

# WGTH ISSUES & PROGRAMS

## FIRST QUARTER 2020

### JANUARY – MARCH

#### DEALING WITH THE COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS

Predominant among all the issues of the day on this entire planet is the worldwide battle with COVID-19, the Coronavirus. It is an issue unmatched, in this generation, in its intensity and ability to do harm as an enemy that cannot be seen by the human eye. Every aspect of people's lives has been affected by the pandemic that has resulted from the spread of this highly contagious virus.

Because the pandemic has been in the forefront of everyone's thoughts and concerns in the last several weeks of this quarter, COVID-19 has been the principal topic of news, sermons, counseling advice, human interest stories, health recommendations, etc. There are many subcategories of issues that relate to the pandemic and how to navigate the new way of life in which everyone has been forced to live. Some of the issues that have been addressed are as follows:

#### UPDATES IN EXECUTIVE ORDERS FROM THE GOVERNOR

As the pandemic progressed, Virginia Governor Ralph Northam issued executive orders with the intent of attempting to follow health professionals' guidelines in trying to slow the spread of the coronavirus and prevent coronavirus-related deaths. As the number of confirmed cases and resultant deaths grew, executive orders were updated in an effort to regulate the transmission of the virus and to make the public aware of the need to cooperate in social distancing and other means of prevention.

Program: WGTH State & Local News

Dates: March 24 and 31, 2020

Times: 7:38 a.m. and 8:38 a.m.

Duration: Average length approximately 3 minutes

Live announcer

The governor's orders were read and explained.

### FEDERAL AID DUE TO ECONOMIC IMPACT

Loss of jobs and the resultant loss of income is, undoubtedly, one of the most devastating effects of the COVID-19 coronavirus on individuals and families. Uncertainty about the duration of the restrictions related to the coronavirus have made it unclear as to how long it will be until many “nonessential” workers can return to their jobs if, in fact, their places of employment can survive the “temporary shutdowns.” The physical, mental, and emotional stress that comes from unemployment and inadequate financial means weighs so heavily on those that are suffering from it that the extent of the affects can be difficult to determine.

Program: Focus on the Family

Date: March 27, 2020

Duration: 9 minutes

Time: 10:33 am – 10:43 am

Guest: Mitch McConnell, Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate,

Interviewed by Jim Daly, President of Focus on the Family

Mitch McConnell, Senate Majority Leader, was interviewed by Jim Daly, President of Focus on the Family, regarding the federal government's recently approved \$2 trillion economic stabilization package. Senator McConnell described the bipartisan deal that would

provide direct payments to taxpayers, along with jobless benefits, and a sizable amount of money for states and businesses. McConnell shared details of the plan, including its necessity in order to help individuals and salvage the U.S. economy from devastation due to the pandemic.

## MEAL DELIVERIES FOR STUDENTS

Although the decision to close schools was made rapidly, the continued provision of meals to school-age children was very important to local school and governmental authorities. Teachers and school administrators are very aware that many of their students would not be fed as well as they are at school... if at all. Individual local counties developed plans for preparing school lunches that could be transported to students using their bus routes or made available at various designated schools in the counties.

Area public school systems released information to the media for dissemination to parents and those who would be caring for the students. Specific plans for each county were announced, including the dates, times, and locations... along with information as to how to notify the schools of each student's need for meals.

Program: WGTH Community Calendar

Dates: March 16-25, 2020

Duration: 90 seconds

Times: 3-5 times per day at various times

Providing meals for public school students has been an emphasis in the local counties even though the school attendance was discontinued for the rest of the school year. Tazewell, Russell, and Buchanan counties in Virginia, comprise a large portion of the station's immediate listening area. Each of the three counties sent information to have announced regarding their particular plans for preparing and sending out meals for students to eat at home. Plans varied from delivering meals to

students through the means of bus routes to having students come with parents to a designated school to pick up their meals.

## HOME SCHOOLING ADVICE

The closure of local schools forced many families into the uncharted territory of homeschooling. (Although there are some area homeschool families, the vast majority of students attend public or private schools.) An additional drawback for homeschooling assistance is the fact that many students from the local counties do not have access to computers and internet. Therefore, most of the local school systems sent home “packets” with worksheets that they hoped the students would be willing and able to complete.

Many parents still have to work making the oversight of homeschooling very difficult. Parents who have the opportunity to stay home with their children usually find that setting schedules, checking completed work, and finding time for the regular household chores can be extremely challenging. Even some of the public school teachers admitted that homeschooling was tough for them.

Program: The Kevin and Taylor Show

Date: March 25, 2020

Duration: 1:45 each

Time: 4:48 pm and 4:53 p.m.

Guest: Rachael Speer, area representative for Classical Conversations

Rachael Speer, area representative for Classical Conversations and associated with Classical Conversations of West Cobb (Georgia), was a featured guest on the “Kevin and Taylor Show.” Classical Conversations is a ministry that “exists to help parents in homeschooling.” She was invited to be interviewed at this time because so many parents were thrown into homeschooling with virtually no warning due to school closures related to the coronavirus pandemic.

The term Rachael used for this category of homeschool parent is “instahomeschooler.” Her first, and most important, piece of advice was: “Give yourself grace.” She shared that homeschooling days, as with life in general, has its ups and downs... its successes and failures. Do not be too hard on yourself, but enjoy the journey... was the gist of her encouragement to parents.

Following her initial cheerleading effort, Rachael gave parents several good and practical suggestions, some of which included: using a whiteboard with a checklist for each “student” in order to stay on track as well as possible, the use of incentives to keep students progressing in the completion of their work, and using competition to encourage students to keep up the pace and add a little fun.

## PROVISION OF HOUSING FOR FAMILIES OF SERIOUSLY ILL CHILDREN

The serious illness of a child can be an all-consuming problem for a family. When treatment is available but not close to home, expenses can add up quickly. Financial concerns about housing for parents and other family members near the hospital where the child will be receiving treatment would be burdensome. To have those concerns alleviated would be of great help to the family.

Program: The Richlands Winter Honey Festival (live remote broadcast)

Date: February 22, 2020

Duration: 10 minutes

Time: 10:10 am – 10:20 am

Guests: Malia Grant, Chief Executive Officer of the Southern Appalachian Ronald McDonald House

Jennifer Plumley, Co-Manager of McDonald’s Restaurants for Gene Forbes, franchise owner

McDonald's local restaurants, owned by Gene M. Forbes Enterprises, Inc., sponsored the Honey Bun 5K in conjunction with the Richlands Winter Honey Festival in order to raise money for the Southern Appalachian Ronald McDonald House in Johnson City, Tennessee. Jennifer Plumley, representing the Gene M. Forbes Enterprises, Inc., announced those who placed in the top 5 in the Honey Bun Run that had taken place earlier that morning. Each of the five won McDonald's merchandise, and every participant was given a knit toboggan (black and gold stripes in honor of honeybees). Jennifer Plumley introduced Malia Grant, the Chief Executive Officer of the Southern Appalachian Ronald McDonald House.

Malia Grant talked about the Southern Appalachian Ronald McDonald House Charities, Inc., that is located in Johnson City, Tennessee. This, particular, Ronald McDonald House serves forty counties in Southwest Virginia, Northeast Tennessee, and Eastern Kentucky. So many of the more than 6,000 children and more than 14,000 parents and extended family members served by this regional facility have been from the communities within our listenership.

The House is a not-for-profit organization that provides a "home-away-from-home," as they like to call it for families whose children are in Johnson City, Tennessee, area hospitals receiving treatment for serious illnesses. Some arrangements are made to help with meals in addition to housing. The environment encourages the families temporarily residing at the House to share their experiences and to support and encourage one another. Nice accommodations and services are provided to families regardless of their ability to pay. The House only asks for ten dollars per night if a family is able to pay.

## FLOOD RECOVERY EFFORTS AND SUPPLY STATUS

The original date of the Richlands Winter Honey Festival was Saturday, February 8, 2020. However, two days prior – on Thursday, February 6<sup>th</sup> – a sizable portion of the town and some of the surrounding areas experienced a horrific flood. In fact, the venue itself – the Richlands Police Department – was in one of the flooded areas. Flood victims in many of the places the flood hit had never remembered having such high water marks, and others had not had flooding to that extent since the flood of 1977, that wiped out most of the nearby Town of Grundy, Virginia. Several businesses sustained major damage and many residences were severely damaged.

Program: WGTH Special Report (recorded)

Date: February 7, 2020

Duration: 6 minutes

Time: 4:08 pm

Guests: Jerry Gilbert, Town of Richlands Chief of Police

John Absher, Town of Cedar Bluff Town Manager

The day after the flooding began, Richlands Police Chief, Jerry Gilbert, and Cedar Bluff Town Manager, John Absher, reported on the flooding in the local area. They reported on the extent of the damage in the various localities that were hardest hit. They explained that schools had been closed the day prior and the day of the report, because so many children could not travel to and from their homes until the waters subsided. Furthermore, there were dangers from electrical and gas lines being compromised by high water.

Both Gilbert and Absher commended emergency responders for their excellent work. Additionally, they acknowledged the quick response of several disaster relief teams and others that were on their way. Generous amounts of water, food, cleaning supplies, and blankets had already been donated and more was coming in all the time. Area

businesses and individuals that were able donated food, supplies, and monetary gifts. Gilbert and Absher pointed out how well the community had demonstrated their care and concern for one another by how generously they had met immediate needs.

Program: Richlands Winter Honey Festival (live remote broadcast)

Date: February 22, 2020

Duration: 7 minutes

Time; 11:10 pm – 11:17 pm

Guest: Town of Richlands Mayor Paul Crawford

Mayor Paul Crawford of the Town of Richlands gave a status report on the post-flood cleanup and the situation regarding cleanup supplies and other necessities. Whereas Richlands did not have a large enough total estimated loss to qualify for FEMA money, it appeared that there would be sufficient funds to cover most losses. Additionally, Virginia Baptist Disaster Relief, a similar Methodist group, and other volunteers were coming to use their well-organized expertise in helping individuals and families restore their homes to make them habitable. Mayor Crawford expressed his sincere appreciation for all of the help coming from outside the area,

Regarding assistance from the community, Mayor Crawford was pleased to report that there was such an outstanding response from the community that they had to ask people to stop bringing water, food, and cleaning supplies. In fact, a truckload of surplus provisions was sent to a neighboring county in West Virginia that had suffered greatly from flood damage, as well. Mayor Crawford acknowledged several individuals that had worked tirelessly... especially Connie Allen of the Richlands Community Development Committee who had coordinated everyone's efforts in order to maximize efficiency and avoid duplication of labor and other resources.



## PROVIDING STRUCTURE ALONG WITH WHOLESOME ACTIVITIES FOR TEENS

Area high schools provide a good variety of team sports and club opportunities. Several area youth groups and organizations also exist. However, not all of the youth in the area have interest in sports and traditional activities. Some youth, particularly those who are less popular and may not conform precisely to socially acceptable standards of behavior, need to have a place where they are accepted. They need a place where they can find out they are good at something and are encouraged to use their gifts to create and accomplish their very own dreams.

Program: The Richlands Winter Honey Festival (live remote broadcast)

Date: February 22, 2020

Duration: 5 minutes

Time: 10:45 am – 10:50 am

Guest; Heather Smith, Director of the Teen Venture Center

Heather Smith, director of the Teen Venture Center in Richlands, talked about the purpose of the center, its offerings, and the students that it serves. Teen Venture is a charitable organization that was started by area leaders from the business community, educators, ministers, and local government in order to provide a place where youth who might be at-risk for dropping out of school or participating in alcohol and drug abuse find their niche or comfort zone. Students in Tazewell, Russell, and Buchanan counties – from sixth grade through college up to age twenty – can meet at the center and take part in rock climbing, a very nice skate park, a radio broadcast setup, a music studio, and/or an art studio.

Heather Smith explained the benefits of having a place where the participants can feel welcome, accepted, and successful. She shared some of the success stories and that a goodly number of students

participate on a regular basis. She praised the volunteers that provide snacks for the students and help in other ways. The need for more volunteers was expressed.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF BEEKEEPING AND BEE PRESERVATION

Beekeeping is not only important for the production of honey, but the honey bees are crucial to the pollination of plants that are used by humans. Honey bees have been threatened by a number of catastrophic circumstances. Their existence as pollinators cannot be understated, and honey bees need to be preserved.

Program: The Richlands Winter Honey Festival (live remote broadcast)

Date: February 22, 2020

Duration: 10 minutes

Time: 11:20 pm – 11:30 pm

Guests; Mark and Sheila Andrews of Sourwood Branch Bee Farm

Mark and Sheila Andrews, of Sourwood Branch Bee Farm in North Carolina, demonstrated their enthusiasm for and expertise in beekeeping with knowledgeable answers to questions about honey bees and beekeeping spoken in layman's terms. This very pleasant couple, obviously, love what they do and enjoy sharing their passion with others. Although they sell beekeeping items, they really care about bees and their customers.

Threats to the wellbeing of honey bees were discussed and how their absence would negatively affect humans and the food supply. Two of the situations that severely threaten honey bees are colony collapse disorder (where the majority of worker bees disappear) and the death of bees due to harmful pesticides. Mark explained the significance of these problems and how beekeepers were diligently doing their part to combat the effects of these threats to honey bee populations.

## TEACHING CHARACTER-BUILDING LESSONS AND SHARING LOCAL HISTORY THROUGH WRITING

Quality literature can spark the imagination and entertain in amazing ways. There are added benefits for readers that authors can include. Among those benefits are character-building lessons and the inclusion of local history. Several local authors have a knack for that.

Program: The Richlands Winter Honey Festival (live remote broadcast)

Date: February 22, 2020      Duration: Approximately 5 minutes each

Guests and Times: Victoria Fletcher 10:50 am – 10:55 am

Linda Hoagland 11:30 pm – 11:35 pm

Adda Leah Davis 11:50 pm – 11:55 pm

Gifted authors do more than simply write books. Victoria Fletcher, Linda Hoagland, and Adda Leah Davis are teachers in their writings. All three of these ladies are popular local authors that inspire readers with their distinct literary styles, but have a desire to help instill good character qualities in their readers... especially the children who read their work. They, also, write most of their books from experiences that they have lived or heard about... often based on real accounts... thereby sharing local history featuring real people,

Victoria Fletcher has written, mostly, children's devotional books and anthologies.

Linda Hoagland writes poetry and mysteries for the most part.

Adda Leah Davis calls herself an Appalachian author.

## THE GREAT NEED FOR FOSTER CARE

There are so many at-risk children and teens in our region. Parents with substance abuse problems, anger and other mental health issues, extreme financial difficulties, and other issues are not providing stable environments in which to raise healthy children and youth.

The need for foster care never seems to dwindle. Foster families are always being sought to provide homes for at-risk youth. Perfection is never a requirement, but love and compassion are truly a blessing.

Program: The Richlands Winter Honey Festival

Date: February 22, 2020

Duration: 3 minutes

Time; 11:46 pm – 11:49 pm

Guest: Vicky Hodges, Foster Family Trainer with Intercept Health

Vicky Hodges, foster family trainer with Intercept Health, encouraged listeners to strongly consider becoming foster parents. She cited the statistical gap between the need and the availability of homes. Vicky explained that Intercept Health offers therapeutic foster care with an abundance of support for foster parents and a genuine desire to help at-risk youth and families succeed. Contact information was given for those who might have questions.