drive Set for April 12, 13

The Dorcas 4-H Club of Grant County will again be sponsoring a community recycling drive this spring for the public to dispose of recyclable materials. This event will be held at the livestock barn at the Tri-County Fairgrounds in Petersburg on Friday, April 12, from 3:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and Saturday, April 13, from 8:00 a.m. to noon.

Members of the 4-H club will be accepting newspapers, catalogs, magazines, office paper and junk mail. Also, aluminum cans and hard and softbound books will be taken. The 4-H club can no longer accept glass and plastic bottles for safety and health reasons.

This recycling event is a community service project of the Dorcas 4-H Club. The club's goal is to make the world a little better place by conserving its resources.

For more information, please call 304-257-2459.

Sugar Grove Lions Bestows Fellowship Award to Mitchell



The Melvin Jones Award was bestowed on Tom Mitchell by Barbara Fishel, district governor, at the Sugar Grove Lion's Club dinner meeting on Feb. 21. This fellowship award is the highest form of recognition and embodies humanitarian ideas consistent with the nature and purpose of Lionism. The recipient of the award becomes a model because of the exemplary service to his club and the community for which it serves.

In recognizing Mitchell, Fishel spoke of his impact to the immediate community, as well as across the globe. Fellow Lions commended him for his dedication to humanitarian service and support to Lions Club International Foundation.

Other guests attending the ceremony were Mr. Fishel and Carolyn Bowman, zone chairman, and her husband. Pictured are, from left, Brandon Mitchell, Paula and Tom Mitchell and Barbara Fishel.