Page 8

Braves end Knights girls' soccer season

Page 6

Bluffton man sentenced for child exploitation

By HOLLY GASKILL

Sentenced in the Wells County Circuit Court Sept. 27, Sebastian Hubble, 30, will spend 10 years in the Indiana Department of Corrections and his lifetime on the sex offender's registry.

Hubble was arrested in April following a year-long investigation by the Bluffton Police Department. In pleading guilty to the highest charge issued

child exploitation, a Level 4 felony — 14 additional charges were dismissed. These charges were all related to voyeurism and possession of child pornography.

The police investigation discovered Hubble had possession of lewd images of

minors, including images of child

Sabastian Hubble

sexual assault. Hubble also secretly took inappropriate images of children under his care. A significant portion of the con-

versation during the sentencing hearing followed Hubble's computer encryption. BPD Det. Cliff Thomas testified that the computer seized in a warrant from Hubble contained malware that neither he nor the cybercrimes unit of the Indiana State Police were able to unlock. Thomas ultimately contacted the

"I have never sent a piece of equipment that (the ISP) weren't able to get into," Thomas stated.

Most evidence that was able to be dis-

covered from the malware was found on Hubble's cell phone. Prosecutor Colin Andrews alleged that this level of encryption — and without Hubble's assistance ultimately prevented the investigation.

Larry Mock, Hubble's lawyer, noted that Hubble had been cooperative with the investigation and exercised his right not to volunteer information to the police. Mock affirmed Hubble's clean background and service in the Air Force as a low-risk to re-offend according to the Indiana Risk Assessment System. He asked Judge Kenton Kiracofe to consider a six-year sentence with a portion suspended and on probation.

"Not to downplay what happened — it's a very bad thing," Mock stated. "But I think if we look at the things in total, the defendant is not even close to being the worst of

By DAVE SCHULTZ Admission fees for the Wells Community

Pool and rates for Parks Department facility

and Recreation Department's board present

at Thursday night's meeting — Rick McEvoy, Christine Zadylak, and Susan Camp-

bell (John Gerber was absent) — approved

the rate increases proposed by Parks Super-

intendent Brandy Fiechter. They were mod-

est increases for the most part; for instance,

pool admissions went up from \$3.50 to \$4

for adults and from \$3 to \$3.50 for children.

Park went from \$75 per day to \$95 for four

hours or less and \$125 for more than four

Rental of the large pavilion at Roush

The three members of the Bluffton Parks

rentals will go up in 2024.

the worst, given that this is his first offense.

Andrews recognized Hubble appears to be low-risk, but there were "some troubling aspects." Andrews referenced Hubble's personal impact statement, alleging Hubble displayed a pattern of removing himself from responsibility. According to Andrews, this included Hubble's claims he didn't remember many of the actions, his belief the actions were about control, not sexual gratification, and multiple instances where he did not name the victims involved.

"The person we're dealing with is clearly shielding himself — maybe even internally, not just from the court — from his own horrible actions here," Andrews stated.

Andrews asked Kiracofe to consider a 12-year sentence with nine to 10 years exe-(Continued on Page 2)

Park cost \$50 per day this year; next year's

fees will be \$50 for up to four hours and \$60

will run \$60 for up to four hours and \$70 for

been the inside facility at Washington Park,

and the rental rates for that will go from \$80

to \$95 Monday through Thursday and from

\$130 to \$150 Friday through Sunday. The

difference between the weekday and week-

end rates is an effort to even out the pavil-

ion's rental numbers; this year the facility was

rented only 16 times during the week and 47

In other business Thursday night:

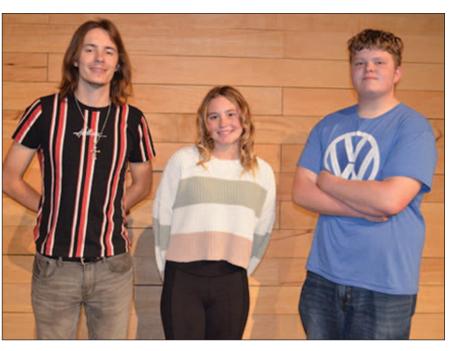
Rental of the new pavilion at Roush Park

The city's most rented pavilion in 2023 has

for more than four hours.

more than four hours.

times on the weekend.



Brewing up a Halloween tale

Rehearsals are under way for the "Legend of Sleepy Hollow" production by the Creative Arts Theatre. It will be presented at the Life Community Church stage on Oct. 27-28. Cast members left to right are Cole Sheets (Ichabod Crane), Kinlee Taylor (Katrina Van Tassel), and Matthew Elwell (Brom Bones). Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 for those 12 and younger. (Photo provided)

hours. Rental of the small pavilion at Roush (Continued on Page 2) Hoosier kids missed between 10 to 18 days of school last year

Parks Department raises

rates on pool, facility rentals

Indiana's education officials on Wednesday raised alarms about high rates of chronic absenteeism across the state

By CASEY SMITH Indiana Capital Chronicle

About 40 percent of Hoosier students missed 10 or more school days last year, and nearly one in five were absent for at least 18 days, according to new Indiana data.

A presentation before the Indiana State Board of Education on Wednesday highlighted the staggering statistics that state leaders said should warrant immediate

Student absences have been on the rise since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in Indiana and across the nation, data shows. Although Indiana's latest numbers show slight improvements, absentee rates during the 2022-23 school year were still 8 percent

higher than before the pandemic. "It's October — the first quarter is gone. We have to draw attention to this right now. And there's no time to wait," said Indiana Secretary of Education Katie Jenner. "I think this is really a rally cry for us to look at our parents, families, caregivers, and also our community leaders to come up with some solutions that might help."

Indiana fared better than most other states for chronic absenteeism — defined by the rate of students who missed at least 18 school days, either excused or unexcused. That's equal to 10 percent of the academic

But in the last three years, the rate of Hoosier students who have been chronically absent more than doubled compared to before the pandemic.

Education experts note that being absent as few as three days out of the school year affects test scores and overall academic performance. The student demographic groups with the largest gaps in state language arts and math testing since the pandemic are more likely to be chronically absent.

Jenner told the Indiana Capital Chronicle this summer that high rates of absenteeism are likely contributing to the state's dismal literacy rates, for example.

By the numbers

According to the Indiana Department of Education, roughly 221,000 Hoosier students were considered chronically absent

(Continued on Page 2)

Wells APC supports rezoning three parcels in Uniondale

By DAVE SCHULTZ

The Wells County Area Plan Commission had only one item of new business on its agenda Thursday night and it supported a change of rezoning for three parcels in Uniondale from I-1 (light manufacturing) to I-2 (light manufacturing).

The decision by the 11 APC members is only advisory. The final decision on the request will be made by the Uniondale Town Council.

The parcels are at 6025 N. Main St., 708 W. Railroad St., and directly west of 708 W. Railroad St. The rezoning request was made by JLE Equestrian LLC, Bolinger Contracting LLC, and Uniondale Warehouse LLC. The companies were represented before the APC by Andy Bolinger.

In his review of the petition, Mike Lautzenheiser, executive director of the APC, told the agency's members that the primary

reason for the rezoning request is the storage of items outdoors, which is allowed in an I-2 zoning by not in an I-1 zoning. Most of the parcels in the area are zoned either I-1 or I-2, and the transfer to I-2 maintains the integrity of the zoning.

The request was approved by APC members Tyson Brooks, Tim Rohr, Jerome Markley, Bill Horan, Jarrod Hahn, Chandler Gerber, Melissa Woodworth, Becky Stone-Smith, Kiera Lance, Harry Baumgartner Jr., and John Schuhmacher.

In other business, the APC granted a 30-day extension on a violation involving property at 602 W. Mill St. in Ossian. The owner, Eugene Sterling, said the area has been cleared up. The 30-day extension was approved to give Lautzenheiser an opportunity to formally inspect the prop-

daves@news-banner.com

Meta, X questioned over lack of rules against political deepfakes

By MATT O'BRIEN **AP** Technology Writer

Deepfakes generated by artificial intelligence are having their moment this year, at least when it comes to making it look, or sound, like celebrities did something uncanny. Tom Hanks hawking a dental plan. Pope Francis wearing a stylish puffer jacket. U.S. Sen. Rand Paul sitting on the Capitol steps in a red bathrobe.

But what happens next year ahead of a U.S. presidential elec-

Google was the first big tech company to say it would impose new labels on deceptive AI-generated political advertisements that could fake a candidate's voice or actions. Now some U.S. lawmakers are calling on social media platforms X, Facebook and Instagram to explain why they aren't

doing the same.

Two Democratic members of Congress sent a letter Thursday to Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg and X CEO Linda Yaccarino expressing "serious concerns" about the emergence of AI-generated political ads on their platforms and asking each to explain any rules they're crafting to curb the harms to free and fair elections.

"They are two of the largest

platforms and voters deserve to know what guardrails are being put in place," said U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota in an interview with The Associated Press. "We are simply asking them, 'Can't you do this? Why aren't you doing this?' It's clearly technologically possible."

The letter to the executives from Klobuchar and U.S. Rep. Yvette Clarke of New York warns:

"With the 2024 elections quickly approaching, a lack of transparency about this type of content in political ads could lead to a dangerous deluge of election-related misinformation and disinformation across your platforms - where voters often turn to learn about candidates and issues."

X, formerly Twitter, and Meta, the parent company of Face-(Continued on Page 3)

Local/Area

Obituaries.....3 Police Notebook . . . 3

Opinion Star Parker.....4

Also...

Sports. 6-7 Diversions 5



A break in the rain before

it returns tonight Saturday Sunday High 67 High 54 | High 54 Low 41 Low 38 Low 39

More Weather on Page 2



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Bluffton man sentenced

(Continued from Page 1

cuted with the IDOC.

In closing, Andrews also referenced the gallery of people present for the hearing.

"The wide-ranging effect that this has on our system and our society ... this person is a danger to society," Andrews said. "By his own statement he implicates himself — the more he tries to assuage his own guilt, the more he shows he needs a lot of time away to confront himself, confront his actions, and make reparations for those he's harmed."

Hubble's crimes were reported by a woman identified as his wife in the probable cause affidavit. She delivered a victim impact statement on behalf of herself and the children involved.

The woman stated she had married Hubble in 2021 and found child pornography on his computer approximately one year later. At the time, she had three children in the home — her two children under five years old and her 7-year-old niece whose parents were struggling with addiction. She was also five months pregnant with Hubble's child, which she described as a high-risk pregnancy.

She advised she had discovered images on Hubble's laptop from a Russian website commonly used for trading sexually explicit images of children. It was later discovered during the police investigation that Hubble had also taken inappropriate images and videos of her child and niece. The woman now believes he had done so to obtain images from the website — an idea that was also echoed by Thomas.

She additionally noted that while the investigation ensued, she was denied a protective order because of Hubble's lack of criminal history. Hubble allegedly moved just a few streets away from the home.

"I lived in deep fear of what might happen to me if he found out (I had reported him) for over a year because of behavior he had exhibited in the past," she stated. "My (children) both went through a catastrophic loss to their emotional safety when the man they saw as a father was suddenly gone and deemed unsafe. They watched as I

struggled to pay bills and keep myself alive while I was on continuous IV fluids, medication, and home health care during a very high-risk pregnancy."

Furthermore, she emphasized that the investigation was prolonged due to the malware on Hubble's computer. By not allowing the detectives access, she claimed Hubble was preventing other victims from receiving justice.

In her closing statement, she asked Kiracofe to consider what she believed Hubble could be sentenced to as a first-time offender — eight years in the IDOC and 10 years on the sexual offender registry. This, she calculated, would protect her now one-year-old daughter until her 18th birthday.

She concluded, "With this sentence, time served, time off for good behavior, and his time on the registry, my daughter will have the ability to spend her entire childhood with him identified as a sexual predator and receive the protective benefits that apply from (Hubble) being supervised on the registry."

Hubble later accepted the opportunity to provide a statement to the court, during which he apologized to and thanked the police and prosecution. He then described a pattern of "sexuality morality issues similar to many youthful men" he had struggled with, which he stated had become secretive and repressed due to his religious background. Hubble claimed he had tried counseling, but his pedophilia was a deeper issue he had not discussed in counseling and was unaware of.

Hubble said he had always tried to be a good person, including in seeking faith in his incarceration thus far. He added that he respected his former partner's desire for protection but claimed he had always tried to support her.

"This isn't who I want to be," Hubble stated. "I never wanted to hurt her or those kids, and knowing I have — I'm going to have to live with the rest of my life. That will never change, but what I can change is putting my best foot forward and trying to be the best I can be for them, myself, for the state, and the community I live in. That's who I want to be. I am just so heartbroken and sorry for all this."

In taking the sentencing under advisement, Kiracofe asked the prosecution about the 14 dismissed charges. Andrews advised these charges were largely dismissed due to the agreement, not lack of evidence.

Kiracofe then recognized the aforementioned mitigating and aggravating factors within the case but drew concern with how Hubble related himself to the actions.

He stated: "Mr. Hubble indicated he has a problem in this area, yet it's one thing to say, 'I have a problem.' (If) an alcoholic has a problem, (they) don't go work in a bar (and) don't go work in a liquor store. Here, you have a problem, and you have allowed small children to come into your home. So, while I'm sympathetic in some way to your situation, you put yourself in the situation where you could victimize people, and that's not acceptable."

Kiracofe further discussed the content of the downloaded images, some of which displayed child sexual assault, and several concerning internet searches related to the assault of minors. However, he said it was one issue to have sought out child pornography and "quite another" to create it with children under his care.

He also noted that, while Hubble was not required to unlock the computer, his inaction also denied the woman and her family the knowledge of whether or not images were distributed online.

"Mr. Hubble's actions have changed the trajectory of a lot of folks' lives, especially these children's lives," Kiracofe stated. "They're victims now. And even more, he has now a child who was even further victimized — unintentionally, but a victim nonetheless."

Hubble was sentenced to 12 years with two years suspended — with the intention to monitor Hubble's actions on probation — and will be registered as a sex offender for his entire life.

Hubble will receive 152 days credit for time already served and was also ordered to pay \$189 in court costs, a \$100 child abuse prevention fee, a \$500 sexual assault victims assistance fee, and a \$100 administrative fee.

holly@news-banner.com

Weather

Friday, October 6, 2023
(24-hour observations at 8:51 p.m. Thursday)
High: 73; Low: 64; Precipitation: 1 inch of rain
Wabash River Level (at the Main Street bridge): 1.35
feet at 8:45 p.m. Thursday

Wells County forecast

Today: Mostly sunny, with a high near 67. West wind 5 to 15 mph, with gusts as high as 25 mph.

Tonight: A 40 percent chance of showers, mainly before 2 a.m. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 41. West wind 10 to 15 mph, with gusts as high as 25 mph. **Saturday:** A 30 percent chance of showers, mainly

between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. Partly sunny, with a high near 54. Northwest wind around 15 mph, with gusts as high as 25 mph.

Saturday Night: A 10 percent chance of showers before

8 p.m. Partly cloudy, with a low around 38. West wind around 10 mph.

Sunday: A 20 percent chance of showers. Partly sunny, with a high near 54.

Sunday Night: A 20 percent chance of showers. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 39.

Parks Department

(Continued from Page 1)

• The Lancaster Park upgrade is nearing completion, and Fiechter said many of the various contractors are expected to be wrapping up their work this month. The basketball court is finished and many other features are set. Fiechter said she had been told that three semi-tractor-trailer loads of mulch had been put in place on the playground.

• A public meeting on plans to ease erosion on the banks of the Wabash River will be held at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 18, at the Washington Park pavilion. The public meeting is a requirement of the city's receipt of a \$10,757.52 Lake

and River Enhancement grant.

• Fiechter announced an increase in her calculation of costs for the pool's 2023 season. Some chemicals were purchased last year, which meant that the total amount spent on pool operation this year was \$117,383.01.

• A walk to raise support for the department's Rock Steady program for those with Parkinson's disease raised \$6,650. A \$150 donation was received from the Elks Club for swim lesson equipment.

• Day of Caring volunteers painted the gazebo and pulled weeds at the Iris Garden on the Rivergreenway.

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Hoosier kids

(Continued from Page 1) during the 2022-23 academic year.

More than 400,000 students missed at least 10 days of school — which, per Indiana statute — made them "habitually absent."

A school day is considered missed if a student is there for less than half of the

To put those numbers into perspective, state leaders emphasized that 3,086 school buses could be filled with kids if all of Indiana's chronically absent students came to school on the same day.

"We're trying to help people understand that we're not talking about a small amount of people," said John Keller, IDOE's chief information officer. "When you think about it that way, that's a big number."

Keller added that Indiana is "far away" from chronic absentee rates in the 2018-19 school year, when just 11.2 percent met that definition.

The rate rose to 18.5 percent in 2020-21 — the first year after the pandemic — and topped out at 21.1 percent in the 2021-22 school year, according to state data.

year, according to state data.
The 2022-23 data indicates that 19.3 percent of

students were chronically absent from school.

The issue is especially worsening among high schoolers, Keller noted.

State education department officials said the highest chronic absenteeism rates came from the most vulnerable students who were homeless or suffered from displacement, including children in foster care. Housing instability, in addition to mental health challenges, are also driving absentee numbers up, they noted.

Low-income status also increased a student's likelihood of being chronically absent. A lack of transportation is additionally thought to be contributing to missed days at some schools.

Black students saw the largest percentage of chronic absenteeism of any racial or ethnic group last year. Only White and Asian students had below the state average.

Still, chronic absenteeism was higher in some schools than in others. Kenner said in 84 schools, 50 percent of students were chronically absent. Another 270 schools recorded one out of every three students as chronically absent, while 547 schools had one in four students.

Statewide, 1,651 Hoosier schools had at least one out of every 10 students marked as chronically absent, according to state data.

Rates were typically highest in high-poverty urban school districts and charter schools, while suburban schools reported lower

Gary Community Schools had the highest chronic absenteeism rate among the state's public school districts at about 66 percent.

Chronic absenteeism was higher than 40 percent in Muncie and South Bend schools and over 30 percent in Anderson, Richmond, Indianapolis Public Schools and at least two dozen other

Multiple rural districts had high rates, too, including 43.2 percent in Cannelton, 37.5 percent in Madison and 32.1 percent in Medora

and 32.1 percent in Medora.

Rates were mostly lower in suburban districts like Carmel Clay — at 8.4 percent — and in Zionsville, which recorded a 7.3 percent

rate of chronic absenteeism. **How to get more kids in school?**

SBOE officials doubled

down on Wednesday that absenteeism is a problem without a single solution, though.

To start, Jenner said an "Early Warning Dashboard" is in the works to direct resources to at-risk students. The system will be piloted for some schools this academic year. She said the goal is for the dashboard to be ready for all schools by the start of the 2024-25 school year.

Included in the dashboard — which will be connected to Indiana's existing GPS dashboard — will be data on attendance, as well as information about which students at risk. Granular data could provide details about absences at the individual classroom and teacher levels Jenner said

els, Jenner said.

"The reality is that culture eats policy for breakfast," Jenner said, adding that while illness and quarantines kept many students home during the pandemic, the slow rebound in attendance suggests missing school has become a new normal. "So, if we have a national culture of chronic absenteeism, we could sit as a board and pass a number of policies today, but the culture is not there."

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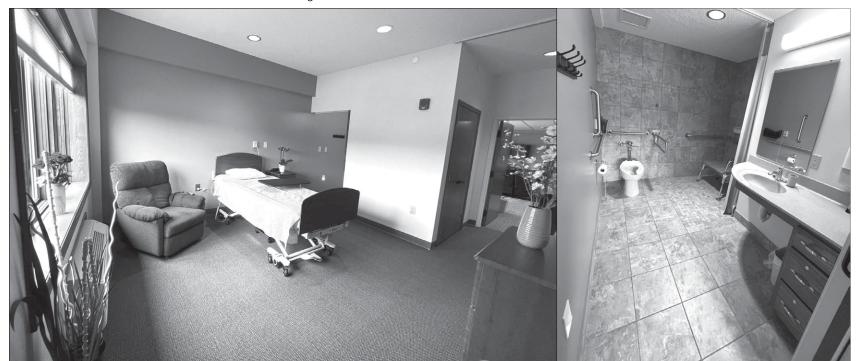
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OBITUARIES

Lee Braselton, 76

Lee "L.H." Braselton, 76, of Ossian, passed away Oct. 2, 2023, at Parkview Hospital Randallia surrounded by his family.

Lee was born in Elberton, Ga. on April 4, 1947, to Ellen and Louis Braselton; both parents preceded him in death. Lee graduated from Central High School in 1965. He married Julia Schwehn on Dec. 9, 1978. Lee retired from GE and spent many years as a car salesman. He most recently



worked for Avis Car Rental. Lee was a member of Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Ossian. His hope and faith in Jesus Christ was the foundation of his life. His greatest joy was his children and his grandchildren and his unconditional love for them was exceedingly transparent in his daily life.

Additional survivors include sons, Robert (Jennifer) Braselton and Ted (Linda) Braselton; daughters, Jennifer (Steve) Moring, Michele Werling, Marissa Johnson, and Jane (Michael) Reinhard; a brother, James (Jean) Braselton; 19 grandchildren; several nephews and nieces; and his chihuahuas, Bella and Bean.

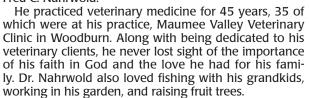
In addition to his parents, Lee was preceded in death by his brother, Glenn Braselton; son-in-law, Josh Johnson; and stepmother, Jessie Braselton.

A funeral service will be held at 2:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 7, 2023, at Bethlehem Lutheran Church 6514 E. 750N in Ossian with Rev. Samuel Wirgau officiating. Visitation will be available one hour prior. Visitation will also be from 2-7 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 6, 2023, at Elzey-Patterson-Rodak Funeral Home 120 W. Mill Street Ossian. Memorial contributions may be made to Bethlehem Lutheran Church or Loving Shepherd Ministries of Bluffton. Fond memories and expressions of sympathy may be shared at www.elzey-patterson-rodak.com for the Braselton family.

David Nahrwold, 69

David F. Nahrwold D.V.M., 69, of Woodburn, passed away on Wednesday, Oct. 4 at Parkview Hospital in Fort Wayne, following a valiant battle with cancer. His faith in Jesus Christ assured him that his spirit and soul are already in heaven awaiting the resurrection of his body on the last day.

Dr. Nahrwold was born in Fort Wayne on Jan. 28, 1954, a son of the late Norma P. (Werling) and



Dr. Nahrwold will be missed by his wife, Elaine (Lund); children, Elisabeth (Jonathan) Held, Stephanie (Donald, M.D.) Fahler and Seth (Becky) Nahrwold, DVM; siblings, Rhonda (Fred) Rasdorf, Curtis (Karen) Nahrwold, Susan (Ramon) Laughbaum, and Carol Nahrwold; grandchildren, Nathaniel Held, Evelyn Fahler, Elyse Nahrwold, Anna Held, Zachary Nahrwold, Ruth Fahler and Lydia

His funeral service is Monday, Oct. 9, 11 a.m. at Ascension Lutheran Church, 8811 Saint Joe Rd in Fort Wayne, with viewing one hour prior.

Viewing is also Sunday, October 8th, from 2-6 p.m. at Ascension Lutheran Church.

He will be laid to rest at Bethlehem Lutheran Church Cemetery in Ossian.

Please omit flowers. Memorials to Ascension Lutheran Church, 8811 Saint Joe Rd, Fort Wayne, IN 46835, or the Purdue Foundation Scholarship Fund (Vet Class of 1978 - 013143) 625 Harrison St. West Lafayette, IN

Memories may be shared at dooleyfuneralhome.com

Indianapolis police capture a cheeky monkey that escaped

Momo the monkey's taste of freedom is over.

The primate spurred an hourslong search on Indianapolis' east side after he escaped Wednesday evening from his owner's property. But the male patas monkey was finally captured safely Thursday morning, police

Momo was captured by the brother of the monkey's owner after police tracked the primate to the bathroom of a house under construction, said Lt. William Carter of the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department.

That was more than enough monkey business for us," the department said in a post on X, formerly known as Twitter, to announce Momo's capture.

Carter said police were called to the city's east side about 6 p.m. Wednesday on a report of "an aggressive animal" that turned out to be the monkey on the run.

After his capture, Momo was taken into the care of Indianapolis' Animal Care Services, which turned him

over to staff at the Indianapolis Zoo for now, said Katie Trennepohl, deputy director of Indianapolis Animal Care Services.

While a permit is not required in Marion County to own such an animal, she said Momo will remain held under the advice of the county's prosecutor's office, which will work with Animal Care Services to determine whether Momo will be returned to his owner.

Trennepohl said Animal Care Services had "dealt with Momo one other time" when he had escaped in

Last night, after Momo escaped again, she said his owner was issued a a citation because the monkey was "chasing and approaching in an unsafe fashion" while on the run in a resi-

dential area. She said that anyone who had direct contact with Momo during his time on the lam should contact the local health department because of a concern about "diseases that can be transmitted to humans.'

Obituary Policy

The News-Banner and Ossian Journal publishes "basic" obituaries free of charge for "local" deaths. "Basic" obituaries will include the deceased's name, age, community of record, date and place of death, basic genealogical information, the date, time and location of calling hours and services and the name of the funeral home handling

If additional information and/or a photo is desired to be included, or if the deceased does not meet the definitions of a "local" person,

there is a charge. Area funeral homes will provide details on the policy and will coordinate obituary publication

Police Notebook

INCIDENTS

City:

Wednesday, 2:16 p.m., 100 block of West South Street. Report of upstairs apartment smelling of marijuana.

Wednesday, 3:38 p.m., 100 block of South Johnson Street. Report of dispute between subjects. Advised to contact the Social Security office.

Wednesday, 3:41 p.m., 900 block of East River Road. Report of neighbor trespassing.

Wednesday, 4:09 p.m., 800 block of South Oak Street. Welfare check requested. No issues.

Wednesday, 5:14 p.m., Walmart. Report of parking issue with semi truck. Driver advised to move along.

Wednesday, 5:49 p.m., Creative Arts Council of Wells County. Subject warned for trespassing.

Wednesday, 8:07 p.m., EZ Bowl. Vehicle hit a curb and was unable to drive due to damage to wheel. Towed to Freeman's.

Wednesday, 8:51 p.m., Ind 116 and North Fairway Lane. Car versus

Wednesday, 9:31 p.m., Bluffton Regional Medical Center. Transported subject to the Wells County Sheriff's Department.

Wednesday, 10:16 p.m., Pine Grove Apartments. Report of neighbors yelling at caller. Both parties claimed being verbally threatened by the other

Wednesday, 10:43 p.m., Pine Grove Apartments. Report of a large dog bark-

Thursday, 12:36 a.m., West Silver and South Jersey streets. Report of group of juveniles playing in street and not moving for traffic. Officer advised adults the middle of the intersection might not be the best place to play foot-

Thursday, 2:29 a.m., Walgreens. Report of someone sleeping in seat of car. Advised they had issues at home and were sleeping it

Thursday, 3:18 a.m., South Main and East Silver streets. Report of man walking backwards and appearing confused. Subject advised he was waiting for the newspaper to

Thursday, 10:50 a.m., 600 block of West Ohio Street. Report of bad burning leaves smell.

Thursday, 12:02 p.m., 800 block of Greenlawn Avenue. Report of domestic issue.

County:

Wednesday, 3:30 p.m., 1000 South and 600 East. Keystone. Officer located large area of damage to asphalt at intersection and followed a trail of fluids. Officer made contact with subject who advised he blew a hydraulic hose on his farm equipment and would take his loader to smooth it out and lay gravel. County highway con-

Wednesday, 4:48 p.m., Wells County Jail. Protection order served to Damien Jackson.

Wednesday, 4:41 p.m., 7200 North 300 West, Marble. Abandoned vehicle

Wednesday, 8:59 p.m.,

10000 West 900 South, Marion. Report of a teenager exhibiting toddler like behavior at the instruction to go to bed. The 13 year old

reportedly broke household items. Wednesday, 9:33 p.m., 200 West and 300 North, Bluffton. Report of a car crashing into a pole, snap-

ping it in half. Wednesday, 11:26 p.m., 700 Countryside Drive, Marble. Report of loud bang. No issues found.

Thursday, 8:41 a.m., 4384 South 300 West, Poneto. Report of a loose horse, possibly belonging to neighbors property.

Ossian:

misdemeanor.

Wednesday, 8:36 p.m., 1100 West 1200 North, Ossian. Subject transported to Wells County Jail.

ARRESTS Tornor Dejuan Doby, 26, Fort Wayne, driving while suspended - prior, Class A

Oscar Soria, 43, Bluffton, operating a motor vehicle without ever receiving a license, a Class C misde-

Meta, X

(Continued from Page 1) book and Instagram, didn't respond to requests for comment Thursday. Clarke and Klobuchar asked the executives to respond to their questions by Oct. 27.

The pressure on the social media companies comes as both lawmakers are helping to lead a charge to regulate AI-generated political ads. A House bill introduced by Clarke earlier this year would amend a federal election law to require labels when election advertisements contain AIgenerated images or video.

"I think that folks have a First Amendment right to put whatever content on social media platforms that they're moved to place there," Clarke said in an interview Thursday. "All I'm saying is that you have to make sure that you put a disclaimer and make sure that the American people are aware that it's fabricated."

For Klobuchar, who is sponsoring companion legislation in the Senate that she aims to get passed before the end of the year, "that's like the bare minimum" of what is needed. In the meantime, both lawmakers said they hope that major platforms take the lead on their own, especially given the disarray that has left the House of Representatives without an

elected speaker. Google has already said that starting in mid-November it will require a clear disclaimer on any AI-generated election ads that alter people or events on YouTube and other Google products. Google's policy applies both in the U.S. and in other countries where the company verifies election ads. Facebook and Instagram parent Meta doesn't have a rule specific to AI-generated political ads but has a policy restricting "faked, manipulated or transformed" audio and imagery used for misin-

formation. A more recent bipartisan Senate bill, co-sponsored by Klobuchar, Republican Sen. Josh Hawley of Missouri and others, would go farther in banning "materially deceptive" deepfakes relating to federal candidates, with exceptions for parody and satire.

AI-generated ads are already part of the 2024 election, including one aired by the Republican National Committee in April meant to show the future of the United States if President Joe Biden is reelected. It employed fake but realistic photos show-

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

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ing boarded-up storefronts, armored military patrols in the streets, and waves of immigrants creating panic.

Klobuchar said such an ad would likely be banned under the rules proposed in the Senate bill. So would a fake image of Donald Trump hugging infectious disease expert Dr. Anthony Fauci that was shown in an attack ad from Trump's GOP primary opponent and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis.

As another example, Klobuchar cited a deepfake video from earlier this year purporting to show Democratic Sen. Elizabeth Warren in a TV interview suggesting restrictions on Republicans voting.

"That is going to be so misleading if you, in a presidential race, have either the candidate you like or the candidate you don't like actually saying things that aren't true," said Klobuchar, who ran for president in 2020.

"How are you ever going to know the difference?

Klobuchar, who chairs ie Senate Rules and Administration Committee, presided over a Sept. 27 hearing on AI and the future of elections that brought witnesses including Minnesota's secretary of state, a civil rights advocate and some skeptics. Republicans and some of the witnesses they asked to testify have been wary about rules seen as intruding into free speech

protections. Ari Cohn, an attorney at think-tank TechFreedom, told senators that the deepfakes that have so far appeared ahead of the 2024 election have attracted "immense scrutiny, even ridicule," and haven't played much role in misleading voters or affecting their behavior. He questioned whether new rules were needed.

"Even false speech is protected by the First Amendment," Cohn said. "Indeed, the determination of truth and falsity in politics is properly the domain of the voters.'

Some Democrats are also reluctant to support an outright ban on political deepfakes. "I don't know that that would be successful, particularly when it gets to First Amendment rights and the potential for lawsuits," said Clarke, who represents parts of Brooklyn in Con-

But her bill, if passed, would empower the Federal Election Commission to requirement on AI-generated election ads similar to what Google is already doing on its own. The FEC in August took

start enforcing a disclaimer

a procedural step toward potentially regulating AIgenerated deepfakes in political ads, opening to public comment a petition that asked it to develop rules on misleading images, videos and audio clips.

The public comment period for the petition, brought by the advocacy group Public Citizen, ends Oct. 16.



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St. Francis of Assisi "Be praised, my Lord, for all your creation."

On October 4, we celebrate the Memorial of St. Francis of Assisi. one of the Church's most venerated and beloved saints. St. Francis is known for his ministry to the poor and underprivileged, his care for nature and animals, and founding the Franciscan order.

Son of an affluent cloth merchant, St. Francis lived in wealth and ease until God used a meeting with a leper to change his heart. While riding on horseback one day, he saw a man disfigured by the disease. Overcome Saturday, Oct. 7th with pity, Francis was compelled to give him his cloak.

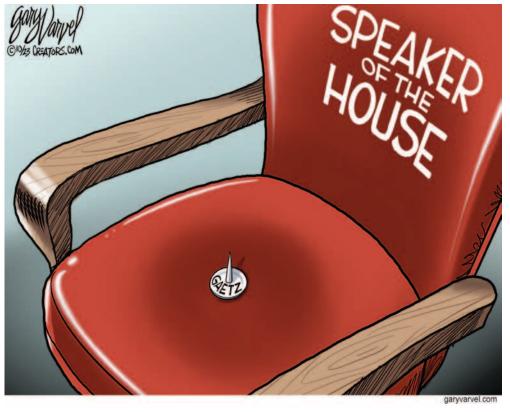
After the incident, St. Francis began 1300 N. Main St. to turn his life toward God, and one | Bluffton

day, while praying in a tiny dilapidated chapel, he heard a voice say to him, "Francis, repair my church." While initially interpreting the command literally, he realized that the command reached beyond the physical church. Rejecting his wealth, he began to live a simple life, performing manual labor and ministering to the sick.

St. Francis was eventually joined by others, forming the Order of the Friars Minor. Their practices included living poverty, demonstrating love for 3 nature, animals, and their fellow human beings, and drawing closer to lesus in their suffering.

ANNUAL Blessing of the ANIMALS 12:00 PM St. Joseph Catholic Church

The Week That Was - a look back through cartoonists' eyes...





YOU MUST BE
ABLE TO PULL THE SWARD
OUT TO BE THE NEXT
SPENKER. IF YOU'RE
AND THE SWARD
OUT TO BE THE NEXT
BROUGH!



Other Opinions Tax fraud at the IRS

The Internal Revenue Service makes clear that taxpayers who willfully conceal or alter tax documents risk severe penalties. But what happens when government auditors are caught manipulating documents and hiding those actions in court?

The IRS has agreed to settle and drop a penalty in Lakepoint Land II LLC v. Commissioner. A judge in U.S. Tax Court had sanctioned the IRS in the case, ripping the agency's counsel for acting in "bad faith" and having "multiplied the proceedings in this case unreasonably and vexatiously" by failing to tell the court that documents it used to assess a penalty had been backdated.

Several other Tax Court cases suggest wider IRS document fiddling as the agency has gone after "syndicated conservation easements." Congress created conservation easements in the 1980s, letting land owners donate the development rights for acreage to a qualified charity in return for a tax deduction.

Those easements have become big business, as legal tax loopholes often do. Companies buy up land, have it appraised for its foregone developmental value, then sell stakes to investors who receive the tax benefit. This entirely legal commerce is disliked by the green lobby and some lawmakers.

The IRS began its crackdown in 2016, and by 2020 former Commissioner Charles Rettig had declared it a "top priority" to "actively identify, audit and litigate" these transactions that "defraud the government of revenue." The IRS zeroed in on what it claimed were inflated land appraisals, denying deductions and slapping firms with hefty penalties.

One legal rub: The federal tax code requires an IRS supervisor to approve in writing the initial determination of a penalty. That didn't happen in Lakepoint. The company presented emails to Judge Christian Weiler showing that the IRS agent on the case failed to get her supervisor's written approval in 2016 for a proposed \$15 million penalty.

When the agent realized this — in February, 2017 — her supervisor acknowledged in an email that this was a "HUGE oversight" and backdated her signature to seven months earlier. IRS attorneys nonetheless swore to the accuracy of this date, and they continued to mislead the court for months even after the falsification was discovered. Judge Weiler ordered the IRS to pay Lakepoint's fees and expenses.

Three more partnerships — Arden Row Assets, Basswood Aggregates, and Delwood Resources — have presented evidence of similar backdating by a different IRS agent and manager. That agent in a March 2022 email tells the manager that "the date you use to sign should either be the date you 'approved' penalties against the taxpayer (7/14/21) . . . or a little thereafter?" The manager a few days later responded: "All 3 are signed with date of July 14, 2021." Note the wink-nod "approved."

The cases suggest a culture of disregard for tax laws that the IRS requires taxpayers to follow to the tee. Imagine the fines or prison sentences awaiting average Joes who backdate tax documents and lie about it.

IRS abuse is all the more outrageous because the partnerships had the legal right to engage in easements at the time.

In addition to settling with Lakepoint, the IRS says it has "undertaken an ongoing review of syndicated conservation easement cases to ensure that the evidentiary record about supervisory approval is properly presented and that the agency pursues or continues to pursue penalties only where appropriate."

Glad to hear it, but it's a disgrace that the IRS had to be found out in court before it stopped its abuses. This is one of many reasons the recent \$80 billion budget increase for the IRS should be eliminated.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
Distributed by The Associated Press

Kevin McCarthy is not the problem

Republican presidential candidate Nikki Haley got to the heart of the government shutdown fireworks in her appearance on Fox News Sunday.

"Let's be clear what the Freedom Caucus is really trying to do; they are trying to cut spending."

That's of course correct. One would be hardpressed to find any Republican, Freedom Caucus member or not, who does not understand the gravity of the state of our federal budget and spending.

Unfortunately, now we have a small group of Republicans doing what liberals do — looking for whom to blame. You would think that House Speaker Kevin McCarthy is personally responsible for \$33 trillion in national debt and a \$2.2 trillion deficit.

McCarthy is sent to do budget battles with his hands tied behind his back. The marching order regarding spending cuts is and has been that only on the table is discretionary spending.

Discretionary spending accounts for 27% of the federal budget.

Discretionary spending is funds that Congress has authority to appropriate annually. About half of it is the Defense budget. Given that our Defense spending is currently at a dangerously low level as a percent of GDP, it is, for practical purposes, also off the table.

So, what is left to target for spending

cuts is miniscule in the grand scheme of things. The allegation that McCarthy betrayed his party and colleagues by not seriously going to budget war and shutting down the government is a grand distortion.

If we want to turn to reality, the real issue is what no one wants to talk about — the approximately 70% of the federal budget that is non-discretionary, which happens automatically.

The major non-discretionary items are interest on the federal debt and entitlement programs — the two largest being Social Security and Medicare.

Interest is a symptom rather than a cause. Interest rates, and hence interest expenditures, have been going up because of all the spending and the inflation that has resulted from this.

at has resulted from this.

So, we wind up staring into the eyes of the ele-

phants in the room.

Social Security and Medicare.
Even our champion of Make America
Great Again, former President Donald
Trump, has insisted that reform of Social
Security and Medicare is off the table.

Federal spending is now around 25% of GDP. CBO projects it reaching 30% in 30 years. The average from 1962 to 2022 was 20.5%

Most of the growth in that spending comes from interest, Social Security and Medicare.

We are a far different country today compared to when these programs were enacted — Social Security in 1936, Medicare in 1965.

The costs of Social Security, a retirement system, and Medicare, a health care payment system for the

elderly, are driven by the percentage of elderly in the population. Lower birth rates, hence fewer children, and longer life spans means a higher percent of elderly and increasingly costly programs.

The median age in the U.S. in 1930 was 26.5. In 1960, it was 29.6. In 2021, it was 38.8.

Per a Cato Institute report, "unfunded obligations for Medicare and Social Security are equivalent to \$650,000 for every U.S. household."

Must our citizens take a beating with benefit cuts and retirement age increases? No.

We need to transform from tax-based government systems to market-based systems of ownership. Markets and ownership are what built our country. Our problems began when we start turning to government.

But major change takes courage and leadership. And in this we seem to be sorely lacking.

I invite those Republican members of Congress, so bent on dumping on Speaker McCarthy, who has done his job keeping the nation functioning and moving forward, to step out and speak to the nation regarding how they propose to reform Social Security and Medicare.

And I invite our Republican presidential candidates, including the one currently leading in the polls, to do the same.

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Today in History

By The Associated PressToday is Friday, Oct. 6, the 279th day of 2023. There are 86 days left in

the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Oct. 6, 1973, war erupted in the Middle East as Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack on Israel during the Yom Kippur holiday, starting a nearly three-week conflict that would become known as the Yom Kippur Wor.

var. On this date:

In 1536, English theologian and scholar William Tyndale, who was the first to translate the Bible into Early Modern English, was executed for beresy

In 1927, the era of talking pictures arrived with the opening of "The Jazz Singer" starring Al Jolson, a feature

containing both silent and sound-synchronized sequences.

In 1928, Chiang Kai-shek became president of China.
In 1939, in a speech to the Reichstag, German Chancellor Adolf Hitler

stag, German Chancellor Adolf Hitler spoke of his plans to reorder the ethnic layout of Europe — a plan that would entail settling the "Jewish problem."

In 1976, President Gerald R. Ford,

In 1976, President Gerald R. Ford, in his second presidential debate with Democrat Jimmy Carter, asserted that there was "no Soviet domination of eastern Europe."

In 1979, Pope John Paul II, on a week-long U.S. tour, became the first pontiff to visit the White House, where he was received by President Carter.

In 1981, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat was shot to death by extremists while reviewing a military parade.

In 2003, American Paul Lauterbur and Briton Peter Mansfield won the Nobel Prize for medicine for discoveries that led to magnetic resonance imaging.

In 2010, the social networking photo app Instagram was launched by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger.

In 2014, the Supreme Court unexpectedly cleared the way for a dramatic expansion of gay marriage in the United States as it rejected appeals from five states seeking to preserve their bans, effectively making such marriages legal in 30 states.

In 2017, the board of directors of The Weinstein Co. said movie mogul Harvey Weinstein was on indefinite leave from the company he founded amid an internal investigation into sexual misconduct allegations against him.



Stretched thin by bridal duties

Dear Annie: My future sister-in-law is getting married, and I am a maid of so many people honor. She already had a bridal party where I made food and helped out tow is an event in before and after the event. Now she is having her bachelorette party. Originally, she stated she just wanted a casual night out with the bridal party. It sounded like it would just be an evening event, so we decided on a Saturday that we would all be free. Now another bridesmaid decided it's going to be more of an all-day affair.

That weekend, there is a fair going on, and my fiance and I park cars at our house for a fee because it is the busiest day of the fair. Since they have changed plans, I will now be missing out on hundreds of dollars that I need. Would it be rude to say that I will meet them later on in the day? — Broke Bridesmaid

Dear Broke Bridesmaid: Weddings have evolved over the years to include not only a ceremony, reception and rehearsal dinner but also a bachelorette party, engagement party, bridal shower, etc. As the maid of honor, it is expected that you help out with all of the initially agreed-upon events, but sacrificing multiple weekends and forfeiting money that you don't have is excessive and uncalled

Since the day portion of the event was not originally part of the plan, simply inform the bridal party that you only had the evening blocked off to celebrate and that, unfortunately, you have business to attend to during the day.

Dear Annie: I enjoyed and wholeheartedly agreed with your advice to "Discouraged Great Aunt," who persistently invites her relatives to events and functions, which they attend only a fraction of the time. Relationships are a two-way street, and she sounds like a very thoughtful person. I have no idea Partner?" is out now! Annie Lane's secwhat the makeup of her nephew's family is, but if it's anything like ours (six kids, ages infant through 13 years old), I wanted to add that attending events can be a huge logistical challenge in a large

While my husband and I love being parents to so many children, attend-

ing events with Annie of varying ages in by Annie Lane and of itself. Our



so we don't attend as many extraneous events as we used to, or take off on a whim to visit family and friends as we may have done in the past. However, this is not a bad thing as it allows us to make the events we do partake in more memorable.

usual obligations

- church, school,

daily chores and

meals, etc. —

take more time

and thought than

when we had a

smaller family,

I've told family and friends that our idea of a good time spent with family now is getting together in our backyard with a pitcher of lemonade to watch the kids play, or meeting halfway between cities at a playground or for a picnic, etc. I love it when a grandparent says, "I'll be in the area soon. Can I come for supper and bring pizza?" The little things that don't take much money or effort matter so much to us. Besides, we've found that the majority of magical interactions between children and older relatives come from a child at ease in their normal environment. Thanks, Annie! — Mom of Many

Dear Mom of Many: I couldn't agree with you more. An outing doesn't have to be super elaborate to be special. At the end of the day, spending time with our loved ones is what matters, and I encourage "Discouraged" to lean into the little, low-pressure moments with her

"How Can I Forgive My Cheating ond anthology - featuring favorite columns on marriage, infidelity, communication and reconciliation — is available as a paperback and e-book. Visit http:// www.creatorspublishing.com for more information. Send your questions for Annie Lane to dearannie@creators.com.

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BLONDIE







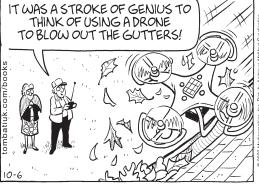
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CRANKSHAFT





My Answer

By Dr. Billy Graham

Q: Christians say that they stand for love and forgiveness, yet some Christians compromise Biblical principles for popularity with secular society, while many other Christians talk more about the "do nots" of their religion. This doesn't seem to balance out too well, does it?

A: The very power of our conviction sometimes inclines us toward feeling that we are right and that all other people are wrong. Christian conviction is based upon the "thou shalts" and the "thou shalt nots" of Scripture rather than our own personal

A God of love must be a God of justice

Biblical conversion, faith, and conviction, it would have a great

impact in the world. While Christians are to exhibit love and forgiveness, because this is what Christ exhibited to the human race, Christians must never compromise Biblical convictions for the sake of popularity. When comfort and ease and pleasure are put ahead of duty and conviction progress is

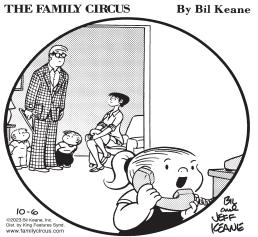
always set back. The Bible says this: "Holding fast the faithful word ... that he might be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict [God's truth]" (Titus 1:9). Mankind seeks to excuse ourselves of sin but God seeks to convict us of it

We are to renounce the evil influence of the world, the flesh, and the devil. There can be no parleying, bargaining, compromise, or hesitation. Christ demands total loyalty, and this is not preached much anymore.

A God of love must be a God of justice. It is because God loves that He is just. His justice balances His love and makes His acts of both love and justice meaningful. Christians must dare to take a strong, uncompromised stand for Jesus Christ.

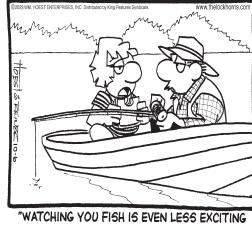
(This column is based on the words and writings of the late Rev. Billy Graham.)

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"Yes, Daddy's here. He's showing everybody his birthday suit.'

The LOCKHORNS



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Bellmont's Carly Gilbert (right) sneaks the ball past Norwell's goaltender Gracie Rinkenberger (left) during the first half of the sectional semi-final match at Norwell. The Braves won 3-1 and advanced to the championship Saturday night against Heritage. Norwell ends the season 11-5-1. (Photo by Ryan Walker)

No. 4 Braves blitz Knights to end girls' soccer season

By RYAN WALKER

Bellmont's offense was just too much for Norwell, ending the Knights season on its home field 3-1 Thursday night.

It was wet and rainy from the opening kick, but the two teams toughed out what should have been the sectional championship game. Heritage (11-3), who Norwell beat 5-1 two weeks ago, will play Bellmont Saturday night in the championship game.

This was the Knights' chance to finally knock the Braves off after losing by one goal in each of their last two meetings. Last year, Norwell was eliminated 2-1 in the sectional semi-final as well. This year, it was 1-0 in the regular season.

The Braves (15-2-2), No. 4 in 2A, came out swinging on the attacking end, barely letting the Knights (11-5-1) possess the ball.

Senior standout Gracie Rinkenger did what she could as the goaltender and made at least seven or more big saves along with her defensive supporting cast.

The kicks just kept on coming until Bellmont broke free with two goals in a row toward the end of the first half. The first was scored by Anna Ruble with five minutes to go, and the second by team leader Carly Gilbert with four. Her 16th goal on the season.

Bellmont scores 2.6 goals per game on average, and with an offense that spreads the field well, it was hard to stop.

"We talked about it all week in planning for it," Norwell head coach Dan Batdorff said after the game. "We know what (the Braves) are going to do, and it's the same thing year after year. It's just they execute, that's the biggest thing. There's ball control, there's execution, great placement of players, they move well off the ball, they move

well together."

At the half, it looked like Norwell didn't stand a chance. But at the beginning of the second half, it looked like a more inspired group, one that had nothing to lose.

Batdorff's team started to control the ball and get a few chances at some through balls. Though they weren't hitting on them, the ball was at least over midfield significantly more often than in the first half.

At the 21-minute mark, Norwell's leading goal-scorer, Grace Mann, sent one through the back of the net to get on the board.

Perhaps the tide was turning? Well, not for long.

Less than two minutes later, Bellmont's Arabelle Laurent scored to squash any momentum Norwell had.

For the rest of the game, the Braves had complete command of the ball before the clock turned to 0.

"It always hurts, but at the same time, this is the No. 4 team in the state," Batdorff said. "I can't complain too much. I mean, they were the better team. They showed it."

Bellmont will head to the championship match against the ACAC champs Heritage on Saturday night at 7 p.m.

For Norwell, it was Batdorff's best season with 11 wins. The coach was nearly emotional as he recapped the season after the game, giving praise to his players and his eight seniors.

"I tried to tell them that, but I was going to break down crying," Batdorff said. "I appreciate them so much. It has been a wonderful season. Statistically, this is the best season I've had as a coach.'

sports@news-banner.com





Norwell MS XC completes successful week

Norwell's Middle School cross country teams recently finished a fantastic season on Wednesday. On Saturday, Sept. 30, the boys' and girls' teams went down to Terre Haute for the state meet. The girls placed third overall in the Big School Division out of 37 participating teams. Mia Kurtz placed 6th overall with a time of 11:04.3, and Reagan Wilson placed 24th with a time of 11:24.9 to earn all-state honors. The boys placed 21st of 38 participants. Hudson Petrie finished 19th overall with a time of 10:12.4 and was named an all-state honoree. On Wednesday, Oct. 4, the Knight girls won the Northeast 8 Conference, and the boys finished second. The girls dominated as individuals, as Kurtz finished in second place overall with a time of 11:45.61, Reagan Wilson third (11:47.95), Ashley Tucker fifth (11:59.07), Kenley Reed sixth (12:06.37), and Macy Oatess eighth (12:20.79). All five received all-conference awards. For the boys, Petrie finished second place overall with a time of 10:40.77, Maddux Thornton seventh (11:16.18), and Kayden Robbins eighth 11:17.5). All three received all-conference awards. Top photo, pictures from left to right: Mya Oatess, Maggi Neuenschwander, Avery Thornton, Ashley Tucker, Mia Kurtz, Reagan Wilson, Macy Oatess, Kenley Reed, and Hadley Meyer. Bottom photo from left to right Cooper Figert, Kayden Robbins, Miles Daugherty, Easton Reinhard, Maddux Thornton, Hudson Petrie, and Harrison Koop. (Photos provided)

High School Calendar

FRIDAY, OCT 6

FOOTBALL: Huntington North at Norwell, 7 p.m.; Adams Central at Bluffton, 7 p.m.; Heritage at Southern Wells, 7 p.m. SATURDAY, OCT 7

CROSS CÓUNTRY (CO-ED): Norwell at Delta Eagle Invitational at Taylor University, 8:30 a.m.; Bluffton, Southern Wells at ACAC race at

Bluffton 11 a.m. VOLLEYBALL: Norwell at Maconaguah Invite, 9 a.m. MONDAY, OCT 9 No events scheduled **TUESDAY, OCT 10** No events scheduled

WEDNESDAY, OCT 11 No events scheduled THURSDAY, OCT 12

VOLLEYBALL: (sectional) Peru at Norwell, 6 p.m.; Southern Wells vs. Lakeland Christian at Southwood, 7 p.m.; Whitko at Bluffton, 7:30 p.m. FRIDAY, OCT 13

FOOTBALL: Norwell at Columbia City, 7 p.m.; Bluffton at Lakeland, 7:30 p.m.; Southern

Wells at South Adams, 7 p.m. **SATURDAY, OCT 14**

CROSS COUNTRY (CO-ED): (sectional) Norwell, Bluffton, Southern Wells at Taylor University, 10:30 a.m. boys race, 11:15 a.m. girls

Vikings beat Knights in 5 sets

Norwell fell on the road against Huntington North 3-2 Thursday night.

The Knights won the first set 25-15, the sec-

ond 25-22, then lost 25-19, 26-24, and 15-10 in the rest. Their record is now 17-10 on the season.

Stat leaders for the night were Jordyn Xayyachack with 26 sigs, Vanessa Rosswurm and Macie Saalfrank with 15 kills, Marlee Wenger with 26 assists, Mekynzi Beck with two blocks, and Autumn Lee, Saalfrank, and Wenger with three aces.

The junior varsity team won in two sets

(25-16, 25-15).Norwell will be at the Maconaquah Invitational to finish up the regular season starting at 9 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 7.

Dick Butkus, HOF Chicago Bears linebacker, dies at 80

By ANDREW SELIGMAN **AP Sports Writer**

CHICAGO (AP) - A photo of Dick Butkus sneering behind his facemask filled the cover of Sports Illustrated's 1970 NFL preview, topped by the headline, "The Most Feared Man in the Game." Opponents who wound up on the business end of his bone-

Butkus, a middle linebacker for the Chicago Bears whose speed and ferocity set the standards for the position in the modern era, died Thursday, the team announced. He was 80.

rattling hits could testify that wasn't an

exaggeration.

According to a statement released by the team, Butkus' family confirmed that he died in his sleep at his home in Malibu, California.

Butkus was a first-team All-Pro five times and made the Pro Bowl in eight of his nine seasons before a knee injury forced him to retire at 31. He was the quintessential Monster of the Midway and was elected to the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1979, his first year of eligibility. He is still considered one of the greatest defensive players in league history.

"Dick Butkus was a fierce and passionate competitor who helped define the linebacker position as one of the NFL's all-time greats. Dick's intuition, toughness and athleticism made him the model linebacker whose name will forever be linked to the position and the Chicago Bears," NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell said in a statement. "We also remember Dick as a long-time advocate for former players, and players at all levels

A moment of silence honoring Butkus was held before the Bears played at the Washington Commanders on Thursday night.

Trading on his image as the toughest guy in the room, Butkus enjoyed a long second career as a sports broadcaster, an actor in movies and TV series, and a sought-after pitchman for products ranging from antifreeze to beer. Whether the script called for comedy or drama, Butkus usually resorted to playing himself, often with his gruff exterior masking a softer side.

Former driver Romain Grosjean is taking **Andretti Global to court**

By JENNA FRYER AP Auto Racing Writer

Former Formula One driver Romain Grosjean said Wednesday he is pursuing arbitration against Andretti Global because the team is not bringing him back for a third season in the IndyCar Series.

Grosjean, who has spent the three seasons since his death-defying 2020 F1 crash racing IndyCar in the United States, said in a statement posted to social media that he believed he was returning to Andretti in 2024.

Andretti has hired Indianapolis 500 winner Marcus Ericsson and is believed to be dropping from four cars to three for next season.

"I had expected to continue racing with the fine people of Andretti Autosport in the coming years," the Frenchman said. "I am disappointed that is not being fulfilled, and wish Andretti team members well. I am pursuing other options to continue my IndyCar career in pursuit of excellence. I have commenced an arbitration proceeding in Indiana against Andretti Autosport, seeking to protect my rights.

A spokeswoman for Andretti did not return messages seeking comment Wednesday.

Grosjean, who relocated from Switzerland to Florida ahead of the 2022 season, has hired an Indianapolis law firm. He spent the season after his fire driving for Dale Coyne Racing and overperformed in underperforming equipment.

That landed Grosjean a promotion to Andretti, but he had a public feud with his teammates in 2022 and despite a strong start this season he has never won a race in two seasons with the team. He's winless in 47 career IndyCar starts over three seasons.

"I enjoyed working with the IndyCar team at Andretti Autosport and am proud of the successes we shared through two seasons. I am thankful for the many friendships developed at the highest level of American open-wheel racing," Grosjean wrote.

Grosjean scored back-to-back podiums in April and was a contender to win the season-opening race at St. Pete. But he crashed in the Indianapolis 500 and again the next week in Detroit. It was part of a five-race stretch in which Grosjean finished 22nd or lower in four races at a time teams are putting together next year's lineup.





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News-Banner Scoreboard

FOOTBALL

NFL

AMERICAN CONFERENCE													
East													
W	L	Т	Pct	PF	PA								
Buffalo 3	1	0	.750	139	55								
Miami 3	1	0	.750	150	119								
N.Y. Jets 1	3	0	.250	62	84								
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Thursday's Games Chicago 30, Washington 20 Sunday's Games Jacksonville vs Buffalo at London,

GBR, 9:30 a.m.
Baltimore at Pittsburgh, 1 p.m. Carolina at Detroit, 1 p.m. Houston at Atlanta, 1 p.m. N.Y. Giants at Miami, 1 p.m. New Orleans at New England, 1

p.m. Tennessee at Indianapolis, 1 p.m. Cincinnati at Arizona, 4:05 p.m. Philadelphia at L.A. Rams, 4:05

Kansas City at Minnesota, 4:25 p.m N.Y. Jets at Denver, 4:25 p.m. Dallas at San Francisco, 8:20 p.m. Open: Cleveland, L.A. Chargers, Seattle, Tampa Bay

Monday's Games

Green Bay at Las Vegas, 8:15 p.m.
Thursday, Oct. 12
Denver at Kansas City, 8:15 p.m.
Sunday, Oct. 15

Baltimore vs Tennessee at London. Carolina at Miami, 1 p.m. Indianapolis at Jacksonville, 1 p.m. Minnesota at Chicago, 1 p.m. New Orleans at Houston, 1 p.m. San Francisco at Cleveland, 1 p.m.

Seattle at Cincinnati, 1 p.m. Washington at Atlanta, 1 p.m. New England at Las Vegas, 4:05 p.m. Arizona at L.A. Rams, 4:25 p.m. Detroit at Tampa Bay, 4:25 p.m. Philadelphia at N.Y. Jets, 4:25 p.m.

N.Y. Giants at Buffalo, 8:20 p.m. Open: Pittsburgh, Green Bay Monday, Oct. 16
Dallas at L.A. Chargers, 8:15 p.m.

BASEBALL

Postseason Baseball Glance WILD CARD SERIES

(Best-of-3) American League Minnesota 2, Toronto 0 Tuesday, Oct. 3: Minnesota 3, Wednesday, Oct. 4: Minnesota 2,

Texas 2, Tampa Bay 0 Tuesday, Oct. 3: Texas 4, Tampa Bay 0 Wednesday, Oct. 4: Texas 7, Tampa

National League Arizona 2, Milwaukee 0 Tuesday, Oct. 3: Arizona 6, Milwau-

waukee 2 Philadelphia 2, Miami 0 Tuesday, Oct. 3: Philadelphia 4,

Wednesday, Oct. 4: Arizona 5, Mil-

Wednesday, Oct. 4: Philadelphia 7, **DIVISION SERIES**

(Best-of-5) American League

Baltimore vs. Texas Saturday, Oct. 7 — Texas at Balti-more, 1:03 p.m. (FS1) Sunday, Oct. 8 — Texas at Balti-more, 4:07 p.m. (FS1) Tuesday, Oct. 10 — Baltimore at Texas, 8:03 p.m. (Fox)

x-Wednesday, Oct. 11 — Baltimore x-Friday, Oct. 13 — Texas at Bal-

Houston vs. Minnesota winner Saturday, Oct. 7 — Minnesota at Houston (Verlander 13-8), 4:45 p.m.

Sunday, Oct. 8 — Minnesota at Houston (Valdez 12-11), 8:03 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 10 — Houston at

Minnesota, 4:07 p.m. (Fox) x-Wednesday, Oct. 11 — Houston at Minnesota x-Friday, Oct. 13 — Minnesota at

National League (All Games on TBS) Atlanta vs. Philadelphia
Saturday, Oct. 7 — Philadelphia at
Atlanta, 6:07 p.m.
Monday, Oct. 9 — Philadelphia at
Atlanta, 6:07 p.m.

Wednesday, Oct. 11 — Atlanta at Philadelphia

x-Thursday, Oct. 12 — Atlanta at Philadelphia

x-Saturday, Oct. 14 — Philadelphia at Atlanta Los Angeles vs. Arizona

Saturday, Oct. 7 — Arizona at Los Angeles (Kershaw 13-5), 9:20 p.m. Monday, Oct. 9 — Arizona at Los Angeles, 9:07 p.m.

Wednesday, Oct. 11 — Los Angeles x-Thursday, Oct. 12 — Los Angeles

at Arizona x-Saturday, Oct. 14 — Arizona at

BASKETBALL WNBA

(Best-of-5)

No.1 Las Vegas vs. No. 2 New York Sunday, Oct. 8: Las Vegas at New York, TBD Wednesday, Oct. 11: Las Vegas at

New York, TBD Sunday, Oct. 15: New York at Las Vegas, TBD x-Wednesday, Oct. 18: New York at

Las Vegas, TBD x-Friday, Oct. 20: Las Vegas at New York, TBD

TRANSACTIONS

Thursday's Transactions BASEBALL

American League
BALTIMORE ORIOLES — Announced RHP Jorge Lopez has cleared waivers and elected free agency in lieu of accept-ing an assignment to Norfolk (IL). MINNESOTA TWINS — Assigned OF Gilberto Celestino outright to St. Paul (IL).

Mational League

MIAMI MARLINS — Reinstated RHP

Eury Perez from the 15-day IL.

MILWAUKEE BREWERS — Reinstated RHP J.B. Bukauskas from the

FOOTBALL National Football League CHCAGO BEARS — Reinstated G Taven Jenkins from injured reserve. Released QB Nathan Peterman

Big Ten jumps through hurdles to create new expanded schedule

AP College Sports Writer

Weighing competitive balance, traditional rivalries, television ratings and some very long road trips, the Big Ten produced 262 versions of a football schedule to find the one that best fit its soon-to-be 18-team, bicoastal conference.

The Big Ten released five seasons' worth of football opponents for each of its schools on Thursday. The conference adds Southern California, UCLA, Oregon and Washington next year to a league that had all its schools in the Eastern and Central time zones.

The 2024 schedule will be highlighted by Oregon hosting Ohio State, Penn State at Southern California and Michigan going to Washington.

Big Ten Chief Operating Officer Kerry Kenny said the conference wants to have game dates for the 2024 season set by the end of October.

The Big Ten schedule will remain at nine league games and the conference next year will scrap its divisional format, which had already been determined before the latest expansion. The top two teams in the final standings will play in the conference championship game. Tiebreaking procedures will also be announced later.

The Big Ten had released opponents for the 2024 and 2025 seasons — the first with USC and UCLA — in June, but those needed to be torn up after the conference expanded West again in August with Oregon and Washington also leaving the Pac-12.

"Had to go back to the drawing board," Big Ten Commissioner Tony Petitti said. "We're staying with a lot of the principles that were in place when we did the original announcement back with USC and UCLA being integrated."

Scheduling consultant Kevin Pauga said: "For the better part of eight weeks, the computer was running in some form or fashion."

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1016 JERSEY ST., Bluffton, now through next week, Mon.-Fri. noon-dark, Sat. 8 a.m.dark, Sun. 1 p.m.-dark. Comforter sets, Christmas, antiques, baby bed, portable crib, baby clothes, old ties, curtain rods, decor, furniture, kitchen stuff, lamps, king sheet sets, round clock table, throw pillows, wheelchairs, walkers, transfer boards, books, 69 white chenille bedspread. Too much to list! Everything must go! Prices negotiable!

FRIDAY, OCT. 6, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., 2400 W 200 S, Liberty Center, 1 mile north of Liberty Center, 1/2 mile east. I want my garage back! Everything half price. Come and fill your bags. Kid's clothes, juniors, some toys, lots of misc

GARAGE/BAKE HUGE SALE, rain or shine, Thursday -Friday, 8 a.m.-?, 1533 Bell Brook (off Dustman). Brand new Evenflo infant carseat stroller combo, dual ride, namebrand adult and kids clothes NB to 4T, Matilda Jane, Gap, Maurices, Pink, Adidas, Nike, North Face, Michael Kors, Kate Spade, namebrand athletic shoes, 3D prints, Star Wars busts, fidget toys, toys, Legos and more. Fresh pies, cookies, cinnamon

LIVING ESTATE SALE 1504 Aberdeen L., Highland Terrace addition, New Haven

(1469 to Highway 30 -New Haven left on Green Street, left on Aberdeen), October 4-7, Wednesday-Friday 8-5, Saturday 8-2. A bit of everything including household, seasonal linens, crafts, puzzles, hats, no furniture, or clothes. Our local church is also having their annual sale.

HELOISE HINT: When you set up your garage sale. Make it easy for customers to touch. see and reach all of the sale items. They will examine everything closely before purchasing. Fax Heloise @ 210-HELO-ISE (435-6473).

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Lottery Numbers

Thursday's Drawings HOOSIER LOTTERY Cash 5 — 04-20-35-36-

Cash4Life — 11-19-37-49-52, Cash Ball: 01

Quick Draw Midday -03-04-08-20-22-29-32-35-36-49-52-53-54-56-60-64-67-69-75-77, BE: 20

Daily Three-Midday — 01-06-06, SB:00 Daily Three-Evening —

06-02-03, SB: 03 Daily Four-Midday — 04-04-08-04, SB: 00 Daily Four-Evening -

06-08-08-06, SB: 03 **Quick Draw Evening** 02-03-06-16-20-30-39-41-42-43-45 -47-54-56-58-60-62-71-72-75, BE: 62

Hoosier Lotto — Estimated jackpot (for Saturday): \$37.6 million **MEGA MILLIONS**

Estimated jackpot (for

Estimated jackpot (for

Friday): \$350 million **POWERBALL**

Saturday): \$1.4 billion

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LINE CLASSIFIED AD DEADLINES

Monday editions: Friday by 4 p.m. Tuesday-Friday editions: day-before by 4 p.m. Saturdays: Friday by noon

Public Sale

Calendar

BIDDING ENDS OCTOBER 8 - (Online Only) - Estate of Robert Isch, seller. 1978 White 2-50 diesel tractor, 2015 Ex-Mark Laser-Z zero turn riding lawn mower, 2002 Simplicity lawn mower, 2006 Simplicity Legacy riding lawn mower, single axle utility trailer, tandem axle trailer, 14' hay wagon, 3 bottom plow, Winco generator, lawn and garden, tools, antique & modern furniture, antiques, primitives, glassware, household. Sale manager, Patrick Carter, The Steffen Group Inc., 260-824-3006, www.steffengrp.

BIDDING NOW OPEN AND STARTS CLOSING OCTO-BER 8 STARTING AT 4 PM EST - Larry Beer, owner. Sports collector's dream! 950+ lots featuring lots of sports memorabilia, signed jerseys, bats & balls, MLB, NFL, MLB cards (some cards Graded), die cast toys, stamp collection, yard & hand tools, Yamaha gas powered golf cart, like new Cub Cadet riding lawn mower, household, furniture, Fenton glass, Roseville & Hull pottery, more! Krueckeberg Auction & Realty LLC, Kjauction.com, 260-724-7402.

OCTOBER 15-OCTOBER 22 - (Online Only Auction) - Michael & Jane Michaud, seller. Gravely zero turn riding mower, 2018 Family Farm Home single axle utility trailer, Craftsman portable air compressor, Craftsman & DeWalt power tools, late model appliances, antique furniture, assorted household, Christmas decorations, Berkley fishing boat w/14' trailer, assorted fishing. Preview: Oct. 12 from 3 p.m.-6 p.m. and Oct. 19 from 3 p.m.-6 p.m., 1791 E 1100 S, Warren. Sale managers, Pat-

rick Carter & Nick Huffman.

The Steffen Group Inc., www. steffengrp.com, 260-824-3006. BIDDING STARTS CLOS-ING OCTOBER 17 START-ING AT 6 P.M. EST - Ronald L Franke estate, owner. Real estate 6 p.m.: 812 sf, full basement, 2 bed, 2 full bath, 14'x22' detached garage, .29 acre lot, Fort Wayne Community School, Wayne Township, Allen County Personal property 6:30 p.m.: 2006 Chevy Monte Carlo SS, 105k miles, household, tools, riding lawn mower, furniture, collectibles, morel Preview: Oct. 9, 5-6 p.m., 930 Irene Ave., Fort Wayne. Pick up: Oct. 18, 3-6 p.m. Kruecke-berg Auction & Realty LLC, Kigueting com. 260, 724, 7402 Kjauction.com, 260-724-7402 OCTOBER 22-OCTOBER

27 - (Online Only Auction)
- Michael & Jane Michaud, seller. Single story home situated on 4.55 Acres w/outbuildings. 3 bedroom and 2 full bathrooms with 1,880 square foot and an attached 2 car garage. Open houses: Oct. 12 from 3-6 p.m., Oct. 19 from 3-6 p.m., Oct. 26 from 4-6 p.m., 1791 E 1100 S, Warren. Pat Carter & Nick Huffman, sale managers. The Steffen Group Inc., www.steffengrp.com, 260-824-3006.

OCTOBER 22- OCTOBER 29 - (Online Only Auction) -Harvey E. & Wilma D. King, seller. H&D Repair Center & Body Shop retirement auction. Automotive & body shop equipment, pickup truck, tractor, Rotary Lift 9,000-lb. capacity 2-post hydraulic lift, mower. Preview: Oct. 19 from 3 p.m.-6 p.m. and Oct. 26 from 3 p.m.-6 p.m., 300 Standard Oil Blvd., Montpelier. Sale manager, Patrick Carter, The Steffen Group Inc., www.steffengrp.com, 260-

824-3006 OCTOBER 27 - 8 a.m. -

Secured creditors & various consignors, owners. 815 Adams St., Decatur. Truck & equipment auction. Live and online bidding. 700+ lots! 100+/- municipal units! 2012-2014 Freightliner M2106 box trucks, dump trucks, day cabs, sleepers, utility trucks, bucket trucks, utility & semi trailers, SUV's, 1/2 ton & 3/4 ton pickups, 100+ various skid steer attachments & more! Cargo & passenger vans, large group of Chevy Impalas, Tahoes, Dodge Chargers, more! Selling absolute! Accepting consignments! Krueckeberg Auction & Realty LLC, Kjauction.com, 260-724-7402. **BIDDING NOW OPEN AND**

STARTS CLOSING NOVEM-BER 5 STARTING AT 4 PM EST - Randy Rossman, owner and multiple consignors. Online only consignment auction. 1,000+ lots! Featuring furniture, household items, collectibles, antiques, tools, guns, & much more! Auction preview: Nov. 2, 3-5 p.m., 812 Elm St., Decatur. Pick up times: Nov. 6, 1-6 p.m. & Nov. 7, 9 a.m.-noon, 3 pick up locations in Decatur. Krueckeberg Auction & Realty LLC, Kjauction.com, 260-724-

SUDOKU ANSWER

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Trump lawyers seek dismissal of DC federal election subversion case

Presidential immunity used as argument against prosecution

WASHINGTON (AP) — Lawyers for Donald Trump asked a judge Thursday to dismiss the Washington federal election subversion case against him, arguing the Republican is immune from prosecution for actions they say were taken in his official role as president.

The motion amounts to the most pointed attack yet by defense lawyers on the federal case charging Trump with plotting to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election he lost to Democrat Joe Biden. It tees up a fight over the scope of presidential power, forcing courts to wrestle with whether the actions Trump took in his failed bid to remain in office fell within his duties as commanderin-chief or whether they strayed far outside his White House responsibilities and are subject to prosecution. "Breaking 234 years of

precedent, the incumbent administration has charged President Trump for acts that lie not just within the 'outer perimeter,' but at the

heart of his official responsibilities as President, the defense motion states. "In doing so, the prosecution does not, and cannot, argue that President Trump's efforts to ensure election integrity, and to advocate for the same, were outside the scope of his duties."

The presidential immunity argument had been foreshadowed for weeks by defense lawyers as one of multiple challenges they intended to bring against the indictment.

Special counsel Jack Smith's team is expected to vigorously contest the motion. It is not clear when U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan might rule, but potentially protracted arguments over the motion including an expected appeal if she denies the request — could delay the case as courts step into what defense lawyers described an unsettled question.

The Supreme Court has held that presidents are immune from civil liability for actions related to their official duties. But Trump's lawyers noted in their motion that no court has addressed the question of whether that immunity shields a president from criminal prosecution, hinting that the defense will likely fight the issue all the way to the nation's highest

"In addressing this question, the Court should consider the Constitution's text, structure, and original meaning, historical practice, the Court's precedents and immunity doctrines, and considerations of public policy," they wrote.

Prosecutors appeared to anticipate the immunity argument, writing in the indictment that though political candidates are permitted to challenge their election losses and to even falsely claim victory, Trump's actions strayed far beyond what is legally permissible in the run-up to the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the U.S. Capitol, when pro-Trump rioters stormed the building to disrupt the counting of electoral votes.

In their motion, defense lawyers argue that the actions that form the basis

of the indictment, including urging the Justice Department to investigate claims of voter fraud and pressing state officials on the administration of elections, cut to the core of Trump's responsibilities as commander-in-

The Justice Department has held that sitting presidents cannot be prosecuted. The motion Thursday seeks to ensure that same protection to a former president for actions taken while in office, asserting that no prosecutor since the beginning of American democracy has had the authority to bring such charges.

"Every action of the Defendant charged in the indictment occurred while he was still in office as President of the United States, and, according to the prosecution, all concerned a federal government function," Trump's lawyers wrote. "Given the all-consuming nature of the Presidency, these facts alone strongly support the notion that the indictment is based solely on President Trump's official acts."

They contend that Trump's tweets and public statements about fraud in the election and Vice President Mike Pence's role in the certification were directly related to his assertion that the election's outcome was tainted by fraud and that the Justice Department and certain states had failed to adequately investigate it.

And they say meetings detailed in the indictment with Justice Department officials also fall within his official duties because he was urging his agency "to do more to enforce the laws that it is charged with enforcing."

Prosecutors alleged a broad range of criminal conduct in a four-count indictment issued Aug. 1, accusing Trump of conspiring with a half-dozen allies to pressure state officials to alter the results of their elections; enlist slates of fake electors in battleground states who could falsely claim that Trump had won; and persuade Pence to shirk his duty to certify the vote count before Congress.

The indictment says Trump knew the claims he was pushing about election fraud were false but did so anyway in an effort to undermine the integrity of the democratic process. But Trump's lawyers say "the president's motivations are not for the prosecution or this Court to decide."

Trump's lawyers also argue his 2021 impeachment trial acquittal bars his prosecution, saying the Constitution suggests presidents can only be criminally charged in cases where they are impeached and convicted by the Senate.

Biden administration resumes deportation flights for Venezuelan migrants as arrivals grow

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The Biden administration will resume deporting Venezuelan migrants, the largest single group encountered at the U.S.-Mexico border last month, back to their economically troubled country as their arrivals continue to grow.

U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, speaking in Mexico City Thursday, cited the new measure as one of the "strict consequences" the Biden administration is pairing with the expansion of legal pathways for asylum seekers.

'Our two countries are being challenged by an unprecedented level of migration throughout our hemisphere," Mayorkas said, referring to Mexico.

The repatriation flights are expected to begin shortly, said two U.S. officials, though they did not provide specific details on when the flights would begin taking off. The officials were not authorized to disclose details of the government's plan and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity.

The resumption of deportation flights comes not long after the administration increased protected status for thousands of Venezuelans who had previously arrived to the U.S., they must have entered the country before July 31 of this year to be eligible for temporary protected status.

In making the recent expansion of protections official, President Joe Biden's administration said just this week that it had determined that "extraordinary and temporary conditions continue to prevent Venezuelan

Mayorkas on Thursday addressed the contrast with the announcement just days later of more deportations, saying "we have made a determination it is safe to return

By CHRISTINA LARSON

AP Science Writer

footprints in New Mexico are likely the old-

est direct evidence of human presence in the

Americas, a finding that upends what many

archaeologists thought they knew about

when our ancestors arrived in the New

edge of an ancient lakebed in White Sands

National Park and date back to between

21,000 and 23,000 years ago, according to

research published Thursday in the journal

first reported in Science in 2021, but some

researchers raised concerns about the dates.

Questions focused on whether seeds of

aquatic plants used for the original dating

may have absorbed ancient carbon from the

lake — which could, in theory, throw off

lines of evidence for the older date range. It

uses two entirely different materials found

at the site, ancient conifer pollen and quartz

lenges the once-conventional wisdom that

The reported age of the footprints chal-

The new study presents two additional

radiocarbon dating by thousands of years.

The estimated age of the footprints was

The footprints were discovered at the

World.

New research confirms that fossil human

Further evidence points to

footprints in New Mexico being

oldest sign of humans in Americas

nationals from returning in safety.'

Venezuelan nationals who arrived in the United States subsequent to July 31 and do not have a legal basis to remain here."

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who led a U.S. delegation to Mexico, added that "we have an ironclad commitment to provide protection for those who qualify. That remains paramount in everything we're

Administration officials would not discuss details about how frequently deportation flights would be going to Venezuela or describe how Venezuela agreed to accept back their citizens except to say that, like other countries around the world, the U.S. has long encouraged Venezuela to accept back its nationals. Cuba, another U.S. adversary, announced earlier this year that it would begin accepting Cuban deportees but there has only been one flight a month.

The U.S. had been returning some Venezuelans via commercial flights, but in relatively small numbers and through third countries.

In Venezuela, the government said it had reached an agreement with U.S. officials for a safe and orderly repatriation.

"Venezuelan migration in recent years is a direct result of the application of unilateral coercive measures and a blockade of our economy," Venezuela's foreign ministry said via X, the platform formerly known as Twitter. It said the government would support repatriated Venezuelans.

The U.S. move is the latest effort to deal with swelling numbers of migrants as the administration comes under increasing pressure from Republicans and mayors from the president's own party to do more to slow

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"This is a subject that's always been con-

about how we understand the last chapter of the peopling of the world," said Thomas Urban, an archaeological scientist at Cornell University, who was involved in the 2021 study but not the new one.

humans didn't reach the Americas until a few thousand years before rising sea levels covered the Bering land bridge between Russia and Alaska, perhaps about 15,000

troversial because it's so significant — it's

is convinced. "If three totally different methods converge around a single age range, that's really significant," he said. The new study isolated about 75,000 grains of pure pollen from the same sedi-

mentary layer that contained the footprints. "Dating pollen is arduous and nail-bit-

Thomas Stafford, an independent archae-

ological geologist in Albuquerque, New

Mexico, who was not involved in the study,

said he "was a bit skeptical before" but now

ing," said Kathleen Springer, a research geologist at the United States Geological Survey and a co-author of the new paper. Scientists believe radiocarbon dating of terrestrial plants is more accurate than dating aquatic plants, but there needs to be a large enough sample size to analyze, she said.

The researchers also studied accumulated damage in the crystal lattices of ancient quartz grains to produce an age estimate.

Ancient footprints of any kind — left by humans or megafauna like big cats and dire wolves — can provide archaeologists with a snapshot of a moment in time, recording how people or animals walked or limped along and whether they crossed paths. Animal footprints have also been found at White Sands.

While other archeological sites in the Americas point to similar date ranges including pendants carved from giant ground sloth remains in Brazil — scientists still question whether such materials really indicate human presence.

"White Sands is unique because there's no question these footprints were left by people, it's not ambiguous," said Jennifer Raff, an anthropological geneticist at the University of Kansas, who was not involved in the study.