

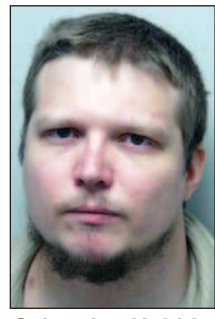
# The News - Banner

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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2023 BLUFFTON, INDIANA • Wells County's Hometown Connection \$1.00

## 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



Sebastian Hubble

minors, including images of child sexual assault. Hubble also secretly took inappropriate images of children under his care.  
A significant portion of the conversation 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 FBI.  
"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

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 ex-

(Continued on Page 2)



**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)

## Parks Department raises rates on pool, facility rentals

**By DAVE SCHULTZ**  
Admission fees for the Wells Community Pool and rates for Parks Department facility rentals will go up in 2024.  
The three members of the Bluffton Parks and Recreation Department's board present at Thursday night's meeting — Rick McEvoy, Christine Zadylak, and Susan Campbell (John Gerber was absent) — approved the rate increases proposed by Parks Superintendent Brandy Fiechter. They were modest 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.  
Rental of the large pavilion at Roush Park went from \$75 per day to \$95 for four hours or less and \$125 for more than four hours. Rental of the small pavilion at Roush

Park cost \$50 per day this year; next year's fees will be \$50 for up to four hours and \$60 for more than four hours.  
Rental of the new pavilion at Roush Park will run \$60 for up to four hours and \$70 for more than four hours.  
The city's most rented pavilion in 2023 has 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 weekend rates is an effort to even out the pavilion's rental numbers; this year the facility was rented only 16 times during the week and 47 times on the weekend.  
In other business Thursday night:

(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 property.

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## Hoosier kids missed between 10 to 18 days of school last year

**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 action.  
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 year.  
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)

## 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 election?  
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 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-

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**Outside**  
  
A break in the rain before it returns tonight  
Today Saturday Sunday  
High 67 High 54 High 54  
Low 41 Low 38 Low 39  
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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.

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# 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 day.

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.

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 rates.

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 districts.

Multiple rural districts had high rates, too, including 43.2 percent in Cannelton, 37.5 percent in Madison 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.

“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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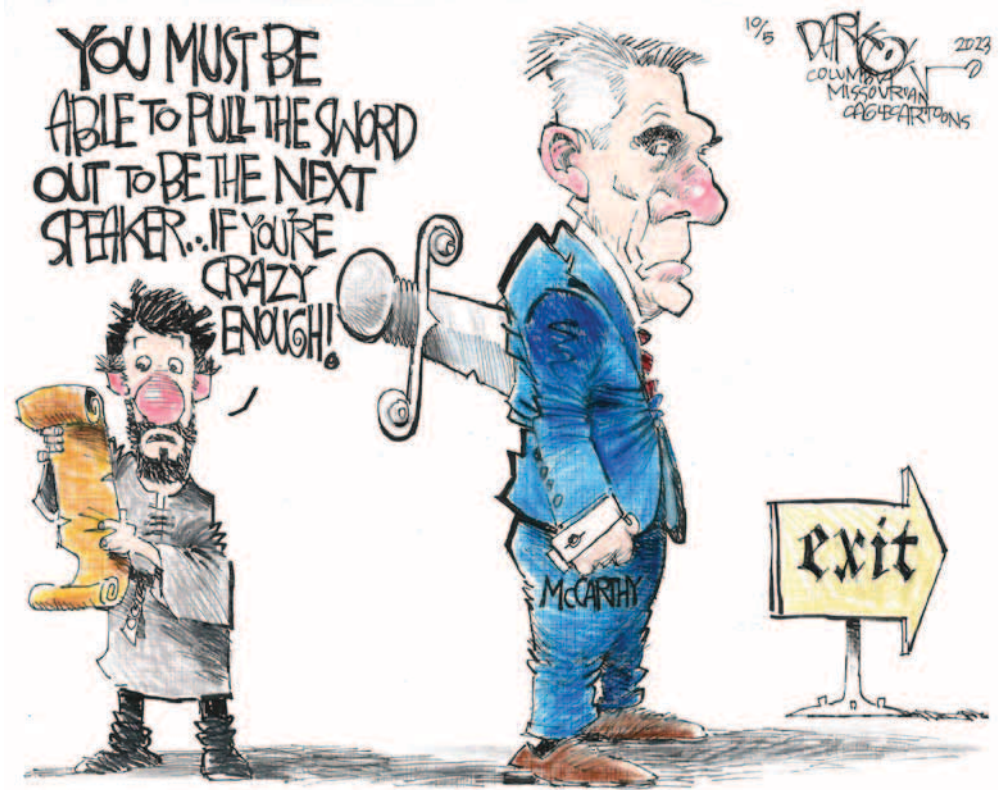
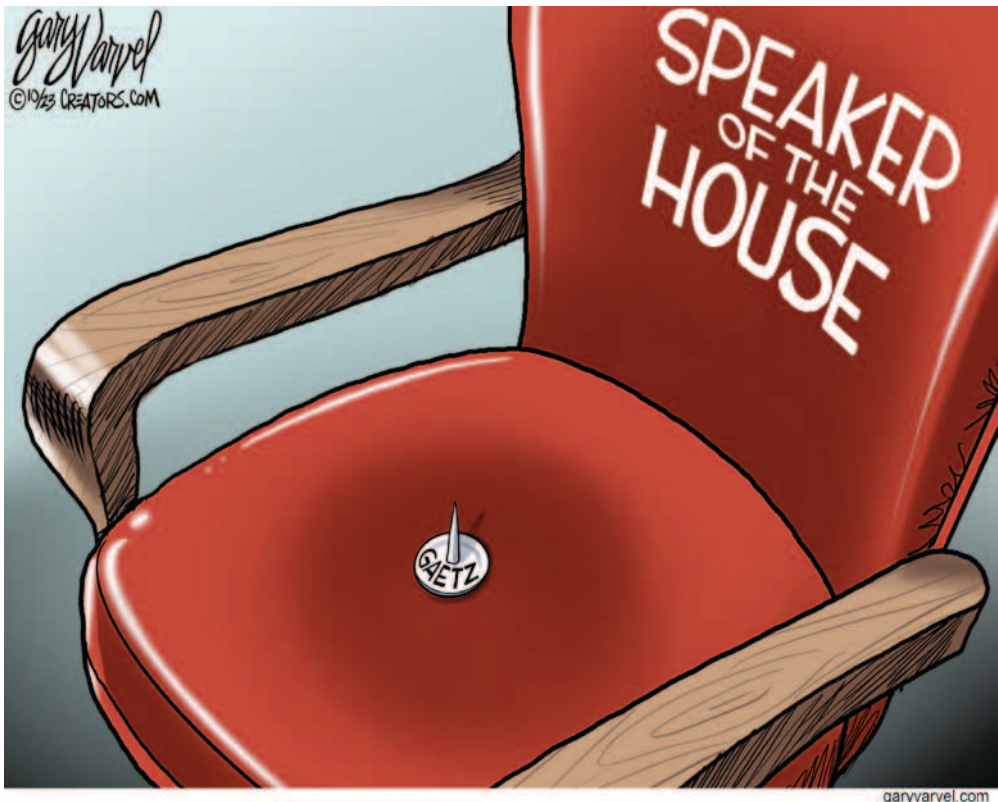



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The Week That Was - a look back through cartoonists' eyes...



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 hard-pressed 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.

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.

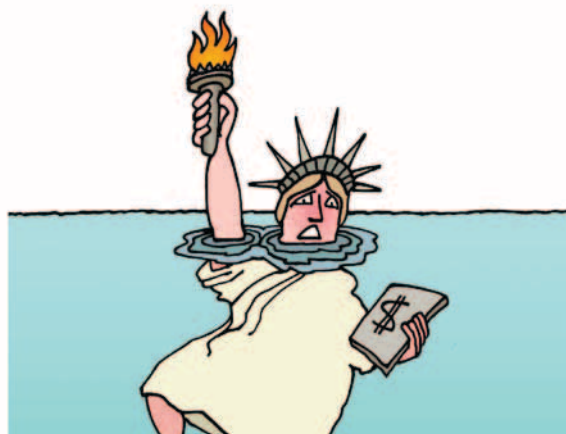
But major change takes courage and leadership. And in this we seem to be sorely lacking.

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.



Star Parker



Today in History

By The Associated Press

Today 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 War.

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 heresy.

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 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 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.

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Bellmont's Carly Gilbert (right) sneaks the ball past Norwell's goaltender Gracie Rinkenger (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."

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### 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 COUNTRY (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 Maconaquah 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 race.

## 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 second 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 Ross-wurm 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-rattling hits could testify that wasn't an exaggeration.

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.

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 of the game."

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 anti-freeze 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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