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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2023

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Jess Osborn stands with a skeleton at a portion of the haunted house tucked behind a graveyard. Names of the deceased include Noah Escape and Cu Later Allie Gator. (Photos by Sydney Kent)

House full of haunts and candy

Horizon Events prepares for its annual haunted house

By SYDNEY KENT

The progress Horizon Events has made on its annual haunted house is almost as spooky as the themed decor lining the Archbold Wilson Park trail.

Last month, the News-Banner met with Jeff Osborn, the president of the local nonprofit, as well as additional board members. The group explained the upcoming plans for the event, many of which have now been brought to fruition.

"These will all be covered in tarp," Osborn said Wednesday evening, pointing to a row of makeshift buildings. "Kids will begin trick or treating along the trail until they get up to the haunted house."

The trail is currently adorned with skeletons, witches, pumpkins, and the names of local businesses that have sponsored the event. Some residents have

even been spotted taking selfies with the larger-than-life skeleton. More decor is expected to be added.

Osborn said the nonprofit is currently seeking volunteers to help pass out candy at the many candy stations along the trail. Businesses are also needed to "sponsor a monster" to support the free event.

Osborn began the now-beloved tradition for his children when he was a resident in Huntington. The event has significantly evolved over the years with the help of the board, volunteers, and members of the community. This year is expected to draw the largest crowd of kids so far.

Anyone interested in volunteering, becoming a sponsor, or giving a tax-deductible donation to Horizon Events should contact Jeff Osborn at 260-307-1134.

sydney@news-banner.com

Wayne Metals to expand with new Markle facility

By DAVE SCHULTZ

MARKLE — Wayne Metals is expanding its Markle operations, adding a 38,000-square-foot facility and a fiber laser cell.

The estimated cost for the two improvements is an estimated \$6,750,000, according to documents filed with the Markle Town Council Thursday night. The documents asked for tax abatement on the improvements on a five-year basis — 100 percent the first year and going down each year to 85 percent, 75, 65, and 50 percent.

The three Markle Town Council members — Matthew Doss, Nick Lund, and Blake Caley — all voted in favor of the abatement request.

Wayne Metals was represented at Tuesday's meeting by Andrew Wigner, the company's controller. Chad Kline, Wells County's economic development director, also helped present the company's plans and formally request approval of the abatement request.

"We'd like to express our thanks to them for their continued investment," Kline told the council. Kline added that Bluffton-based Briner Building Inc. will construct the \$4 million facility, which will consolidate its warehouse and shipping operations. The company said it expects to have the building, which will connect to its current facility at 400 E. Logan St./U.S. 224, completed by August of next year.

In a press release, Wayne Metals said the second investment will be what it called a "state-of-the-art fiber laser cell."

"This strategic investment will bolster their competitive edge in the market, supporting their vision of continued growth and industry leadership," the press release from Kline's office said.

Wayne Metals has three manufacturing facilities, two in Markle and one in Allen County. The company specializes in stamping, fabrication, and powder coating.

The company employs 180 people right now and the investments are expected to add 10 people to the payroll.

"We appreciate our long-standing partnership with Indiana, Wells County, and the town of Markle for their unwavering economic support and recognize our responsibility as a leader in the community now and in the future," said Rollyn Coverdale, Wayne Metals' chief operating officer.

"Wayne Metals has established itself as a pioneer and leader in stamping, fabrication, and finishing," Kline said in his news release. "It has been exciting to see this company continuing to expand its presence in its hometown through an investment of over \$4 million in a 38,000-square foot building expansion and an additional \$2.75 million in equipment."

(Continued on Page 2)

Superintendent of Markle seeks semi-retirement

By DAVE SCHULTZ

MARKLE — The partial retirement of the town's superintendent, a change in the speed limit on Novae Drive, a planned requirement for garage sale permits, and a look ahead to potential problems during a solar eclipse on April 8 were topics of discussion during the Markle Town Council meeting Thursday night.

Rick Asher has served as the town's superintendent for 40 years, and the emotion showed in his voice. After he talked about some other town business, he said, "This is the hard part."

He then said that he had put in for his pension and asked the council members — Matthew Doss, Nick Lund, and Blake Caley — for permission to work on a part-time basis.

"Instead of coming in and telling the guys we have to do

(Continued on Page 2)

Lawmakers push for better higher education cost

By LESLIE BONILLA MUÑIZ
Indiana Capital Chronicle

Indiana lawmakers on Tuesday reviewed the results of a "first-of-its-kind" request of higher education cost and debt data — and found it lacking.

The data was riddled with holes from institutions unable to submit the desired data in the correct format or within the narrow timeframe allowed, and peppered with limitations.

"I think we don't have the data to say anything at this point," said Rep. Jeff Thompson, R-Lizton, at the interim study committee on fiscal policy's sole meeting Tuesday. He is vice-chair.

Policymakers should reframe their requests and allot more time for data collection, said the nonpartisan agency

(Continued on Page 2)



Safety First

Above, Nicole Eakright, the Carseat Coordinator at Family Centered Services, (pictured) goes over a carseat safety checklist at the Spooktacular Safety Event Thursday afternoon. Eakright has been in the position for five years and said it is important to her that kids in the community are safe.

At right, this curious little one is good to go after her carseat safety check. FCS Director of Youth Services, Angie Dial, said FCS provides free carseat safety checks all year long. (Photos by Sydney Kent)



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Outside



Small chance of rain today, storms tonight

Today	Saturday	Sunday
High 72	High 62	High 54
Low 54	Low 44	Low 40

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Wayne Metals expanding

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ment.”

Doss, president of the Markle council, also made a statement in the announcement.

“The significant growth plans will not only enhance production capabilities but also create new job opportunities and enhance job security for its workforce,” Doss said in the press release. “This investment reaffirms Wayne Metals’ position as a first-class employer in Markle.”

Kline added that based on the company’s investment and job creation plans, the Indiana Economic Development Corporation and the town of Markle committed incentives to support of the project.

daves@news-banner.com



Participating in a groundbreaking ceremony for Wayne Metals’ expansion Tuesday were, left to right, Chris Elser and Alex Kellam of Briner Building; Corey Barnard of Fifth Third Bank; Andrew Wigner, Tim Dirig, Jerry Henry, Rollyn Coverdale, Rick Skinner, and Jenny Weinley, all of Wayne Metals; Matt Doss and Nick Lund of the Markle Town Council; and Chad Kline, Wells County’s economic development director. (Photo provided)

Markle superintendent

(Continued from Page 1)

something,” Asher said, “I want to just ask them ‘Do you need me today?’ If they don’t, then I’ll go home.”

The board approved Asher’s request for part-time employment and expressed its thanks for the work he has done and for his willingness to continue to work on an as-needed basis.

“It’s time to turn things over,” Asher said, adding, “I’ve seen a lot of good changes.”

“We honor what you’ve done for the town,” Doss said.

In other business:

- Town Marshal John Markley asked the council to lower the speed limit on the Novae Parkway from Asher Drive to the town’s north limits. The speed limit there has been 55 mph since the thoroughfare was annexed to the town and Markley asked to knock it down to 35. The board members approved the measure after suspending

the rules and passing it on both readings Thursday night.

- A measure sought by the town to require permits for garage sales will be considered by the council at an upcoming meeting. Since the measure involves the charging of fees, the rules can’t be suspended. The proposed permit fee will be \$3 per sale with a maximum of five sales per year. While no permits will be required during the community’s spring and fall townwide garage sales, they will count against the maximum of five sales per year.

- A total eclipse of the sun is expected to cut across America’s midsection on April 8, and Markle is on the northern edge of the 100 percent blockage. That’s expected to bring an influx of short-term visitors into the town; as Caley put it, “We’ll have people spending a day and a half setting up and getting out of town in 30 minutes.” A plan is already in place to have a gathering at the Markle Fish and Game Club

Park with the title “A Total Eclipse of the Park.”

- Two letters were read by Doss from individual complaining about dogs running loose in town, but Markley believes them to be bogus. Both letters were “signed” by people who apparently don’t exist, Markley said, and the town resident who was the subject of one of the letters doesn’t even own a pet.

- Mike Grant, the town’s assistant superintendent, reported that the campaign to raise funds for the park is close to completion. The council approved adding \$7,500 to the \$2,500 it had already granted to the project.

- Asher said the town started picking up leaves a couple of weeks ago and asked residents to place them on the sidewalk. “Please be patient with us,” he said. “We will pick up your leaves.”

- Trick-or-treating hours in Markle will be 5:30 to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 31.

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Higher education cost

(Continued from Page 1)

tasked with conducting the analysis.

Legislators also critiqued the universities for declining to present before the committee, pointing to the institutional representatives observing silently from the back row of the room.

Student loan debt down

The interim committee asked more than a half-dozen public higher education institutions for student loan debts, alumni salaries, staff salaries, program provision cost and more.

It made its initial request in August and gave the institutions — including Ivy Tech Community College, Ball State University and multiple Purdue University campuses — less than six weeks to hand over data in mid-September. But they worked up to Monday night on some elements, Indiana Legislative Services Agency Fiscal Analyst Austin Spears told lawmakers.

Spears cautioned multiple times that the institutions often defined and recorded metrics differently, complicating his agency’s attempts to compare data across institutions. Small program sizes at given degree levels also meant small — and volatile — sample sizes, he said.

Still the agency found that the average Hoosier

higher education student owed less in debt in 2022 compared to a decade prior, even without accounting for inflation.

Those who obtained short-term certificates from Ivy Tech in 2012 owed more than \$8,000 on average, but 2022 graduates owed less than \$1,000 on average, according to Spears’ slides. Vincennes University reported a drop from about \$11,000 in loan debt to \$8,000 during that time period.

Students who obtained long-term certificates and associate degrees in 2022 also owed less debt on average compared to 2012, also in non-inflation-adjusted dollars — except at Ball State University.

Spears noted smaller loan debt declines for bachelor’s degrees, and a “mixed bag” for master’s and doctoral degrees.

Student costs, staff pay disparities

The Legislative Services Agency also examined the cost to students to complete different degrees, with tables noting each institution’s most and least expensive programs. But even that information came with caveats.

Oddly high and low dollar amounts — like a \$40,000 short-term certification in multimedia

design at the Indiana University regional campuses — prompted Spears to warn of possible “data issues.”

Ball State wasn’t able to provide the data required and was excluded, and Vincennes could only offer partial information.

Rep. Ed DeLaney, D-Indianapolis, also observed that the costs reported were “sticker prices.”

“That’s not what everyone pays,” he said, after scholarships.

What students and their families actually owe, DeLaney said, is “the essential question.”

The Legislative Services Agency also collected data showing massive disparities between student-facing faculty — even excluding adjunct educators — and administrators.

Spears said formatting this information was also challenging, as some institutions may have converted faculty pay to full-time salaries differently, and may or may not have included other benefits in those calculations.

One school takes lawmakers up on offer

Seven institutions submitted narratives fleshing out their data, but just one presented before the committee Tuesday, prompting

Weather

Friday, October 13, 2023

(24-hour observations at 11:54 p.m. Thursday from Fort Wayne International Airport)

High: 66; Low: 49; Precipitation: None

Wabash River Level (at the Main Street bridge): 1.24 feet at 8:45 p.m. Thursday

Wells County forecast

Today: A 10 percent chance of showers after 5 p.m. Mostly sunny, with a high near 72. East wind 10 to 15 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

Tonight: Showers, with thunderstorms also possible after 11 p.m. Low around 54. East wind 10 to 15 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph. Chance of precipitation is 100 percent. New rainfall amounts between a quarter and half of an inch possible.

Saturday: Showers. High near 62. Southeast wind 10 to 15 mph becoming northwest in the morning. Winds could gust as high as 20 mph. Chance of precipitation is 90 percent. New precipitation amounts between a tenth and quarter of an inch possible.

Saturday Night: A 40 percent chance of showers before 2 a.m. Cloudy, with a low around 44. Breezy, with a north wind 20 to 25 mph.

Sunday: A 20 percent chance of showers after 2 p.m. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 54.

Sunday Night: A 10 percent chance of showers before 8 p.m. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 40.

Ford at spending limit to get new contract with striking workers

DETROIT (AP) — A top Ford executive says the company has reached the limit of how much money it will spend to get a contract agreement with the striking United Auto Workers union.

Kumar Galhotra, president of Ford Blue, the company’s internal combustion engine business, told reporters Thursday that Ford stretched to get to the offer it now has on the table.

His comments are starkly different from those made by UAW President Shawn Fain Wednesday when he announced an escalation of the union’s strike by walking out at Ford’s largest and most profitable factory. The apparently widening labor rift indicates that Ford and the union may be in for a lengthy strike that could cost the company and workers billions of dollars.

Fain said on Wednesday that Ford told UAW bargainers for nearly two weeks that it would make another counter-offer on economic issues. But at a meeting called by the union, the company didn’t increase its previous offer, Fain said. “Ford hasn’t gotten the message” to bargain for a fair contract, Fain said in announcing the walkout by 8,700 workers at the company’s Kentucky Truck Plant in Louisville.

“We’ve been very patient working with the company on this,” he said in a video. “They have not met expectations, they’re not even coming to the table on it.”

Galhotra called Ford’s offer “incredibly positive” and said Ford never indicated to the union that it would be increased.

“We have been very clear we are at the limit,” he said on a conference call with reporters. “We risk the ability to invest in the business and profitably grow. And profitable growth is in the best interest of everybody at Ford.”

The company has a set amount of money, but is willing to move dollars around in a way that might fit the union’s needs, he said, adding that he still thinks it’s possible to reach a deal.

On Thursday, Fain hinted at further action against Stelantis.

rebuke from some legislators.

Ivy Tech’s vice president of legal and public affairs, Mary Jane Michalak, told lawmakers the community college was working diligently to lower costs beyond just tuition and fees.

“That is a huge cost to students, and that is a cost that is not transparent to students when they ... sign up for a class,” Michalak said. She cited research showing that students who can’t afford materials often go without.

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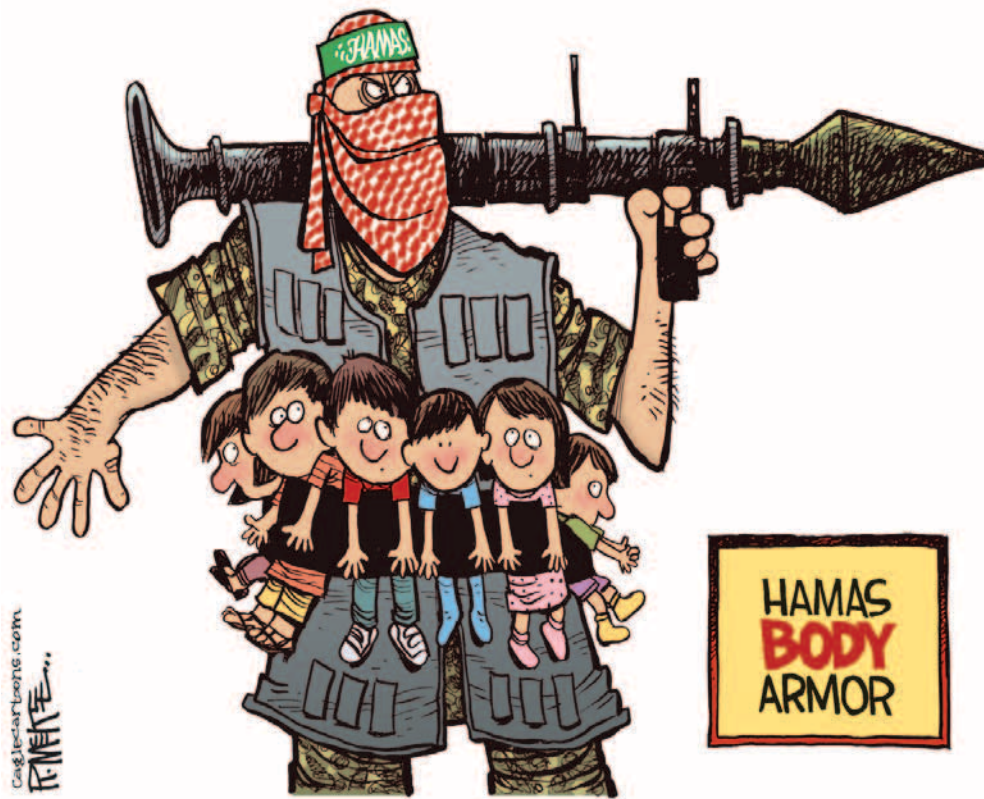
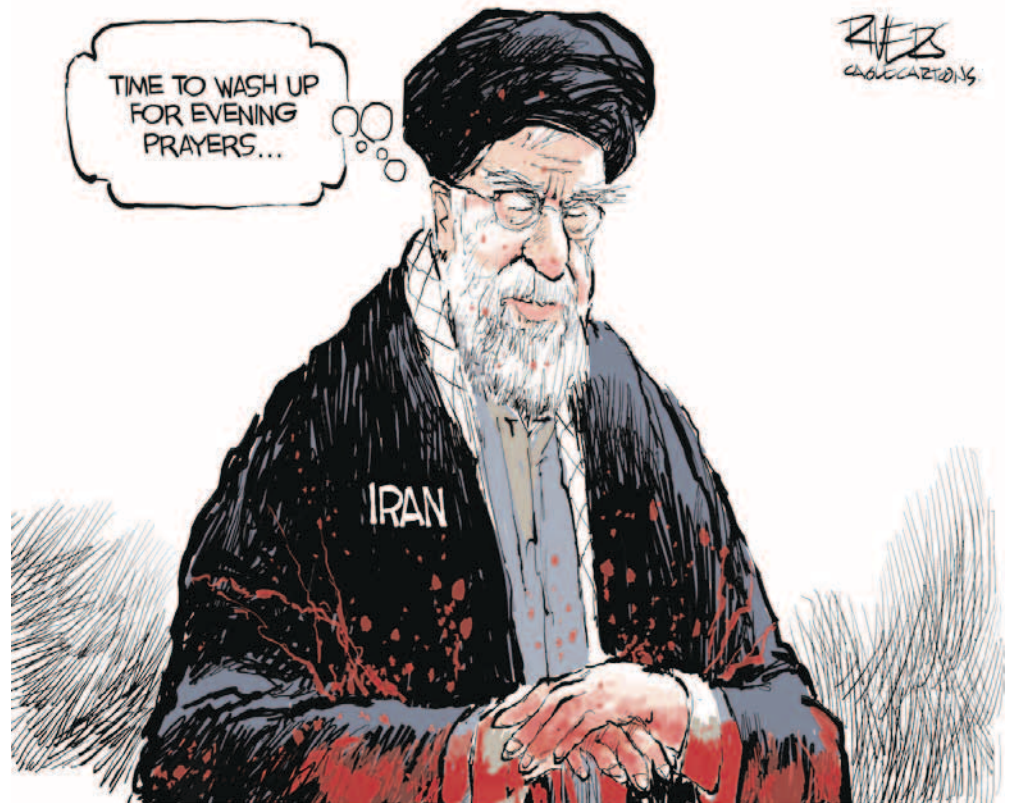
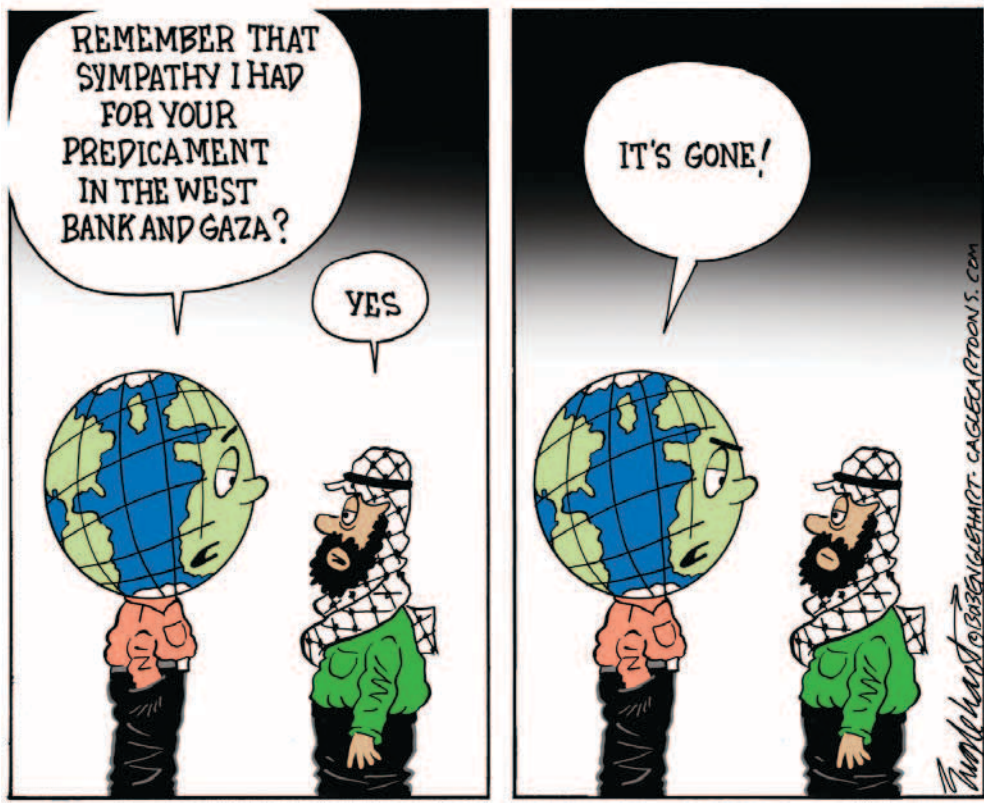
“Butterfly” Prayer Service for Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you.”
Jeremiah 1:5

Sunday, October 15th at 2:00 PM
St. Joseph Catholic Cemetery
2980 E State Rd I24, Bluffton

Place a Memorial “Butterfly” Ornament at St. Joseph Catholic Cemetery in memory of our lost loved ones.

Hamas attacks Israel - through cartoonists' eyes...



Other Opinions

Interest rates are compounding the U.S. debt

Borrowing is expensive again, as anyone who has tried to buy a car or home lately can tell you. The interest rate on 10-year Treasury bonds, the benchmark for home loans, is hovering around 4.75%, a nearly two-decade high. This will significantly add to the federal government's expenses and raises the urgency to lower the deficit. Interest costs are already the fastest-growing part of the budget. Net interest costs — a nonnegotiable expense — nearly doubled as a share of federal outlays between 2020 and 2023, going from \$345 billion, or 5%, to \$660 billion, or 10%. (Defense, by comparison, cost \$815 billion, or 13% of spending in 2023.)

The higher rates partly reflect the Federal Reserve's necessary campaign against inflation, but they also mean that the miracle of compounding is now working against the country's fiscal stability. Barring policy changes, recent interest rate increases could add \$3 trillion over the next decade to interest costs, according to Marc Goldwein, senior policy director for the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget.

In addition to financial danger, there's irony here: While millions of Americans bought or refinanced homes at mortgage rates below 4% in recent years and locked those cheap rates for 30 years, the U.S. government failed to do so. Top Democratic economists such as Janet L. Yellen and Lawrence H. Summers urged a government borrowing spree during a period of seemingly permanent low interest rates before 2020. They argued it was wise to borrow long-term and invest in productivity-enhancing infrastructure and education, as well as the green transition. The government did indeed borrow massively in 2020, but largely to keep businesses and consumers solvent during the pandemic. The Biden administration and Congress have subsequently made investments but were unable to lock in low rates for decades. The average maturity in the federal debt portfolio is about six years, meaning a huge chunk of government debt must soon be refinanced at high rates. Consider the three-month Treasury bill. The yield on that was almost zero in 2021. Now, it's more than 5%.

There was already a critical need for Congress and President Biden to start addressing the long-term fiscal situation through some combination of higher taxes, moderate expense cuts, and adjustments to Social Security and Medicare. We laid out a plan earlier this year to stabilize the debt. The sobering new interest-rate reality makes it even more pressing. Indeed, the infamous crowding-out effect from large federal debts might start making a comeback. Instead of providing capital to invest in private business, directly or through the stock market, people with extra cash are likely to choose to earn high rates on less risky government debt. This could hurt U.S. growth. One sign that investor caution, and not just Fed policy, is at work: Interest rates on government debt have continued to rise well after the Fed's last hike, which occurred in July.

With the House of Representatives in chaos, perhaps the best hope is for a bipartisan group of senators to launch a debt commission to generate a plan. It might not get taken seriously for a while with the 2024 election looming. But if interest costs remain high, so will the risks of inaction.

THE WASHINGTON POST
Distributed by The Associated Press

Democrats should have helped McCarthy hold his job — for their own sake

For all the attention it's getting on social media, the least interesting question in American politics today is who deserves blame for the fall of former speaker Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) and the chaos that has engulfed the House of Representatives. There's enough blame to go around — and, in any case, innocence is no protection from the consequences.

Obviously, it's not the job of Democrats to rescue the ungovernable Republican caucus from its worst impulses, nor is it their fault that eight members of that caucus decided to stage a pointless rebellion against their own leadership. And McCarthy might have rescued his speakership if he'd done more to court Democratic support. When Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-Fla.) put forward a motion to vacate the speakership, McCarthy should probably not have just assumed that Democrats would help him out — or at least, abstain from the vote, allowing the majority of Republicans who still supported him to vote down the rebellion. He should have, y'know, made sure.

Yet Democrats cannot deny that they were active participants, not mere passive spectators, politely declining to rescue a Republican who demanded their assistance but offered nothing in return. They took the unprecedented step of banding together with a handful of the GOP's most radically unserious attention junkies to vacate the speakership for the first time in U.S. history — a motion for which they provided all but eight of the 216 votes.

In doing this, Democrats broke with tradition. Joshua Huder, a senior fellow at Georgetown University's Government Affairs Institute, told me that historically, "parties just did not get involved in the other party's leadership stuff."

Democrats should have held to that precedent. Not because they now bear moral responsibility for the catastrophe — that prize goes to Gaetz and his merry band of outlaws. But because the chaos is bad for America in a way that might come back to bite Democrats in a very tender place.

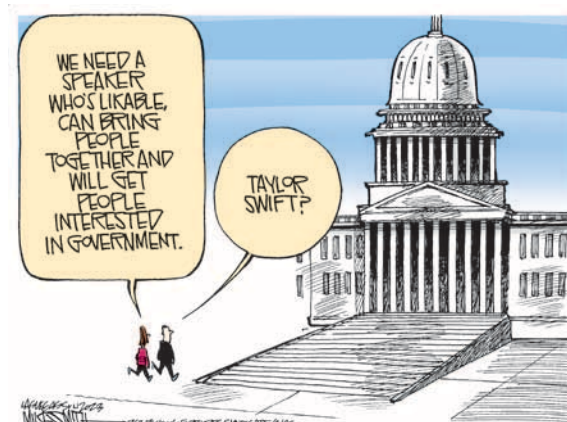
Democratic defenders seem to have several theories of how things might actually work out well for



Megan McArdle

them. The most basic is that McCarthy's undoing simply doesn't matter, because all Republicans are hostage to the same radical faction. This seems daft. Every likely candidate for speaker is at least as conservative as McCarthy, and at least one plausible candidate, Jim Jordan (Ohio), is much more so. I doubt Jordan would have sought Democratic help to avert a government shutdown, as McCarthy did (triggering the Gaetz rebellion). And I doubt anyone else will in the future, either, after Democrats helped overthrow McCarthy.

Nor can I bring myself to believe, as I've seen some speculate, that House Republicans might now be forced to make concessions to Democrats to stabilize the speakership. "Democrats really burned Republicans," says Huder. "There was a



question of how much goodwill there was between the parties before this, but there is no question now. There's none." Why would angry Republicans voluntarily hand Democrats more power?

More plausibly, some progressives seem to believe that McCarthy's fall will curb Republican excesses by punishing leaders who coddle extremists. Unfortunately, this theory has two problems. First, the burn-it-all-down rebels aren't responding to McCarthy's cues; they're mostly courting former president Donald Trump, or hard-line base voters, who don't particularly like McCarthy. Moreover, Democrats just helped the extremists overthrow a more moderate leader; how does this punish extremism?

The last and most compelling theory in favor of the Democrats' strategy is that, even if it doesn't punish radicals, empowering them in the

short term helps Democrats take back the House next year. "Senior Democrats believe that the chaos enveloping House Republicans has the potential to further discredit the GOP as a party of incompetence and ideological extremism," reported Politico on Wednesday.

No doubt, the GOP looks foolish. But does this translate into more votes for Democrats? The kind of news junkies who hang on every detail of the fiasco are already loyal partisans, and Democratic politicians get no bonus votes for convincing reliable base voters that Republicans are even worse than they thought. Unfortunately, the relatively apolitical swing voters probably aren't paying that much attention to legislative infighting.

Of course, people will pay attention if the House ends up shutting down the government in November, after McCarthy's stopgap funding expires. And if the next speaker is too weak or ideologically blinkered to make a deal, voters will probably assign Republicans a greater share of the blame.

But the history of previous shutdowns under Presidents Barack Obama and Trump suggests this won't influence many votes unless Republicans take things so far that voters start seeing major personal impacts — if Social Security checks aren't mailed out, for instance. Republicans probably aren't that crazy.

Even if it doesn't get that far, however, the chaos might have another effect that could hurt Democrats badly: It could push up interest rates on treasury debt. These are already at 16-year highs, making it more expensive for the government to borrow money. Business and consumer debt are also affected by higher rates.

If chaos in Congress makes markets start to worry more about default, the rates will rise further. And consumers who feel the pinch will not blame Congress, nor sit still for anyone's complicated explanation of how it's all the fault of radical Republicans. As always, they will blame the occupant of the Oval Office for their economic woes. And if Biden goes down, he will take congressional Democrats with him.

This will not be fair. But then, it's a bit late for any of the participants in this debacle to start demanding fairness from our politics.

Follow Megan McArdle @asymmetricinfo on X (formerly Twitter).

Why sex can be worth the wait

Dear Annie: I just read the advice to "Teen With No Experience," the high school girl who wants to lose her virginity. I thought I might give a different perspective from a male point of view. I lost my virginity at far too young an age. At the time, I thought getting "experience" was the thing to do. When I met my future wife, she was a virgin, in her 20s. We got married, and I was hit with something that to this day (20 years later) still has an effect on me: The excitement of our first time together was not everything it could have been because of my gaining experience prior to her.

It was exciting because it was with her and because I love her, but I realized that each time I gained experience, I gave away part of myself that I could never get back. What I lost was getting to experience the joys of learning about intimacy together with my wife. I'm not saying that "Teen" should be celibate, but if I had it to do over again, I would have waited. Young people, myself included, often treat sex as something they need to accomplish rather than something to experience with someone they love. — Male Perspective

Dear Male Perspective: Thank you for offering your point of view. I couldn't agree more that sex is not something that should be "accomplished," and you make a strong case for why it's wise to wait. Your last sentence reminds me of something another reader wrote in response to this letter: "Sex is not a milestone like acne or shaving. Sex is actually the glue that turns a friendship into a loving lifetime commitment."

Dear Annie: I will be married to my wife for 10 years this November. We have a beautiful 9-year-old daughter together. Over the years, the subject of separation/divorce has poked its ugly head in and out. It didn't start because of just one act or disagreement, but it didn't start just yesterday either. For the record, I believe that the good memories outweigh the bad. Every time my wife brings up the topic, I feel like I just received multiple instantaneous wounds to my body from my own soul, from my best friend, the pain of which remains

slow and torturous. The more I beg and cry, the more I feel like I am choking. I wish I could flip a switch and make everything right, but my wife is not easily convinced. Showing her my anger does not work; showing her my tearful emotions does not work. I cannot nor do I want to see any light of life past my daughter and wife.

No matter how much verbiage and intent she throws in my face, I refuse to give up. I love my wife until death do us part. I completely understand that there is not a universal answer to the following question. Although I am sincerely apologetic about my mistakes and acts of abandonment in our past, how do I convince my wife to fall back "in love" with me, not to just "love me," through thick and thin till death do us part? — Desperate to Not Divorce

Dear Desperate: I can tell by your letter that the love you have for your family is deep and pure. Unfortunately, no matter how badly we want things reciprocated, we cannot force others into feeling the same way for us that we feel for them.

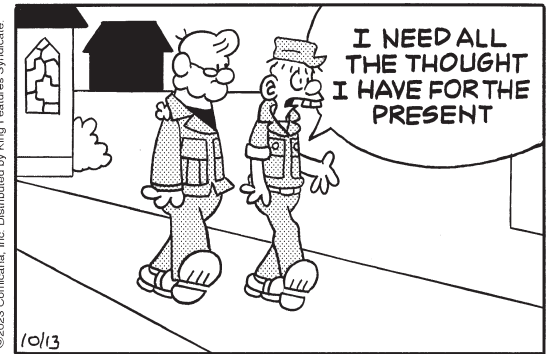
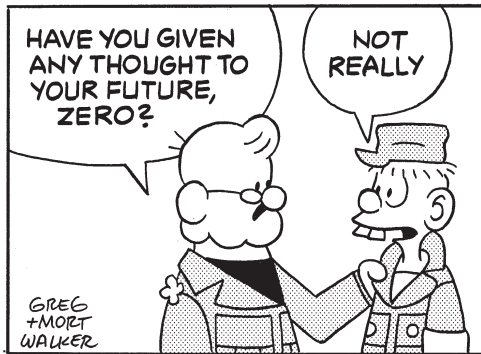
If your wife is willing to work together and push through your issues, couples therapy is the right place to start. Every marriage has its peaks and valleys; through honest, open communication, perseverance and compromise, I am confident you can come out stronger on the other side, provided your wife is committed to doing so.

"How Can I Forgive My Cheating Partner?" is out now! Annie Lane's second 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. © 2023 CREATORS.COM

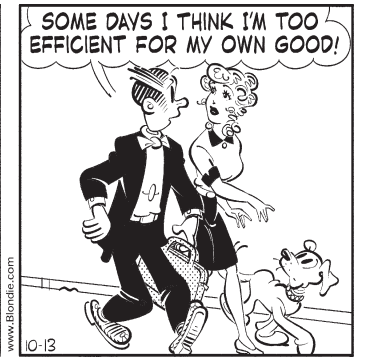
Dear Annie by Annie Lane



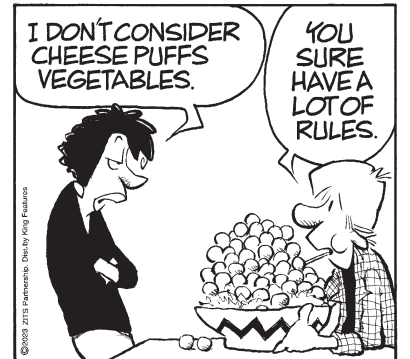
BEETLE BAILEY



BLONDIE



ZITS



CRANKSHAFT



THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane



The LOCKHORNS



My Answer

By Dr. Billy Graham



Only God's Spirit can truly mend a broken heart

Q: I am a caregiver to the elderly and want to have a good spirit, not give advice on how to navigate old age, because I don't know how it feels to be old yet. People who are old and sickly need help, but caregivers need help in knowing how to help. Are there ideas that get overlooked in this area? — C.G.

A: The Word of God is where we "find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16). A simple prayer for someone and offering a Scripture passage that has meant something personal are ways of reaching out to others. Seldom do others resent a prayer or a word of

encouragement. God provides comfort through His Word to people in time of stress. The Lord knows the intent of the heart and He helps us be sensitive to others and helps us recognize the needs of those around us. When we ask Him to show us how to lend a helping hand — He will. Rather than passing on our personal advice, how much more effective it is to share God's loving promises.

We need to build trust through listening, also. Many times people in need just simply want a listening ear. Only God's Spirit can truly mend a broken heart, but we can be a part

of the healing process also by simply being present. People who have experienced suffering are often the ones who can minister best. We don't have to be a preacher or a counselor, but we can all be comforters. The greatest comfort is in knowing that those who belong to Jesus Christ will know His comfort and promise that He will never leave or forsake us (see Hebrews 13:5-6).

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

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CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across, Down, and Solution time: 25 mins.

Yesterday's answer 10-13 crossword puzzle grid

TV schedule table with columns for time slots (10:13, 11, 12, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12) and rows for various channels and programs.



At left, Bluffton's volleyball team celebrates with Marly Drayer (front row, third from the left) on her 1,000th career dig Thursday night against Whitko in the sectional quarterfinal. The Tigers went on to win 3-1, advancing to the semi-final on Saturday morning. At right, Tigers' middle hitter Maryn Schreiber (left) sends a rocket through the outstretched hands of Whitko's Audra Brandenburg. Schreiber led the team with 11 kills and four blocks on the night. (Photos by Ryan Walker)

Tigers snatch quarterfinal from Wildcats, Drayer gets 1,000 digs

By RYAN WALKER
Bluffton's volleyball team had quite the night on Thursday. For starters, it won the opening round of the sectional and upset a good Whitko (18-13) group 3-1 at The Tiger Den. The Wildcats had been a thorn in the Tigers' (10-19) side in recent memory, ending their season twice in the past four tournaments. Bluffton head coach Stacy Morrison, who went through both of those losses, was thrilled to be on the winning side this time around. "It was huge just to get that first win," Bluffton head coach Stacy Morrison said after the game. "Whitko has beaten us in sectionals a couple times — at least when I've been coaching — so it was really nice. We knew they had some big hitters. We

knew they were a tall team, so we knew we had to hit the spots and get after it, and I think that they did that." Secondly, Tiger libero Marly Drayer eclipsed the 1,000 mark for digs during the first set. The junior was one shy of the feat in the last regular season game at home. The moment was spoiled as the Tigers could have stopped the regular season game to honor her but remained stuck at 999. Since it was a postseason game when she got it, they couldn't stop the match. The team celebrated after the game with a sign shaped like a volleyball, a real-life volleyball with her name on it, a gift bag, and a photo with the team. Morrison knew hitting the milestone wouldn't be an issue, but the moment was just as special.

"She is just a workhorse," Morrison said. "She's so easy to coach, and she just hustles and gets after it. She was actually only one short dig on our last home game, and we tried so hard to get that, ... We were playing for her, and I'm so proud of her for working so hard to get that 1,000th dig, especially as a junior." Through all the festivities, the Tigers continued to carry their momentum from the end of the season. The team had been peaking at the right time, playing its best ball, and keeping the energy while playing as a team. During the first set, Bluffton was playing through a deficit early. As soon as Drayer hit 1,000, the team's energy erupted and propelled them through the rest of the night. The set was back-and-forth,

and Whitko had a 23-22 lead before the Tigers scored three in a row to snatch Game 1. Bluffton dropped a hard-fought second but kept it from ruining its will to win. No matter the circumstance, Morrison's group wasn't going to go away. "It's one of the things we've been working on," Morrison said. "Sometimes, Bluffton, if they have a few mistakes, they want to just quit. We've really been working on drills and strategies to say 'OK, what do we do in this situation? So we'll have a deficit where I'll put them in high-stress situations at practice to force them to deal with it.'" The third set is where the match was won for Bluffton. The two teams kept the seesaw battle going, but Bluffton suddenly found another spark of life when

Haley Gibson, from her knees, tipped the ball over the net on a quick reaction play. It was to the Wildcats' surprise and fell for a Tigers' point on the other side. The point helped a run that wrapped up a 25-17 win to go up 2-1. From Gibson's play forward, Bluffton leaned on Whitko enough to win the final set 25-18 for the win. Bluffton will advance to the sectional semi-final against No. 5 South Adams at 12:30 p.m. on Saturday. The game will be played at Bluffton. Stat leaders for the night were Maryn Schreiber with 11 kills and four stuff blocks, Haley Gibson with 30 assists, Marly Drayer with five aces, and Isabella Stout with 16 digs.

sports@news-banner.com



Norwell's Macie Saalfrank (spiking) powers the ball over the net against the Peru defenders as teammate Marlee Wenger (right) looks on in Thursday's sectional match at Norwell. The Knight's advanced with a straight set win to Saturday's semi-final. (Photo by Chad Kline)



What to watch in F1 for this season

LOSAIL, Qatar (AP) — The race for the Formula One title is officially over with five rounds of the season still to go. The next one is at the Circuit of the Americas in Austin, Texas, on Oct. 22. It was clear for months that Max Verstappen was on course to retain his title even before the Red Bull driver made it official Saturday in the sprint race in Qatar. He followed up with victory in Sunday's grand prix. There could yet be drama this season as Red Bull and Verstappen close in on records, Sergio Perez holds onto second place and F1 returns to Las Vegas after more than 40 years.

RECORDS IN SIGHT
Verstappen has 14 wins this season — not including sprints — and needs one more to match his own record of 15 from last year. Red Bull has 16 and would need to win four of the last five races to beat the record of 19 wins in a season set by Mercedes drivers Nico Rosberg and Lewis Hamilton as they fought for the title in 2016. No team has ever had a clean sweep of wins — and Red Bull can't achieve it after Carlos Sainz Jr. won for Ferrari in Singapore last

month. The closest a team has been to perfection is McLaren's 15 wins from 16 races with Ayrton Senna and Alain Prost in 1988. **PEREZ AND HAMILTON**
Sergio Perez, Verstappen's teammate, has been struggling for form — he placed 10th on Sunday in Qatar — after seeming to be a championship contender earlier in the season. He is still second in the standings with a 30-point advantage over Hamilton but could let that slip without a significant improvement over the last five races. Perez scored only one point on Sunday but was helped when Hamilton crashed at the first corner after colliding with Mercedes teammate George Russell. Perez also has the benefit of a home crowd when he races in Mexico City on Oct. 29. **CHASING A WIN**
The McLaren team has excelled since making significant upgrades to its car for the British Grand Prix in July. If Verstappen makes a mistake or has a mechanical failure — although either of those outcomes appears near-impossible — then it could open the door to a first career win for Lando Norris.

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Sports Roundup

Knights win sectional round in volleyball over Peru

The Norwell volleyball team won its opening game of the sectional quarterfinal Thursday night at The Castle. The Knights won in three games with scores of 25-13, 25-15, and 25-17. Stats were not included in the results. Norwell will host Maconaquah at approximately 12:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 14.

Raiders fall in volleyball sectional to Cougars in 3 sets

The Southern Wells volleyball team fell to Lakeland Christian in the sectional quarterfinal Thursday night at Southwood. The Raiders lost in three sets with scores of 25-15, 25-14, and 25-17. Southern Wells finished with a 1-23 record on the season.

High School Calendar

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.

VOLLEYBALL: (sectional semi-final & final) Maconaquah at Norwell, 12:30 p.m.; South Adams at Bluffton, 12:30 p.m.
MONDAY, OCT 16
No events scheduled
TUESDAY, OCT 17
No events scheduled
WEDNESDAY, OCT 18
No events scheduled

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Scalise ends bid to become House speaker after failing to secure votes

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republican Steve Scalise ended his bid to become House speaker late Thursday after hardline holdouts refused to back the party's nominee, throwing the GOP majority into deeper chaos with the chamber unable to function.

Scalise told GOP colleagues at a closed-door meeting late Thursday of his decision and pointedly declined to announce backing for anyone else, including his chief rival, Rep. Jim Jordan, the hardline Judiciary Committee chairman backed by Donald Trump who had already told colleagues he no longer would seek the job.

Next steps are uncertain as the House is essentially closed while the Republican majority tries to elect a speaker after ousting Kevin McCarthy from the job.

"I just shared with my colleagues that I'm withdrawing my name as a

candidate for speaker-designee," Scalise said as he emerged from the closed-door meeting at the Capitol.

Scalise, R-La., said the Republican majority "still has to come together and is not there."

He had been working furiously to secure the votes after being nominated by a majority of his colleagues, but after hours of private meetings over two days and late into the evening at the Capitol it was clear lawmakers were not budging from their refusal to support him.

"There are still some people that have their own agendas," Scalise said. "And I was very clear, we have to have everybody put their agendas on the side and focus on what this country needs."

Asked if he would throw his support behind Jordan, Scalise said, "It's got to be people that aren't doing it for themselves and their own personal interest."

He said he would push quickly for a resolution. "But it wasn't going to happen. It wasn't going to happen today. It wasn't going to happen tomorrow. It needs to happen soon, but I've withdrawn my name."

Frustrations have mounted as the crisis deepened and Republicans lost another day without a House speaker. Scalise was trying to peel off more than 100 votes, mostly from those who backed Jordan.

But many hard-liners taking their cues from Trump have dug in for a prolonged fight to replace McCarthy after his historic ouster from the job. They argued that Majority Leader Scalise was no better choice, that he should be focusing on his health as he battles cancer and that he was not the leader they would support. No House votes were scheduled.

McCarthy said afterward that Scalise would remain

as majority leader but had no other advice for his colleagues.

"I just think the conference as a whole has to figure out their problems, solve it and select the leader," he said.

The House is entering its second week without a speaker and is essentially unable to function, and the political pressure increasingly is on Republicans to reverse course, reassert majority control and govern in Congress.

Action is needed to fund the government or face the threat of a federal shutdown in a month. Lawmakers also want Congress to deliver a strong statement of support for Israel in the war with Hamas, but a bipartisan resolution has been sidelined by the stalemate in the House. The White House is expected to soon ask for money for Israel, Ukraine and the backfill of the U.S.

weapons stockpile.

The situation is not fully different from the start of the year, when McCarthy faced a similar backlash from a different group of far-right holdouts who ultimately gave their votes to elect him speaker, then engineered his historic downfall.

But the math this time is even more daunting. Scalise, who is seen by some colleagues as hero for having survived a 2017 shooting on lawmakers at a congressional baseball game practice, won the closed-door Republican vote 113-99. But McCarthy, R-Calif., noted that Scalise, a long-time rival, had indicated he would have 150 votes behind closed doors, but missed that mark.

Scalise would have needed 217 votes to reach a majority that likely would be needed in a floor battle with Democrats. The chamber is narrowly split

221-212, with two vacancies, meaning Scalise could lose just a few Republicans in the face of opposition from Democrats who will most certainly back their own leader, New York Rep. Hakeem Jeffries. Absences heading into the weekend could lower the majority threshold needed.

Exasperated Democrats, who have been watching and waiting for the Republican majority to recover from McCarthy's ouster, urged them to figure it out, warning the world is watching.

"The House Republicans need to end the GOP Civil War, now," Jeffries said.

"The House Democrats have continued to make clear that we are ready, willing and able to find a bipartisan path forward," he said, urging that the House reopen and change GOP-led rules that allowed a single lawmaker to put in motion the process to remove the speaker.

As desperation in Gaza grows, Israel pledges to block vital aid until Hamas releases hostages

JERUSALEM (AP) — The Israeli military pulverized the Gaza Strip with airstrikes, prepared for a possible ground invasion and said Thursday its complete siege of the territory — which has left Palestinians desperate for food, fuel and medicine — would remain in place until Hamas militants free some 150 hostages taken during a grisly weekend incursion.

A visit by Secretary of State Antony Blinken, along with shipments of U.S. weapons, offered a powerful green light to Israel to drive ahead with its retaliation in Gaza after Hamas' deadly attack on civilians and soldiers, even as international aid groups warned of a worsening humanitarian crisis. Israel has halted deliveries of basic necessities and electricity to Gaza's 2.3 million people and prevented entry of supplies from Egypt.

"Not a single electricity switch will be flipped on, not a single faucet will be turned on and not a single fuel truck will enter until the Israeli hostages are returned home," Israeli Energy Minister Israel Katz said on social media.

Lt. Col. Richard Hecht, an Israeli military spokesman, told reporters Thursday that forces "are preparing for a ground maneuver" should political leaders order one.

A ground offensive in Gaza, which is ruled by Hamas and where the population is densely packed into a sliver of land only 40 kilometers (25 miles) long, would likely bring even higher casualties on both sides in brutal house-to-house fighting.

Hamas' assault Saturday and smaller attacks since have killed more than 1,300 people in Israel, including 247 soldiers — a toll unseen in Israel for decades — and the ensuing Israeli bombardment has killed more than 1,530 people in Gaza, according to authorities on both sides. Israel says roughly 1,500 Hamas militants were killed inside Israel, and that hundreds of the dead in Gaza are Hamas members. Thousands have been wounded on both sides.

As Israel pounds Gaza from the air, Hamas militants have fired thousands of rockets into Israel. Amid concerns that the fighting could spread in the region, Syrian state media reported that Israeli airstrikes on Thursday put two Syrian international airports out of service.

The relentless barrage on Gaza — which the military said has so far involved 6,000 munitions — left Palestinians running through streets, carrying their belongings and looking for safety.

A strike Thursday afternoon in the Jab-

aliya refugee camp took down a residential building on families sheltering inside, killing at least 45 people, Gaza's Interior Ministry said. At least 23 of the dead were under the age of 18, including a month-old child, according to a list of the casualties.

The home belonging to the al-Shihab family was packed with relatives who had fled bombing in other areas. Neighbors said a second house was hit at the same time, but the toll was not immediately known. The Israeli military did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

"We can't flee because anywhere you go, you are bombed," one neighbor, Khalil Abu Yahia, said. "You need a miracle to survive here."

The number of people forced from their homes by the airstrikes soared 25% in a day, reaching 423,000 out of a population of 2.3 million, the U.N. said Thursday. Most crowded into U.N.-run schools.

Families were cutting down to one meal a day, said Rami Swailem, a 34-year-old lecturer at al-Azhar University, who had 32 relatives sheltering in his home. Water stopped coming to the building two days ago, and they have rationed what's left in a tank on the roof.

Alaa Younis Abuel-Omrain has been staying in a U.N. school after a strike on her home killed eight members of her family — her mother, aunt, a sister, a brother and his wife and their three children. Most bakeries stopped producing bread for lack of electricity.

"Even if there is food in some areas, we can't get to it because of strikes," she said.

On Wednesday, Gaza's only power station ran out of fuel and shut down, leaving only lights powered by scattered private generators.

Hospitals, overwhelmed by a constant stream of wounded and running out of supplies, have only a few days worth of fuel before their power cuts off, aid officials say.

"Without electricity, hospitals risk turning into morgues," said Fabrizio Carboni, regional director of the International Committee of the Red Cross. Newborn incubators, kidney dialysis machines, X-ray equipment and more, are all dependent on power, he said.

Ambulance crews carrying bodies to the morgue at Gaza's biggest hospital, Shifa, found no space left. Dozens of full body bags were lined up in the hospital parking lot. Fourteen health facilities have been damaged in strikes, health officials said Thursday.

Menendez accused of being an unregistered agent of Egypt's government in updated indictment

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. Sen. Bob Menendez of New Jersey was charged Thursday with conspiring for years to act as an agent of the Egyptian government while he held a powerful role in shaping U.S. foreign policy, putting the Democrat in deeper legal trouble as he continues to reject calls to resign.

The superseding indictment in Manhattan federal court accuses Menendez of violating the Foreign Agents Registration Act, which requires people to register with the U.S. government if they act as "an agent of a foreign principal." As a member of Congress, Menendez was prohibited from being an agent of a foreign government.

The new charge comes weeks after Menendez and his wife were accused of accepting bribes of cash, gold bars and a luxury car from three New Jersey businessmen who wanted the senator's help and influence over foreign affairs.

The new indictment says a conspiracy occurred from January 2018 to June 2022, alleging that Menendez "promised to take and took a series of acts on behalf of Egypt, including on behalf of Egyptian military and intelligence officials." It said he conspired to do so with his wife, Nadine, and a business associate and fellow defendant, Wael Hana.

According to the indictment, Hana and

Nadine Menendez also communicated requests and directives from Egyptian officials to Menendez.

Hours after the latest charge was revealed, Menendez issued a statement, saying it "flies in the face of my long record of standing up for human rights and democracy in Egypt and in challenging leaders of that country, including President (Fattah) El-Sisi on these issues."

"I have been, throughout my life, loyal to only one country — the United States of America, the land my family chose to live in democracy and freedom," he added. "Piling new charge upon new charge does not make the allegations true. ... I again ask people who know me and my record to give me the chance to present my defense and show my innocence."

The new charge brought fresh calls for Menendez to resign. Democratic Sen. John Fetterman of Pennsylvania said in a statement that senators should vote to expel Menendez because "we cannot have an alleged foreign agent in the United States Senate."

But a vote to expel was unlikely before trial. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., has not called on Menendez to resign and has not commented on the new charge.

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