

# Charleston Gazette-Mail

## Hoppy Kercheval: A Look at What's Happening Across the State

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October 24, 2022

What's happening across the Mountain State? Here's a look.

- **Cabell flips:** One of the last remaining large Democratic counties in West Virginia is now red, but not by much. The most recent voter registration figures from Secretary of State Mac Warner's office show Cabell County with 20,866 Republicans and 20,536 Democrats (and 12,031 of no party). Just six years ago, there were 7,700 more Democrats than Republicans in the state's fourth-largest county.

Out with the old, in with the new: Warner's office also reports county clerks have removed 345,200 names from the voting rolls in the past six years because they were deceased, duplicate, out- of-state or convicted felons. However, 297,400 new voters, including 85,600 high school students, have registered during the same period.

- **Early bird voters:** Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 8, but the voting starts sooner. Early in-person voting begins Wednesday and runs to Nov. 5. All county courthouses are early voting locations. Other locations can be found at [GoVoteWV.com](http://GoVoteWV.com).
- **Cat business is good business:** Clorox has expanded its cat litter production to the Eastern United States with the opening of a manufacturing facility near Martinsburg. Don't laugh. The cat litter business is booming. An estimated 32 million U.S. households are home to 58 million cats that need their litter boxes! The global cat litter market is valued at \$11 billion and is expected to grow at 5% per year until at least 2030.
- **Good performance:** The Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank, has issued its annual report card on America's governors. West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice has received a "B." Cato gives Justice credit for "performing well on both spending and taxes." The grade is a significant improvement over 2018, when Cato gave him an "F" because he proposed a major tax increase (which failed) in his first year in office.
- **Grim anniversary:** This week in 1944, the Japanese cargo ship Arisan Maru was sunk by an American submarine. The sub crew did not know the unmarked ship was carrying American prisoners of war, who were crammed into the ship's cargo hold. More than 1,700 American soldiers died, including several West Virginians.
- **West Virginia Connection:** It seems there is always a West Virginia connection. The new general manager of the San Francisco Giants is Pete Putila. He is from Carmichaels, Pennsylvania, but attended West Virginia University, where he received a degree in sports

management. Putila also interned with MetroNews' Brad Howe, when Howe was the sports marketing director at WVU. Putila is just 33, making him one of the youngest baseball GMs ever.

- **A new low:** Long-time Mountaineer fans like myself have suffered through many low points, but Saturday's domination of the WVU football team by Texas Tech plumbs a new depth. Fans must beware of being a prisoner of the moment after such games, but it is difficult to muster any optimism after the way the Mountaineers performed in that 48-10 loss.