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Baby Steps

Inconsolable babies suffer through withdrawal

BY JENNI VINCENT
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MARTINSBURG — Forget the needles and shooting up, many babies are already heroin addicts before they take their first breath, much less first bottle.

Life is anything but easy for these newborns, and it's going to be a while before they are no longer suffering from the sins of their mothers — many of them addicts, who continued to take drugs like heroin or a cocktail of other opiates (including morphine, codeine, Oxycontin and Dilaudid) or prescription drugs throughout their pregnancy.

That's a recipe for pain and suffering, an almost surefire way to guarantee innocent infants will spend part of their early days in withdrawal — as well as the agony that accompanies it, medical professionals agree.

See **HEROIN**, Page A2



Journal photos by Ron Agnir
Above, a baby in the NICU holds the hand of one of the NICU nurses Friday afternoon in an NICU room at Berkeley Medical Center.

Editor's note: This is another in a continuing series looking at the Eastern Panhandle's growing heroin problem. Tomorrow's stories will include a closer look at the local care of drug-addicted newborns, as well as a feature on rising state newborn addiction rates and how the government is reacting to this growing problem.



Pregnant mom, baby-to-be both addicted to heroin

BY JENNI VINCENT
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MARTINSBURG — Heads turn when Sara walks into a room, because she has a natural presence and a beauty that's hard to miss.

While it's easy to imagine her as a high school cheerleader, she's now in

her late 20s and those times are only distant, fading memories.

Life is decidedly different, and more difficult, than she could have ever imagined.

A single mother, she often talks about the challenges of raising her young son alone — and her fears of failing him, in both big and small ways.

See **BABY STEPS**, Page A2

GOP-led Legislature looks to busy session

BY MICHAEL ERB
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CHARLESTON — The West Virginia Legislature convenes Wednesday as lawmakers prepare for a busy 2015 session.

The state House of Delegates and Senate will

see an historic shift in leadership as Republicans take control of both. Wednesday's opening session will be largely ceremonial, officials said, with members of the House and Senate electing new leadership. Sen. Bill Cole, R-Mercer, will be named Senate President and Del. Tim Armstead, R-Kanawha, will be named Speaker of the House.

In November, House Republicans gained a majority of 64-36 for the first time in more than

80 years. Senate Republicans tied with Senate Democrats on election day, but took a narrow majority of 18-16 the next day when Wyoming County Sen. Daniel Hall switched parties.

Because of the narrow split, Senate leaders say they will have to work most closely with both sides of the aisle.

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Journal photo by Mary Stortstrom
Tess Hyre is crowned Miss Jefferson County for 2015 at the Shenandoah Scholarship Organization's Miss Jefferson County pageant on Saturday evening.

Pageant winners crowned

BY MARY STORTSTROM
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CHARLES TOWN — Eight young women from the Eastern Panhandle put their passions, talents and style on display at the Shenandoah Scholarship Organization's Miss Jefferson County pageant at Wright Denny Intermediate School in Charles Town on Saturday evening.

The pageant is a precursor to the Miss West Virginia and Miss America competitions.

Eight contestants, four competing for the title of Miss Jefferson County 2015 and four competing for the title of Miss Jefferson County's Outstanding Teen, showcased swimwear and evening gowns and performed their best dances or songs during the talent competition.

During the onstage interviews, when contestants were judged on their ability to articulate and express themselves, Miss West Virginia 2014, Paige Madden, asked each contestant about her platform.

Prior to the pageant, Emily Matlock, Miss Jefferson County's Outstanding Teen for 2014, reflected on her year in the spotlight.

"The most exciting thing I did was meet the girls at the state competition," Matlock said. "I still talk to them everyday. Pageants are a great way to make friends."

Matlock said she enjoyed meeting people and attending events as Miss Jefferson County's Outstanding Teen, but was ready to pass the title and crown on.

"My advice for this year's winner is to be yourself and enjoy everything you'll get to do. Do as much as you can and meet as many people as you can, and just have fun," she said.

At the end of the competition, Megan Scarano was crowned Miss Jefferson County's Outstanding Teen for 2015, with Lindsey Beane as the first runner-up.

"It feels great to win. I've put so much hard work into competing and it's finally paid off," Scarano said. "I'm excited for the road to Miss West Virginia's Outstanding Teen."



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3 Things to know

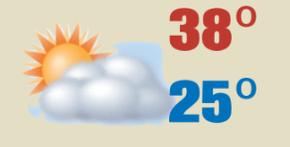
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