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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2023

BLUFFTON, INDIANA • Wells County's Hometown Connection

\$1.00

Removal initiated for Health Department Officer

By HOLLY GASKILL
In a special session Wednesday evening, the Wells County Health Department Board unanimously voted to begin the removal process for Health Officer Dr. Kay Johnson.

The decision followed an hour-long executive session. Three reasons for the session were cited as the initiation of litigation or judi-

cial action, discussion of classified records, and discussion of an employee's job performance.

Board members Chris Esterling, Steve Bales, Molly Hoag, Dr. Mary Donley, and Ann McNabb were present in person and voted to move forward with the process. Board member Tom Longenberger joined the meeting via phone call and was not permitted to vote.

There was no discussion. In making a motion, Bales simply referenced the conversation had during the executive session. McNabb seconded, all voted in favor, and the meeting adjourned.

County Attorney Ted Storer and Esterling, who serves as board president, declined to comment, citing that it was an ongoing personnel matter. Storer referenced

Indiana Code 16-20-1-28 for grounds for the removal.

The code states a local health officer may be removed for one of three reasons: failure to perform the statutory duties, failure to enforce state rules, and "other good cause."

Also required by the statute, the health officer is entitled to an open hearing and legal representation

with notice of at least five days.

Johnson has held the position since 2010. She was most recently re-appointed to a four-year term in 2022.

Should the board continue with Johnson's removal, the board will begin the process to appoint a new health officer. Storer did state, however, that it is "sub-

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County approves agreements with Paddlefish Solar

By HOLLY GASKILL
In preparation for possible solar development in Liberty and Chester townships, decommissioning and road use agreements have been met between the Wells County Commissioners and Paddlefish Solar LLC.

The Wells County Commissioners unanimously approved the documents on Monday. Representatives from the Paddlefish Solar — Jesse Laniak, Trena Roudebush and Mary Solada — joined the meeting through Zoom. Chad Kline, executive director of Economic Development, was also present.

The agreement documents essentially outline protections for the county regarding the set-up and eventual tear-down of the solar development. Laniak has stated they had leases signed with 12 landowners in Wells County, totaling roughly 3,000 acres, for the 40-year solar project.

The county has been in discussion with Paddlefish Solar, owned by EDF Renewables and Geenex Solar, for the majority of the year to reach these agreements.

"These agreements only add protection to Wells County — there is no risk," Laniak summarized.

Within decommissioning, Paddlefish Solar has agreed to remove all equipment at the end of its function. Additionally, there will be a "restoration period," where the company must "restore the land substantially to the same condition as prior to construction," the document states. This period is required to be completed within two years.

To ensure this process is honored, Paddlefish Solar will submit a decommissioning security — in the form of either "cash held in escrow by the country treasurer or escrow company, a letter of credit, a bond, or guaranty by the company." This amount will be determined by an agreed-upon engineer's estimation of the decommissioning cost, with 10 percent contingency added. The value of salvaged materials

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Creating care

Cub Scout families at Bluffton-Harrison Elementary PTO Pack 3149 created felt tie blankets at their November pack meeting. The blankets were then delivered to grateful residents at Christian Care nursing home in Bluffton.

At right, Steven Higgins (left) helped Scout families tie blankets at the November meeting. (Photos by Sydney Kent)



Man faces three sexual misconduct cases

By SYDNEY KENT
A man from Marion is facing three separate cases of sexual misconduct with a minor, a Level 5 felony, in three counties throughout the state. One case was filed in Wells County earlier this year.

Donell Julian Dixon, 22, was charged in the Wells County case in March, according to a probable cause affidavit. A 15-year-old girl told a Child First Interviewer she had "blah blah blah", later clarified as consensual sex, with Dixon on multiple occasions in June and July of last year. She reported that she eventually stopped contacting Dixon after she realized she made a "bad choice."

A friend of the victim reported that Dixon would pick the pair up in his Jeep and drive to various locations in Bluffton. Dixon would reportedly perform sexual acts in the vehicle with the victim in front of her friend, who was also 15-years-old.

Police were able to identify Dixon due to the fact that he listed his child's last name on his Instagram account. The name was cross-referenced in the Department of Child Services database

by a Family Case Manager, which then revealed Dixon as the father.

The state of Indiana took issue with the possibility of reinstating Dixon's bond in the matter during his bail review hearing last week in the Wells Circuit Court. The court ultimately decided to reinstate Dixon's bond at an elevated amount due to the cases throughout the state.

The charge dates for the additional two cases, or the dates the crimes were committed, were in June and July of 2022. In both cases, the victim was 15 years of age and began communication with Dixon through Snapchat.

In February of 2022, the Grant County Sheriff's Department responded to a report of a domestic battery that reportedly occurred between Dixon and his girlfriend. The woman, identified as Lindsey A. Wampner, reported that the two were "play fighting" while Dixon held their child. Wampner told police things got out of hand and she hit Dixon back before taking the child away.

Dixon told police Wampner believed he was messaging other

(Continued on Page 2)



Lining the sewer lines

Crews from Inliner Solutions of Orleans, Ind., were at work on Bluffton's near east side Wednesday working on lining the city's sanitary sewer lines as part of the city's infrastructure improvement project. Pictured is the work at the intersection of Elm and Bennett streets, just south of Pickett's Run Park. The work on the sewer lines is to prevent inflow and infiltration, the term used for groundwater getting into sanitary sewer lines and flowing into the city's wastewater treatment plant. (Photo by Dave Schultz)

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Outside

Mostly sunny and a little warmer today

Today	Friday	Saturday
High 51	High 55	High 59
Low 38	Low 46	Low 34

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Health Department

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ject to a veto power by the Board of Commissioners, but the Board of Commissioners doesn't select, (they) can only approve the appointment by the Board of Health."

In an Aug. 27 press release from the commissioners, they specifically cited Johnson's leadership as a contributing factor in their decision to reject available funds through the Health First Indiana program.

The statement read:

"Since the added attention and stressors brought on by the Covid pandemic that began in 2020, concerns about the state of the Wells County Department of Health have only increased. Specifically, county officials have continued to field concerns about the department's management, or rather the lack thereof, by the County Health Officer, Dr. Kay Johnson."

The item was also broached by Commis-

sioner Jeff Stringer during the health board's meeting on Aug. 16, after repeated communication lapses caused by Johnson joining by phone. "This isn't the first time we've had that lack of leadership," Stringer said at the time.

Johnson continued to cite the lack of support and communication from the commissioners as an issue.

The Wells County Health Department has been with half its full-time staff since July of this year when the

deputy administrator and septic environmental specialist resigned. Since then, it has also had a turnover in another part-time position. Molly Hoag, who retired from the administrator role in 2022, returned as an interim in July to help the department get back on its feet, but hiring has remained a struggle.

The next regular board meeting is at 6:30 a.m. on Dec. 21 in the meeting room of the Wells County Annex.

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Paddlefish Solar

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will be deducted from the total.

This security amount will be returned to the company when it gives satisfactory plans for decommissioning. Should Paddlefish fail to remove the equipment, Wells County is given the right to salvage product components for their worth.

Due to the heavy machinery traveling on county roads, the parties also reached a road use agreement to cover repair costs. In it, Paddlefish Solar agreed to pay ranging from \$35K to \$275K per mile depending on the road's repair cost. Additional funds will be allocated for any drainage and small structure damage.

The company will also provide security between \$2-5 million for these costs.

Paddlefish Solar has provided a list of roads they may use for the project but has not solidified their specific

plans. The road use agreement, Kline noted, was required before their submission of a development plan to the Area Plan Commission.

Commissioner Jeff Stringer then asked if there would be an opportunity to review the road list with emergency services prior to its finalization. "I think the intention was that, once the roads were identified they wanted to have some discussions," Kline explained.

Before the project begins, all components will be assessed to establish the baseline for repairs and reparation.

Additionally, if a major event stopped energy production, Paddlefish Solar would have until the end of 12 months to restart operations before the threat of decommissioning. Documents state that at the end of that period, the company will be responsible for proving they would be "substantially operational" within another year. If the county finds

this unsatisfactory, decommissioning must begin within six months. Major events, as outlined in the documents, are related to natural disasters, war, civil unrest, vandalism, strikes or labor issues, among other related items.

No one from the public commented on the matter.

"I think it covers all our questions and all of our risks," Stringer concluded. However, Stringer again emphasized they would negotiate the roads used. "Communicated will be key," Commissioner Blake Gerber added.

Last December, Paddlefish Solar was granted a 10-year total tax abatement by the Wells County Council for the project, with the promise of at least \$8.5 million in economic development payments and a total investment of at least \$250 million. They have since opened a Bluffton office located at 201 W. Market St. in Suite 3.

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Marion man

(Continued from Page 1)

women and slapped him on the arm, to which he responded by going to hold their child. Dixon reported that Wampner continued to slap him and ordered him to give her their baby. He

then admitted that he punched her in the right arm and she took the child to the next room. Both Wampner and Dixon were charged with domestic battery in the presence of a child, a Level 6 felony. All cases are currently pending.

Dixon is scheduled for a pretrial conference in the Wells County case at 1 p.m. Feb. 21 in the Wells Circuit Court.

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U.S. files war crime charges against Russian men

The four men are accused of torturing an American during the Ukraine invasion

WASHINGTON (AP) — Four Russian men accused of torturing an American during the invasion of Ukraine have been charged with war crimes in a first-of-its-kind case, the Justice Department announced on Wednesday.

It is the first prosecution against members of the Russian armed forces in connection with atrocities during Moscow's war against Ukraine and it is the first time the Justice Department has brought charges under a nearly 30-year-old statute that makes it a crime to subject an American to torture or inhumane treatment during a war.

The charges are largely symbolic for now, given the unlikely prospects of the department bringing any of the four defendants, who are fugitives, into custody. But U.S. officials described the case as a history-making moment in their investigation into Russian war crimes. More charges could be coming.

"This is our first, and you should expect more," Attorney General Merrick Garland said at a news conference.

He said the American people and their government have a long memory. "We will not forget the atrocities in Ukraine. And we will never stop working to bring those responsible to justice," the nation's top law enforcement official said.

The four Russians are identified as members of the Russian armed forces or its proxy units. Two are described as commanding officers.

The Russians are accused of kidnapping an American man from his home in a Ukrainian vil-

lage in 2022. The American was beaten and interrogated while being held for 10 days at a Russian military compound, before eventually being evacuated with his wife, who's Ukrainian, U.S. authorities said.

The American told federal agents who had traveled to Ukraine last year as part of an investigation that the Russian soldiers had abducted him, stripped him naked, pointed a gun at his head and badly beaten him, Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said.

He was also subjected to harsh interrogation methods, threatened with sexual assault and forced to participate in his own mock execution, according to a five-count indictment unsealed Wednesday in the Eastern District of Virginia.

"The evidence gathered by our agents speaks to the brutality, criminality, and depravity of Russia's invasion," Mayorkas said.

Homeland Security and FBI investigators interviewed the American, his family and others who were around the village of Mylove around the time of the kidnapping to identify the four Russians, Mayorkas said.

"Cases like this one are among the most complex the FBI works, but bringing them is essential to deterring crimes like these and showing would-be perpetrators that no one is above the law and the war crimes will not go unpunished," FBI Director Christopher Wray said.

Garland has been outspoken on war crimes in Ukraine since Russia's invasion in February 2022, and his department assigned

federal prosecutors to examine the potential of bringing criminal charges.

Independent human rights experts backed by the United Nations have said they have found continued evidence of war crimes committed by Russian forces, including torture that ended in the rape and death of women up to age 83.

The International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin in March for war crimes, accusing him of personal responsibility for the abductions of children from Ukraine.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russia does not recognize the ICC and considers its decisions "legally void." He called the court's move "outrageous and unacceptable."

The United States is not a member of the ICC, but the Justice Department has been cooperating with it and supporting Ukrainian prosecutors as they carry out their own war crime investigations.

The four defendants are identified as Suren Seiranovich Mkrtychyan and Dmitry Budnik, both of whom are described by prosecutors as commanding officers in Russia's armed forces, as well as two lower-ranking officers identified only by their first names.

All four were fighting on behalf of Russia in its war against Ukraine and are identified in the indictment as either members of the armed forces or military units from the Donetsk People's Republic. After invading Ukraine, Moscow in September 2022 illegally annexed parts of the Donetsk region and three

other Ukrainian regions under its control as part of Russia.

The U.S. and Russia do not have an extradition treaty, but the Justice Department has brought repeated criminal cases against Russian nationals, most notably for cyber crimes and including for interference in the 2016 presidential election. In some of those cases, the defendants have been taken into custody by American officials, such as when they've traveled outside Russia.

The charges come as the Biden administration is pressing Congress to approve more military aid for Ukraine's war effort. President Joe Biden said it was "stunning" that lawmakers have yet to approve tens of billions of dollars in military and economic assistance for Ukraine. Failure to act, he said from the White House, would be "gift" to Putin.

The president has requested nearly \$106 billion to fund the wars in Ukraine and Israel and to meet other security needs. Some Republicans have grown tired of providing support to Ukraine after the U.S. has already sent \$111 billion, and other GOP lawmakers are insisting on stiff changes to U.S. border policy as a condition of voting for the package.

The U.S. is expected to announce a \$175 million package of military aid to Ukraine on Wednesday. The Pentagon has said there is about \$1.1 billion left in funding to replenish U.S. military stockpiles for weapons and equipment sent to Ukraine and roughly \$4.8 billion in drawdown authority still available.

Weather

Thursday, December 7, 2023

(24-hour observations at 9:10 p.m. Wednesday)

High: 41; Low: 28; Precipitation: None
Wabash River Level (at the Main Street bridge): 1.22 feet at 9:45 p.m. Wednesday

Wells County forecast

Today: Mostly sunny, with a high near 51. Southwest wind 10 to 15 mph, with gusts as high as 25 mph.

Tonight: Partly cloudy, with a low around 38. Southwest wind 10 to 15 mph, with gusts as high as 30 mph.

Friday: Partly sunny, with a high near 55. Southwest wind 15 to 20 mph, with gusts as high as 30 mph.

Friday Night: A 40 percent chance of showers after 1 a.m. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 46. South wind 15 to 20 mph, with gusts as high as 25 mph.

Saturday: Showers likely. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 59. Breezy. Chance of precipitation is 70 percent. New precipitation amounts between a tenth and quarter of an inch possible.

Saturday Night: Showers, mainly before 1 a.m. Low around 34. Breezy. Chance of precipitation is 80 percent.

Sunday: A chance of rain showers before 1 p.m., then a slight chance of rain and snow showers. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 40. Chance of precipitation is 30 percent.

Sunday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 25.

Monday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 40.

Monday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 28.

Tuesday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 44.

Tuesday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 26.

Wednesday: Partly sunny, with a high near 40.

3 killed, shooter found dead in University of Nevada, Las Vegas attack

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Three people were fatally shot Wednesday and a fourth person was critically wounded in an attack on the University of Nevada, Las Vegas campus, police said. The suspected shooter also was found dead.

The attack just before noon sent police swarming onto the campus, which is just a couple of miles from the world-famous Las Vegas Strip while students barricaded themselves in classrooms. Authorities gave the all-clear about 40 minutes after the first report of an active shooter.

Police haven't released the identity of the shooter or the motive for the attack. The shootings took place in a city still scarred by an October 2017 attack by a gunman at the Mandalay Bay casino that killed 60 people and wounded hundreds more.

Police said in a post on X, formerly Twitter, that three people were killed and a fourth person was in critical condition at a hospital. Authorities didn't immediately provide additional information but planned to give further updates at a news conference scheduled for 5 p.m. PT.

Alerts went out across the campus after callers reported an active shooter to police at 11:45 a.m. Wednesday, said Adam Garcia, a university police official. He said officers found and "engaged" a suspect, who is now dead. It was not immediately clear how the suspect died.

Students and professors on the campus of 30,000 barricaded themselves inside classrooms and dorm rooms.

Student John Harris heard what he later realized was a gunshot as he was getting out of his car in the parking garage of an on-campus apartment complex. In the elevator, Harris said he got an emergency text alert text from the university.

"I wasn't sure what to believe," said Harris, 21, who ended up sheltering at a friend's dorm. "But as I came down to the street, and I saw there were a bunch of cops in the parking lot at the student union, I knew what I heard was a gunshot and this wasn't a drill."

Professor Kevaney Martin took cover under a desk in her classroom, where another faculty member and three students took shelter with her.

"It was terrifying. I can't even begin to explain," Martin said. "I was trying to hold it together for my students, and trying not to cry, but the emotions are something I never want to experience again."

Martin said she was texting friends and loved ones, hoping to receive word a suspect had been detained. When another professor came to the room and told everyone to evacuate, they joined dozens of others rushing out of the building. Martin had her students piled into her car and drove them off campus.

"Once we got away from UNLV, we parked and sat in silence," she said. "Nobody said a word. We were in utter shock."

The university said on X that the shooter was at the Beam Hall, Frank and Estella Building, home of UNLV's Lee Business School, and that police were responding to an additional report of shots fired at the nearby student union.

Las Vegas police posted on X that a suspect "has been located and is deceased" about 40 minutes after the initial alert was posted.

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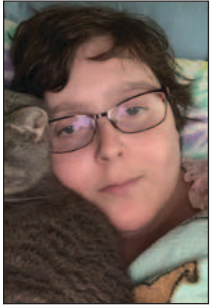
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OBITUARIES

Caitlin N. Williams, 35

Caitlin N. Williams, 35, of Markle, passed away Sunday afternoon Dec. 3 2023 at her home. Caitlin was a 2007 graduate of Bluffton High School.



She was an avid animal lover and especially loved her cats. Caitlin loved to read and learn about history. She was such a sweet and loving girl that accepted everyone as they were.

Caitlin was born Oct. 8, 1988, a daughter of name of Tim and Dawn (Hartup) Williams.

Survivors include her parents, Tim and Dawn Williams of Markle; maternal grandmother, Patricia Basen of S.C.; paternal grandmother, Eileen Cook of Markle; and two aunts, April (Jeff) Schwartz of S.C. and Sheri (Don) Smith of Columbia City.

She was preceded in death by her maternal grandfather, Donald Basen and paternal grandfather, William Williams.

There will be no public services at this time.

Memorial donations can be made out to Helping Paws Pet Haven sent in care of Myers Funeral Home, P.O. Box 403, Markle, IN 46770.

To sign Caitlin's on-line guest registry visit www.myersfuneralhomes.com.

Merlin Zurcher, 92

Merlin D. Zurcher, 92, of Berne, passed away early Tuesday morning, Dec. 5, 2023, at Swiss Village.

He was born on Aug. 13, 1931 in Adams County, to Christian F. and Martha (Ebnit) Zurcher.

Merlin served his country in the U.S. Army during the Korean War as a medic. He fulfilled his duty as a conscientious objector of which he was very proud. He spent his time overseas at the 28th General Hospital in Chapeau, France before being honorably discharged.

On May 14, 1955, he married Leah M. Andrews in Berne, and she preceded him in death on Nov. 16, 2021.

He was a member of First Church of the Nazarene in Berne. Merlin was a longtime janitor for the church. Additionally, he also served the church as an usher, song leader, Sunday school superintendent, and former member of church board.

Merlin worked in furniture production at Dunbar Furniture in Berne. Following the closing of Dunbar Furniture, he was employed at EP Graphics until he retired — at 80+ years old!

Helpful, humble, hardworking and meticulous were all words used to describe Merlin. Merlin enjoyed gardening and sharing in the success of his garden. He was known for collecting apples from his trees, taking them to be made into cider, and sharing the cider with as many people as possible. He was a faithful servant to the Lord throughout his life.

He is survived by three daughters, Beth (Roger) Reeve of New Haven, Pam Zurcher of Berne, and Gail Fogwell of Decatur; son, Daniel Zurcher of Swayzee; two sisters-in-law, Evelyn Zurcher of Rockford, Ohio, and Marjorie Zurcher of Berne; nine grandchildren, Chris Reeve, Andrew Reeve, Jared Reeve, Jenn Reeve, Katie Fogwell, Ben Schneider, Barb Schneider — Schultzy, Mark Schneider, and Jordan Zurcher; and 11 great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death a son, Kevin Zurcher; five sisters, Berniece Davidson, Iva Williams, Irene Fox, Evelyn Yohe and Delores Hirschy; two brothers, Marvin Zurcher and Raymond Zurcher; son-in-law: Leroy Fogwell; and daughter-in-law, Kathy Zurcher.

Funeral services for Merlin will be held at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 9, 2023, at the First Church of the Nazarene, 604 Sprunger St. in Berne with Pastor Matthew Phillips officiating. Burial will follow at MRE Cemetery in Berne.

Family and friends will be received from 3-7 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 8, 2023, at Zwick & Jahn Funeral Home, Yager Kirchofer Chapel in Berne and one hour prior to services Saturday at the church.

Preferred memorials can be made to Berne First Church of the Nazarene World Evangelism Fund; Gideon's International; or Swiss Village — Dementia Unit.

Arrangements are by Zwick and Jahn Funeral Homes, Yager-Kirchofer Chapel of Berne, Indiana.

Madelyn Reineck, 93

Madelyn Reineck, 93, of Bluffton, died Wednesday morning, Dec. 6, 2023, at Christian Care Retirement Community.

Madelyn was born in Bluffton on Dec. 16, 1929, to Gerald and Lucile (McCleery) Moon. She married Dale L. Reineck in Bluffton on Feb. 20, 1949. Dale preceded her in death on Mar. 18, 2006.

Survivors include a daughter, Judy (Jack) Girod of Bluffton; two sons, Jake (Teresa) Reineck of Bluffton and Kit (Deb) Reineck of Liberty Center; along with 13 grandchildren, 29 great-grandchildren, and four great-great-grandchildren.

In addition to her parents and husband, Madelyn was preceded in death by two brothers, Robert Moon and John "Jack" Moon.

Visitation will be Friday, Dec. 8, 2023, from 11:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m., at Goodwin — Cale & Harnish Memorial Chapel in Bluffton, followed immediately by a funeral service at 2:00 PM. Pastor Zach Ruble will officiate. Burial will follow at Six Mile Cemetery in Bluffton.

Online condolences may be made at www.goodwin-caleharnish.com.

American Legion to host breakfast

The American Legion Post 111 will host its monthly breakfast all-you-can-eat buffet from 8-10 a.m. Saturday Dec. 9, 111 W. Washington St. in Bluffton. The breakfast will cost \$11 for adults, \$5 for children 12 years-old and younger, and free for children under 5 year-old.

Obituary Policy

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

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

Area funeral homes will provide details on the policy and will coordinate obituary publication.

Police Notebook

INCIDENTS

City:

Tuesday, 3:09 p.m., Christian New Light Church. Caller reported someone possibly burning trash.

Tuesday, 4:03 p.m., Lowes Home Improvement. Driver cited for speeding.

Tuesday, 4:14 p.m., 80 block of Sunset Drive. Caller requested welfare check for 3 month old baby.

Tuesday, 7:04 p.m., Walmart Supercenter. Report of vehicle with scratch, possibly struck by shopping cart in the parking lot. Video footage pending review.

Tuesday, 8:20 p.m., Praxis. Officer checked item on bench.

Tuesday, 9:57 p.m., Walmart. Report of a parking problem with semi trucks.

Wednesday, 12:17 a.m., 1300 block of West South Street. Caller reported hearing noises in back of residence.

Wednesday, 7:12 a.m., South Adams and West Cherry streets. Officer assisted driver with directions.

Wednesday, 8:30 a.m., 100 block of North Oak Street. Report of a vehicle parked on street despite tenants no longer living at location.

Wednesday, 11:07 a.m., Family Ford. Report of a lost tire from a truck that hit a bus. No injuries.

County:
Monday, 1:04 p.m., Wells County Sheriff's Department. Subject reported fraudulent accounts opened in his name through AT&T.

Monday, 3:19 p.m., North 100 East and 300 North, Bluffton. Officer tagged an abandoned vehicle.

Monday, 3:36 p.m., Angelas Grooming. Report of a boy in the front seat of a two door vehicle with no car seat, under two years old.

Monday, 6:08 p.m., Ind. 3 and West 1000 South, Warren. Subject attempted to make a u-turn across from his residence and became stuck in ditch. Vehicle removed from ditch.

Tuesday, 5:43 a.m., 3600 East 300 North, Bluffton. Car versus deer. Driver

decided to drive vehicle against officer advice.

Tuesday, 10:31 a.m., 2700 West 1100 South, Keystone. Caller reported domestic disturbance, woman threatened to kill man and hit him with multiple items. Shu Bergman arrested for domestic battery, a Class A misdemeanor.

Tuesday, 12:37 p.m., 7300 North 400 West, Markle. Caller reported scam via phone call by subject who attempted to get the caller to purchase gift cards.

Tuesday, 9:55 p.m., Lowes Home Improvement. Subject requested officer follower home for safety reasons.

Ossian:
Monday, 10:35 p.m., Ossian Town Hall. Subject reported issue with stolen vehicle.

ACCIDENTS

City:
Tuesday, 1:26 p.m., North Wayne and East Cherry streets. Ashley Mayne was driving South on North Wayne Street as Kaden Simpson was driving North.

Mayne's Chrysler Town and Country struck Kaden Simpson's Mazda Mx-5 on the passenger side as Simpson failed to yield the right of way. Damages did not exceed \$10,000.

ARRESTS

Christen Michael Alan Ford, 24, Bluffton, possession of methamphetamine, a Level 5 felony, and possession of paraphernalia, a Class A misdemeanor. Bond set at \$11,500.

Shu Bergman, 60, Keystone, domestic battery, a Class A misdemeanor. Bond set at \$25,000.

Timothy Leon Davis, 57, Montpelier, operating a vehicle while intoxicated — endangerment, a Class A misdemeanor, and operating a vehicle while intoxicated, a Class C misdemeanor. Bond set at \$1,500.

Dylan Ryan Thrash, 24, Muncie, dealing marijuana, a Class A misdemeanor, possession of marijuana, a Class B misdemeanor, and possession of paraphernalia, a Class C misdemeanor.

Indiana attorneys debate overreach, obligation to 'protect unborn' in latest abortion ban hearing

By CASEY SMITH
Indiana Capital Chronicle

Does Indiana's near-total abortion ban violate some Hoosiers' religious freedom? That question was at the heart of debate Wednesday in the Indiana Court of Appeals, where lawyers for the state maintained it's incumbent on the government to protect "unborn children," starting at the point an egg is fertilized.

The latest arguments over the new abortion restrictions stem from a class action lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana in September 2022 on behalf of Hoosier Jews for Choice, as well as a group of anonymous women who represent a variety of faiths.

The lawsuit argues that the new abortion law infringes on their religious beliefs and therefore violates Indiana's Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

State overreach vs. obligation

For a RFRA challenge to be successful, the plaintiffs must prove their beliefs are religious — not philosophical — and "sincerely held," as well as that the law is burdensome. The burden then turns to the state, which must show it has a public interest that a religious exemption would undermine.

Ken Falk, ACLU of Indiana's legal director, argued in court that the plaintiffs have been "pressured" to change their sexual behavior in order to not get pregnant. He said they fear they will not be able to get an abortion — even though their religious beliefs "tell (them) to obtain an abortion," if it's in the best interest of the woman's physical and mental health.

"They have taken steps today, solely because of this statute, solely because of their religious beliefs," Falk said. "That's an incredible burden on the human experience."

He additionally noted lawmakers included some exceptions to the abortion ban — like those for rape, incest and in-vitro fertilization — and held that carveouts for religious beliefs are necessary, as well.

"I think what RFRA tells us is that if you are impinging in a substantial way on religious rights, you have to have a compelling interest and there simply is no compelling interest not to allow this religious exemption, particularly given the

other exemptions in the law," he said. "I think the problem here is simply that the state is not recognizing that RFRA imposes the highest burden upon it, and it simply cannot meet this burden."

"For Indiana to say, yes, we recognize secular exemptions, we recognize rape, incest, embryos destroyed in vitro — we recognize all those secular exceptions, but we're not going to recognize the religious exception, then what do we have RFRA for?" Falk continued. "We have RFRA to remind government that they have to honor religion, except in the most extreme circumstances."

Judges question exceptions

James Barta, solicitor general at the Indiana Attorney General's Office, disagreed. He told the justices that protections for unborn children "have nothing to do with any particular religious significance."

He said exceptions for in vitro, for example, show "there are sometimes other interests that may affect how the state regulates the procedure."

"I think there's a difference in the intent behind, are you trying to intentionally terminate an unborn child, or is that a byproduct of undertaking a different medical procedure," Barta said.

But the justices pushed back.

"But you are, in incest and rape situations, taking the life, in your argument, of an unborn child. Why did the state put those in the statute?" asked Judge Leanna Weissmann. Judge Mark Bailey additionally asked why religious exemptions weren't similarly "compelling."

"I think those exceptions simply reflect that the legislature recognized that there are some difficult, ethical

and moral imperatives when you have a pregnancy that is the product of rape or incest," Barta responded.

He maintained the state indeed has an obligation to protect an unborn child "at all stages of development." He said Hoosier's religious beliefs are "important," but that the state may substantially burden those beliefs to achieve a "compelling interest," like "protecting life."

"Once fertilization occurs, you have a new organism ... and there have been many ethicists of a variety of backgrounds — some religious, some not — that have articulated ethical and moral justifications for protecting it from that point," he said.

Barta cited two Indiana Supreme Court rulings. In *Cheaney v. Indiana* — a case that dates back to 1972 — there is "a valid interest to project potential life from the moment of conception," Barta said. He also directed the justices to the state supreme court's recent *Planned Parenthood et al.* decision. Barta said that ruling "recognized that the legislature is entitled to make the judgment that personhood begins at conception."

What happens next?

It's now up to the Court of Appeals to decide whether a narrow injunction that was previously issued in the case has legal standing.

A Marion County judge ruled last year the ban likely violates RFRA. Judge Heather Welch's narrow injunction grants a temporary religious exemption from the state's abortion ban. Even so, it's been mired in confusion about who it protects.

That's because the case initially involved only a handful of plaintiffs, and Welch granted the injunction to those plaintiffs before the case was certified

as a class-action suit earlier this summer.

The state tried to appeal the injunction directly to the Indiana Supreme Court, which denied the direct appeal.

Instead, the case is now going through the normal appeals process, which included Wednesday's hearing before a three-judge panel of the Court of Appeals.

Following the panel's ruling, the case is likely to be appealed to the state Supreme Court — a lengthy process that could take months before a final decision is made in the lawsuit.

Since the law's passage, the Indiana Supreme Court ruled in a separate lawsuit that the ban does not violate the state constitution, overturning a preliminary injunction and putting the restrictions into effect. The state's highest court later denied a request for a rehearing.

The ban outlaws all abortions except in the case of a fatal fetal anomaly and cases of serious health risk to the mother. One part of the law says these exceptions are up to 20 weeks but another part says they can be used anytime. Rape survivors can get an abortion up to 10 weeks post-fertilization.

It also strips abortion clinics of their state medical licenses, and provides that only hospitals and hospital-owned ambulatory surgical centers can provide abortions.

But medical providers across the state have already stopped providing abortion care services altogether. Patients are instead being referred to clinics outside the state.

In November, the ACLU filed an amended complaint challenging the law on behalf of abortion providers. A bench trial in the case is scheduled for May 2024.

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Will Congress ever stop flirting with government shutdowns?

Back in mid-November, when President Biden signed the latest stop-gap funding bill to keep the government operating, official Washington no doubt heaved a sigh of relief. The measure, which originated in the fractious House, passed there only with support from the Democratic minority—in fact, many more Democrats than Republicans voted for it, even though it was put together by the GOP leadership. It was signed a day before the federal government was due to shut down, and keeps some agencies and departments operating until Jan. 19 and the rest until Feb. 2.



Lee Hamilton

Hoosier Opinions

Plenty of others have commented in print and online about the unusual two-tiered structure of the bill and what it accomplishes—painfully little, say many conservatives, while many Democrats and liberal commentators give GOP House Speaker Mike Johnson credit for at least keeping the government operating and buying time for Congress to do what it's supposed to do: fund the government through the regular appropriations process. As longtime journalist Karen Tumulty put it in the Washington Post, the measure “is a challenge to Congress to get back to working in the more orderly fashion it was designed to operate in. What Johnson is trying to do — and it's an admirable goal — is nudge the appropriations committees of both houses to get back to doing their jobs...”

The question, of course, is whether they can pull it off. This was the second stopgap funding measure this year, and the Republican caucus in the House is no less divided than it was, leading to plenty of trepidation about what will happen as the January and February deadlines approach.

All I can say is, I fervently hope Congress gets back on track with the appropriations process, because believe me, this is a terrible way to run a government. Even when Congress steps back from the brink of a shutdown, it's damaging. Government employees may become inured to the threat, but it's demoralizing and distracting nonetheless. Our economy needs to be able to operate with some certainty about what the government will be doing: repeated brinkmanship ripples through both the business and nonprofit sectors. And perhaps more than anything, there's a huge cost in terms of the time and effort agencies have to put into figuring out how to manage a shutdown—which they have to do well in advance. It means they can't turn their attention to any long-term effort to plan or improve. Shutdown threats, in other words, are highly disruptive.

And that's not even to mention the cost of an actual shutdown. A report a few years ago by the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations found that the previous three shutdowns had cost taxpayers nearly \$4 billion in back pay to furloughed workers and other costs, including extra administrative work, lost revenue, and late fees on interest payments owed by the government. In other words, stopping the government is no cost-saving measure.

The impact on the public, of course, is also measurable. Beneficiaries of aid programs (SNAP and other nutrition programs, for instance) face huge uncertainty about whether they'll make it week to week; loan programs are suspended, affecting small businesses, farmers, and others; the national parks and other government-funded attractions close, putting a dent in local tourist economies; and furloughed federal workers, even with the promise of back pay, sometimes begin looking for other work, while government recruiters find it tougher to find qualified candidates willing to put up with that kind of disruption.

As Congress debated this most recent funding measure, House Speaker Johnson said that his goal was to get Congress back to voting on individual appropriations bills—and to avoid stopgap funding and massive omnibus bills in the future. That's an admirable ambition. We can only hope that enough of his colleagues agree that, early next year, they don't drag the United States through another shutdown drama.

Lee Hamilton is a distinguished scholar with the IU School of Global and International Studies. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

Today in History

By The Associated Press
Today is Thursday, Dec. 7, the 341st day of 2023. There are 24 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Dec. 7, 1941, the Empire of Japan launched an air raid on the U.S. Navy base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii as well as targets in Malaya, Hong Kong, Guam, the Philippines and Wake Island; the United States declared war against Japan the next day.

On this date:
In 1787, Delaware became the first state to ratify the U.S. Constitution.

In 1796, electors chose John Adams to be the second president of the United States.

In 1917, during World War I, the United States declared war on Austria-Hungary.

In 1963, during the Army-Navy game, videotaped instant replay was used for the first time in a live sports telecast.

In 1972, America's last moon mission to date was launched as Apollo 17 blasted off from Cape Canaveral.

In 1982, convicted murderer Charlie Brooks Jr. became the first U.S. prisoner to be executed by injection, at a prison in Huntsville, Texas.

In 1988, a major earthquake in the Soviet Union devastated northern Armenia; official estimates put the death toll at 25-thousand.



Liz Cheney for president?

Why would former Rep. Liz Cheney run for president? Is she nuts? Is she trying to sell a book? Why would a Republican whose last election was losing a state primary by 37 points think she should now seek the highest office in the land? Why would a politician hated by most of her own party and used by the other party simply to attack her colleagues think she could bring 80 million Americans together behind a Cheney candidacy?

Who knows? Nevertheless, Cheney, in the preferred political style, is not “ruling out” a run in 2024. It would be a third-party effort, of course, because neither Republicans nor Democrats would have her as a candidate. And it would be focused entirely, 100%, on stopping former President Donald Trump. “Several years ago, I would not have contemplated a third-party run,” Cheney told the Washington Post. But now, she continued, “I happen to think democracy is at risk at home, obviously, as a result of Donald Trump's continued grip on the Republican Party, and I think democracy is at risk internationally as well.”

Cheney told the Post that she will decide whether or not to run “in the next few months.” Whatever her answer, it will be all about Trump. “We face threats that could be existential to the United States and we need a candidate who is going to be able to deal with and address and confront all of those challenges. That will all be part of my calculation as we go into the early months of 2024.”

Cheney, of course, is a politician without a party. She broke with Republicans when she agreed to become part of the House Jan. 6 committee's appallingly one-sided investigation of Trump. The committee was picked by then-Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and Cheney and then-Rep. Adam Kinzinger agreed to march in lockstep with Democrats. Their presence allowed Pelosi and the media to call the committee “bipartisan” when all the members, in public, literally agreed with each other on everything. They all played their parts in the Democratic showrunner's production. The Capitol riot is an entirely fitting subject for investigation, but there should never be another committee structured and run like the J6 Committee.

Cheney had no future with the Republican Party after that. But Democrats don't want her, either. Remember

that in the first two years of Trump's presidency, Cheney voted along with the Trump position 95.8% of the time, and in the last two years, she voted with Trump 92.8% of the time, according to analyses by FiveThirtyEight. No Democrat could ever accept such a record in a candidate for national office.

The fact is, Democrats used Cheney as a Republican who would attack Trump. In Cheney's new book, there is a story in which she learned that when she was being considered for the J6 committee, some Pelosi staff members showed Pelosi a list of the 10 worst things Cheney had ever said about Pelosi. The speaker just handed the paper back to her staff. “Why are you wasting my time with things that don't matter?” Pelosi said, according to the book.

Isn't that nice! Pelosi set aside her personal feelings to recruit a Republican willing to savage Trump precisely as Pelosi wished! It was a very Washington moment, but Cheney appears to have been touched.

Now Democrats are back to eyeing Cheney warily, in no small part because they believe an independent run, even by someone as unpopular as Cheney, would take votes away from President Joe Biden in the general election. They're right. A Cheney candidacy would be exclusively anti-Trump, as will Biden's candidacy. Why give voters a choice in anti-Trump candidates? By siphoning off even a few anti-

Trump votes, Cheney would probably help the former president.

But first, Cheney has a book to sell. That is why she is popping up on television these days. The book is “Oath and Honor: A Memoir and a Warning,” her story of life opposing Trump. At the moment this is written (noon on Dec. 5), the book is No. 1 on Amazon. Good sales and lots of friendly interviews will surely nudge Cheney in the direction of running, at least until she realizes that all those Democrats and Never Trumpers who cheer her attacks on Trump don't necessarily want her to be president of the United States.

Byron York is chief political correspondent for The Washington Examiner.



Byron York



Christmas golden corn weevils

In Christmas's month, golden corn kernels supplied for hungry deer tended to be dropped in a more generous quantity. After all, even Angelkeep critters deserve a blessed Christmas-time.

They arrive more frequently since farm fields no longer hold a harvest crop. Angelkeep took advantage of the ravenous need of the whitetail deer population and converted them mentally to reindeer through the Christmas season. Of course any antlered buck received the fondness and photography attempts seasonally associated with Dasher and Dancer and Prancer and Vixen, and the rest.

It arrived in previous years, but for unaccountable reasons, one December insect had never been highlighted by Angelkeep Journals. It may be because the name itself came with some negative connotations. Christmastime supposedly should be anticipation of all things likened to sugar plums. Hot wassail and traditional figgy pudding, flaming with a ceremonial fire, encouraged the joy and anticipation of the season.

Thus, while much heraldry and anticipatory caroling took place, who wanted to hear about the pre-Christmas appearance of corn weevil?

Corn weevil certainly never made any top-ten list of holiday delights. Yet, as traditional as Christmas trees appeared in the Box-Mart shopping aisles in October, corn weevils appeared in bags of corn kernels purchased in bulk for all Angelkeep critters choosing to visit and dine. Some flew in for a meal, others walked. A very few swam toward the drop spot and climbed out of Angelpond for corn kernels.

This holiday season proved that

Angelkeep Journals

corn weevil was here to stay as a holiday time occurrence. Too many to count scurried across the last handful of kernels dumped from a gallon tin can onto the top of the deers' salt block. The golden color of the corn kernels created a striking background for the scampering weevils shooting forth in every direction giving their own impression of the spokes of a snowflake, or, excuse the correlation, the rays from the Star of Bethlehem.

Impressions of the corn weevil, also known as the maize weevil, improved little once a close-up photograph was enlarged.

Corn weevils infested field crops as well as stored grain. It did so with a variety of grains. It also infested processed foods such as pasta. It's the reason Angelkeep didn't purchase its pasta in 400 pound quantities of fifty-pound bags as done with deer corn.

Weevils averaged only about one-eighth of an inch in length. The length of a weevil largely depended on the grain eaten. Corn weevils grew a silly millimeter longer than a rice weevil.

In sticking with Christmas spirit, the maize weevil, predominately brown, had four reddish-brown spots on the wing covers (elytra), however displayed no Christmas green. Like all insects it's comprised of a head, thorax, and abdomen, plus six legs. The smallest component, its head, included a proboscis appendage that



Alan Daugherty

might turn the stomach of any Christmas figgy pudding eater.

The snout of the corn weevil measured three to four times the length of the rest of the head giving it a size ration of snout-to-head greater than that of the trunk-to-head appendage of an elephant's head.

Now a large elephant ear food with all its sugary and cinnamon flavor endeared many a sweets' lover. The very idea of a sugary weevil snout confection had yet to make any Christmas breakfast buffet table. Perhaps this held true because with a profile view of maize weevil the head and snout resemble a toilet bowl plunger.

Due to research for this Angelkeep Journals' column piece, Angelkeep no longer considered one option on the Christmas breakfast buffet, that of Frosted Corn Flakes.

Now don't even get Angelkeep started on maize weevils geniculate antennae. That meant its antennae have elbows. Why did any insect need elbows on antennae? That's just wrong.

So, there you have it. Corn weevil finally received its due recognition as a steady regular visitor of Angelkeep. It wasn't pretty, the weevil, it's downright ugly. Angelkeep's cornbread dressing recipe was moved to the rear of the recipe box.

As News-Banner teacher writers say, here's the thing, as certain as cookies left out for Santa will disappear before Christmas morning, just as surely corn weevil will reappear every year-end holiday season.

“Are you quite absolutely and unreservedly sure that is a raisin in that oatmeal cookie?”

Mr. Daugherty is a Wells County resident who, along with his wife Gwen, enjoy their backyard and have named it “Angelkeep.”

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Make this ordinary day the best day of your life

It's a common day with ordinary food, ordinary people, and ordinary situations. Ordinary for me is talking with little people, setting food on the table, giving hugs, wiping wet kisses, and channeling hearts from sunrise to sunset.

Isn't it amazing- we all have our own set of "ordinary?" I always tell the children when they feel shy about meeting new people, "Those are ordinary people just like us, we just didn't get to talk with them yet!"

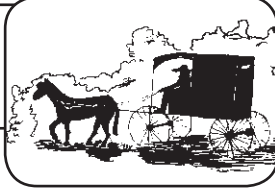
Then too, the "ordinary" people in our lives don't give them a title of less than ideal. Why the people in my life who are the most precious to me are those I consider a part of my ordinary life!

Looking back, the years spent with Daniel I realize that common days at home were some of the best.

Take this, an 82 year-old gentleman from Michigan whose wife passed this summer stopped by our house this week. What do you think his advice was? First take a moment with me to imagine the sadness he's facing since losing his spouse after 60 years of marriage. His life has changed drastically, and his house is quiet and empty as he misses his sweet wife. Without him verbalizing it, I could tell he misses her every moment of every day.

The Amish Cook

by Gloria Yoder



Raising his work-weathered hand, he said, "We can choose to make every day the best day of our life."

As he rose to leave, he repeated, "You can make this day the best day of your life."

Long after that horse and open wagon with him and his son and family had gone out the driveway I kept pondering. All excuses of hard or unfair situations shriveled as I realized today is my opportunity to allow God to use this day as He pleased.

Perhaps ordinary is okay after all, even if it does not look like I thought it would with Daniel fathering his rapidly growing children. Ordinary, when chosen by God, is perfect and complete. When the details of our normal days are orchestrated by Him, the end result will bring joy and peace.

I am the first to confess that there are days and I cannot feel that closeness with the One who gave this new set of ordinary. These are the times I simply claim His grace to carry me through.

Ever since I was a young girl I had this mini sticky note where I penned the words, "In the tears of His saints God sees a rainbow."

Today I look at it. It's an ordinary day at home, but that's okay; it's where I've been placed, so it's where I'll be and in each tear God sees a rainbow.

What does ordinary spell to you as an individual? Pain, frustration, despair, broken dreams, or perhaps joy and happiness? Regardless what you'll check off, God knows. Tell Him about it. He'll listen to it all, and if you choose to give it to Him, He'll take it from you and replace it with His perfect gift. Recently when one of the boys were going through hard times I explained in a very simple way that every time we give something to God He places it in His keepsake box and re-wraps it into something better than we ever imagined and give it back to us. Since that we put things in God's 'keepsake box' and trust that in His time He'll heal, restore, and re-wrap.

Okay, now take a moment to and grab a box of ordinary graham or saltine crackers and end up with this most delicious candy!

OLD-FASHIONED BUTTERSCOTCH CHRISTMAS CANDY



- Saltines or graham crackers
- 1 cup butter (for crunchier crackers, use only ½ cup)
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 ½ cups chocolate chips

Put a single layer of saltine or graham crackers side by side (with 4 sides touching one another) on a 10 by 15-inch rimmed cookie sheet, lined with parchment paper.

Bring butter and brown sugar

to a rolling boil. Boil for three minutes.

Spread mixture on top of crackers.

Preheat oven to 400 degree. Bake crackers with sauce, for 5 minutes.

Remove from heat and immediately sprinkle with 1 1/2 cups chocolate chips. Let set three minutes and then spread melted chips over with a butter knife. Cool and break into sized pieces of your choice.

A Talk with Tego



Buzz is a 2½-year-old, domestic short hair, neutered male.



Woody is a 2-½-year-old, domestic short hair, neutered male.



Baby is a four-month-old, domestic short hair female.



Tego

Tego's Tips: The Wells County Animal Shelter has several, super sweet cats that are already fixed, waiting to have a home to call their own.

These are just a few pets available for adoption at the Wells County Animal Shelter, 1613 W. Cherry St., Bluffton. For more information call 824-6063.

'A Christmas Carol' at Salomon Farm Park's barn

Ossian native Gavin Drew, who is Artistic Director of the Summit City Music Theatre, will be the director for the group's production of "A Christmas Carol" to be held at the Old Barn at Salomon Farm Park in Fort Wayne through Dec. 10.

Those attending should be aware

that the Old Barn is not heated and should dress accordingly. Ticket information at summitcitymt.com.

Wells county residents may remember when Drew was active with the Wells Community Theatre and presented a one-man show in Bluffton.

Santa says ... Support your ho-ho-hometown!

Don't Forget Non-Profits

Some local organizations are focused not on selling products, but on improving the lives of disadvantaged community members. Non-profit groups, food banks and children advocacy organizations are all seeking help this holiday season.

And what they're asking for is simply a hand. They need more manpower to achieve their goals and spread the word on their efforts.

Lending Your Skill Set

Can you spare a few hours every weekend in December? You may be asked to run errands or visit with people. Maybe deliver food or products to clients across town.

Professionals in the creative services field can offer their skills free of charge as a holiday contribution. Developing a website, creating brochures or writing a mission statement for free can help your local group promote its missions.

Locals helping locals will strengthen the community this holiday season.

Food Donations

Why not spend your Christmas spreading some holiday cheer – and delicious food? You can spend some time cooking your favorite dish or baking some special cookies, then take them to your local food bank.

Your gesture will surely be appreciated by the hungry, as well as by the food bank staff. And it is a simple act of kindness that can be turned into a tradition, passed on to children or replicated by your friends and family members.

Charitable Contributions

You may find yourself short on time this holiday season, but maybe you have a few dollars to donate to a local organization. Your contribution could go a long way toward furthering the cause of a group near and dear to your heart.

And for that really hard-to-buy for person, perhaps they would appreciate a donation made in their name.

You can conveniently make online donations or in-person cash contributions. Either way, donating funds is a simple way to show your support while making a difference in the lives of those who need it.

Santa says ... Be sure to shop these businesses:

- ❄️ Above & Beyond Vehicle Reconditioning
- ❄️ Bluffton Tire
- ❄️ Daniel's Jewelers
- ❄️ Gerber Furniture
- ❄️ Lengerich Meats
- ❄️ Mattress + Furniture
- ❄️ Moser & Son
- ❄️ Northwood Computer
- ❄️ Paddlefish
- ❄️ Parlor City Cabinetry
- ❄️ Unique Blue Bar & Grill
- ❄️ Wells County Chamber of Commerce
- ❄️ Wells County Foundation

Gift "Chamber Bucks" ... available at the Wells County Chamber of Commerce

Parlor City Christmas

Saturday, Dec. 9 schedule

8 to 11 a.m.

Breakfast--cost \$11 at the American Legion.

Breakfast with Santa - donation at the Masonic Lodge.

9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

• Cookie Walk benefiting Grace & Mercy Transitional Housing at The Lounge - 303 W. Market St.

9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

• Musical Entertainment featuring Studio 88, Jeanette S. Lundeen Music Studio, Creative Arts School of Music, Tammy Ray Piano Studio, and Gretchen Steffen's piano students at the Wells County Public Library.

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Parlor City Shopping Fair--shop local with 35+ artisans and vendors at the Wells County Commerce & Visitors Centre - 211 W. Water St.

• Wood Carvings by Ryan Frauhiger of Forrest Carvings; warm up by the outdoor fire on the patio and enjoy a Pinewood Derby track at the Wells County Commerce & Visitors Centre.

11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Sentimental Journeys horse-drawn wagon rides will start from the Wells County Public Library. Goodie Walk--free food & treats by local businesses throughout Downtown Bluffton.

Connect 4 Basketball and various games at the 200 block of W. Market St.

Ben Burman State Farm will be hosting Santa at Parlor Studios at 224 W. Market St. with free pictures by Burman Photography. NeuEnchanted Expressions Face Painting by Carissa, A Balloon Above, and Jessica Shoemaker Events--free face painting, balloon

animals, and photo booth at 209 W. Market St.

Princess Meet-and-Greet and Busted Haft Throwing at the 100 block of W. Market St.

Crafts, goodies, and mini organ concerts at 11:15 a.m.

12:15 p.m., and 1:15 p.m. at the First Reformed Church Snowman character and photo ops throughout downtown (tag "parlor-citychristmas" in photos)

11 a.m. to evening

• Live Nativity (Dutch Mill Plaza)

10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

• Trolley Rides - stops at the library, Historical Museum, Wells County Commerce & Visitors Centre, and Market St.

3 p.m. and 7 p.m.

• White Christmas by the Creative Arts Theater Department--admission \$15 for adults. \$10 for 12 & under in the auditorium at 428 S. Oak St.

10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

• Christmas at the Mansion at the Wells County Historical Museum

6 to 9 p.m.

• Wonderland of Lights featuring stories with Santa and hot cocoa--entry donation at Ouabache State Park

11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

• Owl Demonstration at the 100 block of W. Market St.

11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Live Reindeer at the Parlor City Plaza

Throughout the day

Vote on your favorite for the Window Decorating Contest. Read a story at the Story Walk at Pickett's Run Park

Vendors for Parlor City Shopping Fair

During Bluffton's Parlor City Christmas event on Saturday, Dec. 9, a Shopping Fair will be offered at the Wells County Commerce & Visitors Centre from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Vendors planning to be present include:

Petra Baumgartner (papercraft & stocking stuffers); Rebecca Bogner (craft variety); Connie Bultemier (tumblers); Deb Carson (Tastefully Simple); Nicole Curry (crafts/food); Angie Day (Young Living essential oils); Kayla Demuth (tumblers & tees); Ryan Frauhiger (journals, cards, ecoprints); Katherine Frauhiger (soaps/wood crafts); Judy Carver (crocheted items/jewelry); Becky Goshorn (Mary Kay products).

Others include: Angie Honegger (stocking stuffers); Stephanie Kipfer (macrame/small scale wood cutting); Billy Kreigh (cards, eco prints); Lana Miller (baked goods); John Musselman (Tiny Dog Woodworking); Randy Neuenschwander (wooden items); Kayleen Reusser (WWII books); Todd & Debbie Roop (KT Custom Engraving).

Others include: Jessica Salyer (crafts/food); Megan Schantz (handmade items/ sugar cookies); Dan Schrier (re-purposed items/artificial succulents); Phyllis Smith (knit & crocheted items); Leah Springer (laser engraved items); Kenzie Steel (Kenzie's Coney's); Nedra Steury (hand painted china); Brandy Stronczek ((Tinkertique); Diana Wedlar (Daddy's Delights).

Woodcarving on the Patio

While the shopping is taking place inside the Visitor's Centre the action on the patio will include the wood carving of Ryan Frauhiger of Forrest Carvings.

Pinewood Derby Track

Area Boy Scouts will have a Pinewood Derby Track set up on the patio for some racing action.

Warm Up Fire

If the weather is cool an outdoor fire will offer a site to warm up before heading off to another Saturday event.

Knights give Panthers 1st loss of season, led by defense, Fuelling's 32

By RYAN WALKER
Eastbrook ended its perfect season after a trip to The Castle Wednesday night 68-38.

The Knights improved to 8-2 overall and did it against one of the better 2A programs in the state. This was all while holding the Panthers (6-1) to 20 points below their average and creating 20 turnovers.

"When you can limit (Eastbrook) to the 30s — that team at the beginning of the season was the top-scoring team in the state," Norwell head coach Eric Thornton said after the game. "And for us, just playing a really good non-conference team like that. I think they're good enough to win 2A, and I think they will."

That's not to mention that Norwell was lights out from the floor, going 36-55 on the night (65 percent). But it wasn't like Eastbrook didn't carry its offense with them. The team still had a respectable 14-36 showing from the floor at 38 percent, but it was the number of opportunities it had taken from them by an imposing Norwell defense.

And that was how Kennedy Fuelling's night got going on offense — on the defensive end.

The game's first two buckets were uncontested layups via turnovers by the Marian University signee. Every point that the Panthers had in the first quarter was drowned by an answer.

Olivia Howell for Eastbrook hit a shot before Fuelling nailed an open three. Estah McKim swished two free throws only to have

Fuelling follow with another three. Sophia Morrison, who leads the Panthers with 22 points per game, hit her first of four triples of the game, but Makenzie Fuess hit her first 30 seconds later.

And for good measure, Fuelling knocked down two more threes in what was a 16-point first quarter to put the Knights ahead 22-7.

That was only four of the eight that she would get for the game, finishing with 32 total points.

On the other side, Morrison scored 14 for Eastbrook. Although she was short of her season average, the Panthers got a spark from her on four made triples and had Norwell's attention.

Howell and Audri Prater also score in double figures per night, but Thornton's defense held both to just 10 total by the final buzzer. Part of the game plan for Wednesday was to not key in on just Morrison, but to limit all three of them.

"It's tough to do because you've got Prater and Howell on the inside," Thornton said. "They just really have nice weapons offensively. It's tough to get all that covered, but all in all, we tried to know where (Morrison) is."

Norwell kept the game in its own hands for the rest of the night, outscoring Eastbrook in every quarter.

The Knights got some production from a few of their role players off the bench. Haley Green hit both of her shots for four points, while Addie and Lilly Norris hit threes. Fuess finished with 16.

The non-conference challenge was the last game

before the big one Friday night at Columbia City.

The Eagles are a perfect 9-0 so far and have taken the state of Indiana by storm with wins over the No. 2 and No. 5 teams, and are No. 1 themselves.

The No. 16 Knights will need to continue shooting the rock as it did against Eastbrook to have a chance to knock off Columbia City and potentially retake the Northeast 8 Conference crown. Shooting 65 percent and getting Fuelling to 11-16 is a good start.

"It's big because with Friday coming, you want kids going in there feeling confident in their game and their shots. It's good to see her knock some down," Thornton said.

That game will start at 7:30 p.m.

Norwell won the junior varsity game 74-12. Macie Saalfrank dropped 23 points to lead the Knights, while Ashley Waldman scored 15, and Jada Dale and Larkin Smith each had nine.

sports@news-banner.com

NORWELL 68, EASTBROOK 38
At Norwell
EASTBROOK (6-1): Sophia Morrison 6-14 0-0 14, Audri Prater 2-4 0-0 6, Kortney Goff 2-5 0-0 6, Olivia Howell 2-5 0-0 4, Estah McKim 2-5 2-2 6, Mia Busstos 1-3 0-0 2. TOTALS: 14-36 2-2 38.
NORWELL (8-2): Kennedy Fuelling 11-16 2-3 32, Makenzie Fuess 5-11 4-5 16, Lillian Norris 2-4 0-0 5, Vanessa Rosswurm 2-7 0-0 4, Haley Green 2-2 0-0 4, Addie Norris 1-1 0-0 3, Dekota Hubble 1-1 0-0 2, Annabelle Johnson 0-0 0-2 0, Ali Riley 0-1 0-0 0, Ryland Graft 0-0 0-0. TOTALS: 36-55 6-10 68.
Eastbrook 7 10 11 10 — 38
Norwell 22 11 18 17 — 68
Three-point FG: Eastbrook: 7-18 (Morrison 4-8, Goff 2-5, Prater 2-4), Norwell: 12-26 (Fuelling 8-12, Fuess 2-8, A. Norris 1-1, L. Norris 1-1, Riley 0-1, Rosswurm 0-3). Rebounds: Turnovers: Eastbrook 20, Norwell 10. Fouls: Eastbrook 9, Norwell 5 Fouled Out: None. Technicals: None. JV: 74-12 Norwell.



Norwell senior Kennedy Fuelling (right) reaches to regain the ball during a drive to the hoop against Eastbrook's Olivia Howell in the second half of Wednesday night's game at Norwell. The Lady Knights picked up a 68-38 non-conference win. (Photos by Chad Kline)



Norwell's Addison Norris (right) has the ball knocked away by Eastbrook's Olivia Howell (20) while trying to get off a pass during the second half.

Ohio State's Harrison, Illinois' Newton and Northwestern's Braun take AP's top B10 honors

By ERIC OLSON
AP College Football Writer

Ohio State receiver Marvin Harrison Jr. is The Associated Press Big Ten offensive player of the year, Illinois end Jer'Zhan Newton is defensive player of the year and Northwestern's David Braun is coach of the year.

Harrison is a unanimous AP All-Big Ten first-team pick for the second straight year. Newton, Michigan offensive lineman Zak Zinter and Iowa punter Tory Taylor are the other unanimous first-team selections by the voting panel of 23 media members who cover the conference.

The first team includes six players each from conference champion Michigan and Ohio State.

Ohio State's repeat first-team picks are Harrison, defensive end JT Tuimoloau and linebacker Tommy Eichenberg. Michigan running back Blake Corum and Zinter also were on the first team in 2022, as was Illinois' Newton.

Harrison, a finalist for the Heisman Trophy, is the Buckeyes' first receiver with back-to-back 1,000-yard seasons. He has seven 100-yard receiving games this season, and his 13 touchdown catches are tied for second nationally.

Newton was second in the Big Ten with 7.5 sacks, and he also recorded nine quarterback hurries and blocked four kicks. He was a finalist for the Bronko Nagurski Award.

Purdue safety Dillon Thieneman is newcomer of the year after he set school freshman records with six interceptions and 74 solo tackles. His 106 tackles are most among freshmen in the nation.

Braun, hired as Northwestern defensive coordinator last January, unexpectedly became the face of the program following the firing of Pat Fitzgerald in the wake of a hazing scandal. Braun was interim coach until last month, when he was hired to the permanent role. The Wildcats went from 1-11 last season to 7-5, the biggest turnaround in the Bowl Subdivision.

FIRST TEAM OFFENSE

u-WR — Marvin Harrison Jr., Ohio State, junior, 6-4, 205, Philadelphia.

WR — Isaiah Williams, Illinois, junior, 5-10, 185, St. Louis.

Tackle — Olumuyiwa Fashanu, Penn State, junior, 6-6, 317, Waldorf, Maryland.

Tackle — Aireontae Ersery, Minnesota, junior, 6-6, 325, Kansas City, Missouri.

u-Guard — Zak Zinter, Michigan, senior, 6-6, 322, North Andover, Massachusetts.

Guard — Donovan Jackson, Ohio State, junior, 6-4, 320, Bellaire, Texas.

C — Drake Nugent, Michigan, senior, 6-2, 301, Lone Tree, Colorado.

TE — Cade Stover, Ohio State, senior, 6-4, 251, Mansfield, Ohio.

QB — J.J. McCarthy, Michigan, junior, 6-3, 202, La Grange Park, Illinois.

RB — Blake Corum, Michigan, senior,

5-8, 213, Marshall, Virginia.

RB — TreVeyon Henderson, Ohio State, junior, 5-10, 212, Hopewell, Virginia.

PK — Dragan Kesich, Minnesota, senior, 6-4, 240, Oak Creek, Wisconsin.

All-purpose — Cooper DeJean, Iowa, junior, 6-1, 207, Odebolt, Iowa.

DEFENSE

Defensive end — Chop Robinson, Penn State, junior, 6-3, 254, Gaithersburg, Maryland.

Defensive end — JT Tuimoloau, Ohio State, junior, 6-4, 270, Edgewood, Washington.

u-Defensive tackle — Jer'Zhan Newton, Illinois, junior, 6-2, 295, St. Petersburg, Florida.

Defensive tackle — Kris Jenkins, Michigan, senior, 6-3, 305, Olney, Maryland.

Linebacker — Jay Higgins, Iowa, senior, 6-2, 233, Indianapolis.

Linebacker — Tommy Eichenberg, Ohio State, senior, 6-2, 239, Cleveland.

Linebacker — Aaron Casey, Indiana, senior, 6-2, 235, Douglasville, Georgia.

Cornerback — Cooper DeJean, Iowa, junior, 6-1, 207, Odebolt, Iowa.

Cornerback — Mike Sainristil, Michigan, senior, 5-10, 182, Everett, Massachusetts.

Safety — Tyler Nubin, Minnesota, senior, 6-2, 210, St. Charles, Illinois.

Safety — Hunter Wohler, Wisconsin, junior, 6-2, 211, Muskego, Wisconsin.

u-Punter — Tory Taylor, Iowa, senior, 6-4, 232, Melbourne, Australia.

SECOND TEAM OFFENSE

WR — Daniel Jackson, Minnesota, senior, 6-0, 200, Kansas City, Kansas.

WR — Roman Wilson, Michigan, senior, 6-0, 192, Maui, Hawaii.

Tackle — Josh Fryar, Ohio State, senior, 6-6, 313, Beech Grove, Indiana.

Tackle — LaDarius Henderson, Michigan, senior, 6-4, 315, Waxahachie, Texas.

Guard — Matthew Jones, Ohio State, senior, 6-4, 315, Brooklyn, New York.

Guard — Trevor Keegan, Michigan, senior, 6-6, 320, Crystal Lake, Illinois.

Center — Hunter Nourzad, Penn State, senior, 6-3, 320, Marietta, Georgia.

TE — Colston Loveland, Michigan, sophomore, 6-5, 245, Gooding, Idaho.

QB — Taulia Tagovailoa, Maryland, senior, 5-11, 208, Ewa Beach, Hawaii.

RB — Braelon Allen, Wisconsin, junior, 6-2, 245, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

RB — Kyle Monangai, Rutgers, junior, 5-9, 210, Roseland, New Jersey.

PK — James Turner, Michigan, senior, 6-0, 196, Saline, Michigan.

All-purpose — Tyrone Tracy Jr., Purdue, senior, 6-1, 210, Indianapolis.

DEFENSE

Defensive end — Aense Isaac, Penn State, senior, 6-4, 249, Brooklyn, New York.

Defensive end — Nic Scourton, Purdue,

(Continued on Page 7)

High School Calendar

THURSDAY, DEC 7
SWIMMING & DIVING (CO-ED): Jay County at Norwell, 6 p.m.; Bluffton at Blackford, 5:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, DEC 8
BOYS BASKETBALL: Lakeland Christian at Bluffton, 7 p.m. (JV one half).

GIRLS BASKETBALL: Norwell at Columbia City, 7:30 p.m.; Bluffton at Woodlan, 7:30 p.m.; Heritage at Southern Wells, 7:30 p.m.

WRESTLING: NE8 DUALS at New Haven 6 p.m.; Bluffton, Southern Wells at ACAC Team Duals (Jay County High School), 6 p.m.

SATURDAY, DEC 9
BOYS BASKETBALL: Blackhawk at Norwell, 7:30 p.m.

SWIMMING & DIVING (CO-ED): Norwell Boys Invitational, 9 a.m.

WRESTLING: NE8 Duals at Columbia City, 9 a.m.; Bluffton, Southern Wells at ACAC Team Duals (Jay County High School), 9 a.m.

MONDAY, DEC 11

No events scheduled
TUESDAY, DEC 12
BOYS BASKETBALL: Northfield at Southern Wells, 7:30 p.m.

GIRLS BASKETBALL: Woodlan at Norwell, 7:45 p.m.; Southern Wells at Elwood, 7:30 p.m.

SWIMMING & DIVING (CO-ED): Snider/Wayne at Norwell, 6 p.m.
WRESTLING: Jay County at Norwell, 6 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, DEC 13
WRESTLING: Churubusco at Bluffton, 6:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, DEC 14
GIRLS BASKETBALL: Southern Wells at Woodlan, 7:30 p.m.

SWIMMING & DIVING (CO-ED): Norwell at South Adams, 5:30 p.m.; South Side at Bluffton, 5:30 p.m.

WRESTLING: Mississinewa at Southern Wells, 6 p.m.

Ohtani, Soto and Yamamoto are still up for grabs as teams head home from winter meetings

By RONALD BLUM
AP Baseball Writer

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Shohei Ohtani, Juan Soto and Yoshinobu Yamamoto were still up for grabs as team officials started to head home Wednesday evening following a baseball winter meetings of much talk and little action.

Ohtani, the unique two-way star, is expected to get a record contract of \$500 million-plus. His agent, Nez Balelo, didn't travel to the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center, preferring to stay away.

While Los Angeles Dodgers manager Dave Roberts acknowledged meeting with Ohtani at Dodger Stadium before heading to Nashville, other teams were mum. Some fans tried to use flight-tracking programs to determine Ohtani's whereabouts, and Toronto general manager Ross Atkins sparked speculation of a get-together at the team's spring training

facility in Dunedin, Florida, when he switched a media availability on Monday to Zoom.

Ohtani has not spoken with reporters since Aug. 9, two weeks before a pitching injury that required surgery and will keep him off a mound until 2025.

The Yankees, after missing the playoffs for the first time since 2016, have been negotiating a trade to acquire Soto from San Diego. The three-time All-Star can become a free agent after next year's World Series.

New York did make a rare trade with the rival Boston Red Sox late Tuesday, acquiring outfielder Alex Verdugo for right-handers Greg Weissert, Richard Fitts and Nicholas Judice.

"He's actually been a guy that we've talked about now for, for a while," Yankees manager Aaron Boone said. "I feel like there's an edge he feels the game with."

Both the Yankees and

Mets are among the teams seeking Yamamoto, a 25-year-old right-hander who was 16-6 with a 1.21 ERA this season for the Orix Buffaloes of Japan's Pacific League. The Yankees plan to meet with the pitcher on Monday in California, a person familiar with the planning told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity because details were not announced.

Mets owner Steve Cohen and president of baseball operations David Stearns went to Japan ahead of the winter meetings to talk with Yamamoto and family.

"I think it demonstrates Steve's commitment to do everything he possibly can to bring players to New York," Stearns said.

In deals that did get finalized, Baltimore agreed to a \$13 million, one-year contract with closer Craig Kimbrel, the Los Angeles Dodgers announced a \$9 million, one-year deal to keep

(Continued on Page 7)

News-Banner Scoreboard

BASKETBALL

High School

Wednesday Boys' Scores
Cambridge City Lincoln 63, Anderson Prep Academy 49.
Concord 48, W. Noble 42.
Ft. Wayne Smith Academy 55, Pierceton Woods 20.
Ft. Wayne Snider 66, DeKalb 50.
Ft. Wayne Wayne 98, New Haven 61.
Griffith 61, Hammond Noll 53.
Lawrence North 79, Lawrence Central 61.
Victory 55, Thrival 49.

Wednesday Girls' Scores
Anderson Prep Academy 58, Union (Modoc) 32.
Corydon 52, Austin 38.
Eastside 59, Churubusco 27.
Elwood 36, Tipton 13.
Evansville Reitz 74, Evansville Harrison 30.
Frankton 69, Daleville 34.
Ft. Wayne Luers 43, Belmont 34.
Ft. Wayne Northrop 85, E. Noble 57.
Hamilton 54, Coldwater Pansophia, Mich. 6.
Hebron 60, Griffith 31.
Lake Central 71, Anderson 18.
Lapel 70, Madison-Grant 17.
Leo 44, Angola 36.
Northeastern 51, Lawrenceburg 17.
Norwell 68, Eastbrook 38.
Rushville 54, Whiteland 51.
Tippecanoe Valley 49, Triton 32.
Union City 53, Centerville 42.
Whiting 52, River Forest 33.

Class 4A			
W-L	Pts	Prv	
1. Fishers (9)	5-0	252	1
2. Westfield (1)	3-0	179	7
3. Lawrence North 2-0	176	4	
4. Indpls Cathedral 4-0	165	6	
5. Kokomo	3-1	125	8
6. Indpls Ben Davis 2-1	119	5	
7. Brownsburg	3-1	87	2
8. Chesterton	3-0	76	NR
9. Indianapolis Attucks 2-1	54	9	
10. Penn	3-0	53	NR

Others receiving votes: Anderson 40, Noblesville 39, Ft. Wayne North 32, Greenfield 25, Center Grove 24, Gary West 18, Carmel 16, Indpls N. Central 15, LaPorte 14, Ft. Wayne Snider 12, Lafayette Harrison 10, S. Bend Riley 9, S. Bend Adams 8, Ft. Wayne Wayne 6, Terre Haute South 6.

Class 3A			
W-L	Pts	Prv	
1. Guerin Catholic (7)	4-0	226	2
2. Scottsburg	4-0	193	3
3. NorthWood (4)	0-0	189	1
4. Delta	3-0	158	T6
5. Heritage Hills (1)	3-0	121	9
6. Greensburg	2-0	120	T6
7. Indpls Brebeuf	2-1	104	4
8. Danville	3-0	76	NR
9. S. Bend St. Joseph's 2-1	75	8	
10. Silver Creek	4-0	52	NR

Others receiving votes: Mishawaka Marian 27, S. Bend Washington 26, Evansville Memorial 16, N. Daviess 13, Norwell 13, Peru 10, Hammond Noll 9, Heritage Christian 6, Batesville 6.

Class 2A			
W-L	Pts	Prv	
1. Wapahani (7)	3-0	224	3
2. FW Blackhawk (3)	1-1	180	1
3. Brownstown (2)	3-1	165	2
4. Tipton	3-0	141	7
5. Linton-Stockton 1-0	138	4	
6. Southwestern	3-0	132	6
7. Manchester	3-0	110	10
8. Providence	2-1	83	8
9. N. Judson	2-0	47	NR
10. Ft. Wayne Luers 1-0	34	NR	

Others receiving votes: Paoli 30, Gary 21st Century 30, Sullivan 30, Eastern Hancock 21, Adams Central 19, Triton Central 17, Indpls Park Tudor 12, Bowman Academy 8, Parke Heritage 7, Forest Park 6, S. Spencer 6.

Class 1A			
W-L	Pts	Prv	
1. Loogootee (7)	4-0	210	2
2. Indpls Lutheran (4)	0-0	167	4
3. Morgan Twp.	3-0	134	7
4. Bloomfield	2-1	121	1
5. Greenwood Christian 3-1	119	5	
6. Ev. Christian	4-1	102	6
7. Orleans	2-1	86	3
8. Michigan City Mq1-0	80	10	
9. Clay City	3-1	64	NR
10. Shakamak	2-1	52	NR

Others receiving votes: Barr-Reeve 42, Christian Academy 40, Triton 32, Fountain Central 26, Elkhart Christian 16, Tindley 16, Bethesda Christian 7, Borden 6.

College

Men's Basketball Scores
Wednesday, Dec. 6
EAST
Brown 67, Rhode Island 64.
Bryant 67, Siena 51.
Canisius 87, Robert Morris 80.

Colgate 115, Northern Vermont-Lyndon 37.
Dartmouth 76, New Hampshire 64.
Duquesne 85, Marshall 72.
Fairfield 75, Yale 71.
Hofstra 62, Iona 57.
La Salle 62, Loyola (Md.) 61.
Maine 74, Boston U. 65.
Maryland 81, Penn St. 75, OT.
Morgan St. 92, UMBC 80.
NJIT 80, Fordham 77.
Penn 111, FDU-Florham 57.
Saint Joseph's 69, American 53.
St. Bonaventure 94, Niagara 60.
St. John's 85, Sacred Heart 50.
Stony Brook 81, Stonehill 63.
Temple 85, Bloomsburg 55.
Towson 81, UMass 71.
Vermont 73, Northeastern 71.
Wagner 62, Coppin St. 59.

SOUTH
Belmont 72, Lipscomb 71.
Clemson 72, South Carolina 67.
Davidson 62, Campbell 50.
Florida A&M 65, Presbyterian 60.
Memphis 85, VCU 80, OT.
Miami 97, LIU 49.
NC State 93, Md.-Eastern Shore 61.
San Francisco 73, Vanderbilt 60.
South Alabama 83, Mercer 62.
UCF 94, Jacksonville 52.
Wake Forest 76, Rutgers 57.
William & Mary 84, Old Dominion 79.
Wofford 81, Gardner-Webb 66.

MIDWEST
Ball St. 68, Detroit 65.
Cent. Michigan 71, Valparaiso 67.
Drake 75, Saint Louis 69.
Fort Wayne 70, S. Indiana 57.
Illinois St. 62, N. Kentucky 59.
Marquette 86, Texas 65.
N. Iowa 78, Richmond (Ohio) 64.
Ohio St. 84, Miami (Ohio) 64.
SE Missouri 95, Harris-Stowe 45.
SIU-Edwardsville 78, Green Bay 69.
St. Thomas (MN) 75, Milwaukee 71.
Toledo 69, Oakland 68.
W. Illinois 80, Coe 58.
Youngstown St. 78, Ohio 72.

SOUTHWEST
Houston 75, Rice 39.
Houston Christian 95, SW Adventist 58.
N. Arizona 78, Abilene Christian 76.
Texas Rio Grande Valley 76, Texas A&M-CC 74.
Texas Tech 87, Omaha 58.
Texas-Arlington 74, North Texas at Dallas 37.

Women's Basketball Scores
Wednesday, Dec. 6
EAST
Albany (NY) 56, CCSU 37.
Boston College 95, UMass 57.
Bryant 63, Loyola (Md.) 54.
Columbia 76, Memphis 66.
Delaware St. 108, Wilmington (DC) 39.
Drexel 51, Marist 36.
Fairleigh Dickinson 86, Bloomfield 38.
Maine 79, Harvard 61.
Monmouth (NJ) 72, American 60.
New Hampshire 68, Stonehill 41.
Princeton 79, Quinnipiac 70.
Providence 51, Rhode Island 50.
Sacred Heart 57, NJIT 48.
Stony Brook 81, Yale 66.
Towson 68, George Washington 60.

UConn 90, Ball St. 63.
Vermont 62, Army 42.
Wagner 69, St. Peter's 67.
SOUTH
Alabama 88, Coastal Carolina 46.
Belmont 70, Lipscomb 51.
E. Kentucky 85, Miami (Ohio) 55.
ETSU 79, Charleston Southern 52.
Furman 124, Bob Jones 44.
Georgia 86, Troy 70.
Middle Tennessee 73, Tennessee 62.
Minnesota 76, Kentucky 57.
North Carolina 81, UNC-Greensboro 66.
Northwestern St. 59, Tarleton St. 51.
Presbyterian 68, Queens (NC) 60.
South Carolina 104, Morgan St. 38.

Tulane 90, New Orleans 63.
UNC-Asheville 88, Warren Wilson 33.
Virginia 78, Rider 51.
Virginia Tech 98, LIU Brooklyn 50.
MIDWEST
Cleveland St. 87, Niagara 56.
Detroit 62, W. Michigan 59.
Fort Wayne 57, Bellarmine 46.
IUPUI 81, Evansville 75.
Illinois 74, N. Kentucky 52.
Iowa 67, Iowa St. 58.
Kansas 79, Houston Christian 57.
Kansas St. 101, McNeese St. 39.
Missouri 81, Missouri St. 63.
Notre Dame 96, Lafayette 42.
Purdue 83, SE Missouri 57.
S. Illinois 77, SIU-Edwardsville 53.
Saint Louis 89, S. Indiana 53.
Toledo 69, Michigan 46.
UMKC 84, Bellevue 34.

Youngstown St. 53, Akron 52.
SOUTHWEST
North Texas 73, Ark.-Pine Bluff 66.
Texas 106, Long Beach St. 62.
Texas A&M 83, Lamar 51.
FAR WEST
Boise St. 87, CS Bakersfield 66.
Montana 82, Loyola Marymount 68.
N. Arizona 96, Pacific 65.
Weber St. 57, Nevada 55.

NBA

EASTERN DIVISION
Atlantic Division

W	L	Pct	GB	
Boston	15	5	7.50	—
Philadelphia	13	7	6.50	2
New York	12	8	6.00	3
Brooklyn	11	9	5.50	4
Toronto	9	12	4.29	6½

W	L	Pct	GB	
Orlando	14	7	6.67	—
Miami	12	9	5.71	2
Atlanta	9	11	4.50	4½
Charlotte	6	13	3.16	7
Washington	3	17	1.50	10½

W	L	Pct	GB	
Milwaukee	15	6	7.14	—
Indiana	11	8	5.79	3
Cleveland	12	9	5.71	3
Chicago	8	14	3.64	7½
Detroit	2	19	0.95	13

W	L	Pct	GB	
Dallas	12	8	6.00	—
New Orleans	12	10	5.45	1
Houston	9	9	5.00	2
Memphis	6	14	3.00	6
San Antonio	3	17	1.50	9

W	L	Pct	GB	
Minnesota	16	4	8.00	—
Denver	14	7	6.67	2½
Oklahoma City	13	7	6.50	3
Utah	7	14	3.33	9½
Portland	6	13	3.16	9½

W	L	Pct	GB	
L.A. Lakers	13	9	5.91	—
Sacramento	11	8	5.79	½
Phoenix	12	9	5.71	½
L.A. Clippers	9	10	4.74	2½
Golden State	9	11	4.50	3

Tuesday's Games
Milwaukee 146, New York 122 (Quarterfinal Game 1)
L.A. Lakers 106, Phoenix 103 (Quarterfinal Game 1)

Wednesday's Games
Memphis 116, Detroit 102.
Philadelphia 131, Washington 126.
Cleveland 121, Orlando 111.
Minnesota 102, San Antonio 94.
Brooklyn 114, Atlanta 113.
Houston 110, Oklahoma City 101.
Chicago 111, Charlotte 100.
Miami 112, Toronto 103.
Dallas 147, Utah 97.
Denver at L.A. Clippers, 10 p.m.
Portland at Golden State, 10 p.m.

Thursday's Games
Milwaukee vs. Indiana, 5 p.m., Las Vegas (Semifinal Game 1)
L.A. Lakers vs. New Orleans, 9 p.m., Las Vegas (Semifinal Game 1)

Friday's Games
Atlanta at Philadelphia, 7 p.m.
Detroit at Orlando, 7 p.m.
Toronto at Charlotte, 7 p.m.
New York at Boston, 7:30 p.m.
Washington at Brooklyn, 7:30 p.m.
Cleveland at Miami, 8 p.m.
Golden State at Oklahoma City, 8 p.m.
Minnesota at Memphis, 8 p.m.
Chicago at San Antonio, 8:30 p.m.
Houston at Denver, 9 p.m.
Sacramento at Phoenix, 9 p.m.
Dallas at Portland, 10 p.m.
L.A. Clippers at Utah, 10 p.m.

Saturday's Games
No games scheduled.

HOCKEY

NHL

EASTERN DIVISION							
GP	W	L	OT/PTS	GF	GA		
Boston	24	17	4	3	37	81	59
Florida	25	15	8	2	32	77	66
Detroit	24	14	7	3	31	91	71
Tampa Bay	27	12	10	5	29	90	94
Toronto	22	12	6	4	28	76	74
Montreal	25	11	11	3	25	72	89
Buffalo	26	10	14	2	22	74	90
Ottawa	20	10	10	0	20	70	65

METROPOLITAN DIVISION							
GP	W	L	OT/PTS	GF	GA		
N.Y. Rangers	24	18	5	1	37	82	66
Carolina	24	14	9	1	29	82	77
Philadelphia	25	13	10	2	28	74	70
N.Y. Islanders	24	10	7	7	27	69	79
Washington	22	12	8	2	26	52	65
New Jersey	23	12	10	1	25	85	88
Pittsburgh	25	11	11	3	25	74	66
Columbus	27	8	14	5	21	77	92

WESTERN DIVISION							
GP	W	L	OT/PTS	GF	GA		
Colorado	25	16	7	2	34	90	73
Dallas	24	14	7	3	31	83	71
Winnipeg	24	14	8	2	30	77	66
Arizona	24	13	9	2	28	68	68
St. Louis	24	13	10	1	27	70	74
Nashville	25	13	12	0	26	80	80
Minnesota	23	9	10	4	22	75	82
Chicago	24	7	16	1	15	59	89

CENTRAL DIVISION							
GP	W	L	OT/PTS	GF	GA		
Vegas	26	16	5	5	37	83	61
Los Angeles	22	15	4	3	33	85	53
Vancouver	26	16	9	1	33	101	70
Calgary	25	10	12	3	23	73	87
Seattle	26	8	12	6	22	70	92
Anaheim	25	10	15	0	20	69	87
Edmonton	22	9	12	1	19	74	79
San Jose	26	7	17	2	16	52	106

Pacific Division
GP W L OT/PTS GF GA
Vegas 26 16 5 5 37 83 61
Los Angeles 22 15 4 3 33 85 53
Vancouver 26 16 9 1 33 101 70
Calgary 25 10 12 3 23 73 87
Seattle 26 8 12 6 22 70 92
Anaheim 25 10 15 0 20 69 87
Edmonton 22 9 12 1 19 74 79
San Jose 26 7 17 2 16 52 106
NOTE: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.

Tuesday's Games
Ottawa 6, N.Y. Rangers 2.
Los Angeles 4, Columbus 3, OT.
Detroit 5, Buffalo 3.
San Jose 5, N.Y. Islanders 4, OT.
Nashville 4, Chicago 3, SO.
Colorado 3, Anaheim 2.
Minnesota 5, Calgary 2.
New Jersey 6, Vancouver 5.

Wednesday's Games
Tampa Bay 3, Pittsburgh 1.
Florida 5, Dallas 4.
Vegas at St. Louis, 9 p.m.
Carolina at Edmonton, 9:30 p.m.
Thursday's Games
Buffalo at Boston, 7 p.m.
Los Angeles at Montreal, 7 p.m.
San Jose at Detroit, 7 p.m.
Toronto at Ottawa, 7 p.m.
Columbus at N.Y. Islanders, 7:30 p.m.

Dallas at Washington, 8 p.m.
Tampa Bay at Nashville, 8 p.m.
Anaheim at Chicago, 8:30 p.m.
Carolina at Calgary, 9 p.m.
Philadelphia at Arizona, 9 p.m.
Winnipeg at Colorado, 9 p.m.
Minnesota at Vancouver, 10 p.m.
New Jersey at Seattle, 10:30 p.m.
Friday's Games

Pittsburgh at Florida, 7 p.m.
St. Louis at Columbus, 7 p.m.
Minnesota at Edmonton, 9 p.m.
Saturday's Games
Arizona at Boston, 1 p.m.
New Jersey at Calgary, 4 p.m.
Vegas at Dallas, 4 p.m.
Montreal at Buffalo, 7 p.m.
N.Y. Rangers at Washington, 7 p.m.
Nashville at Toronto, 7 p.m.
Ottawa at Detroit, 7 p.m.
Los Angeles at N.Y. Islanders, 7:30 p.m.

St. Louis at Chicago, 8 p.m.
Philadelphia at Colorado, 9 p.m.
Carolina at Vancouver, 10 p.m.
Tampa Bay at Seattle, 10 p.m.

FOOTBALL

College

2023-24 Bowl Game Schedule
Saturday, Dec. 16
Myrtle Beach Bowl
Conway, S.C.
Georgia Southern vs. Ohio, 11 a.m.
Celebration Bowl
Atlanta
Howard vs. Florida A&M, noon
New Orleans Bowl
New Orleans
Jacksonville St. vs. Louisiana, 2:15 p.m.

Cure Bowl
Orlando, Fla.
Miami (Ohio) vs. Appalachian St., 3:30 p.m.
New Mexico Bowl
Albuquerque, N.M.
New Mexico St. vs. Fresno St., 5:45 p.m.
LA Bowl Hosted
Inglewood, Calif.
UCLA vs. Boise St., 7:30 p.m.

Independence Bowl
Shreveport, La.
California vs. Texas Tech, 9:15 p.m.

Monday, Dec. 18
Famous Toastery Bowl
Charlotte, N.C.
W. Kentucky vs. Old Dominion, 2:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Dec. 19
Frisco Bowl
Frisco, Texas
UTSA vs. Marshall, 9:00 p.m.

Thursday, Dec. 21
Boca Raton Bowl
Boca Raton, Fla.
USF vs. Syracuse, 8:00 p.m.

Friday, Dec. 22
Gasparilla Bowl
Tampa, Fla.
Georgia Tech vs. UCF, 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 23
Camellia Bowl
Montgomery, Ala.
Arkansas St. vs. N. Illinois, noon
Birmingham Bowl
Birmingham, Ala.
Troy vs. Duke, noon
Armed Forces Bowl
Fort Worth, Texas
No. 24 James Madison vs. Air Force, 3:30 p.m.

Famous Idaho Potato Bowl
Boise, Idaho
Georgia St. vs. Utah St., 3:30 p.m.
68 Ventures Bowl
Mobile, Ala.
South Alabama vs. Eastern Michigan, 7:00 p.m.
Las Vegas Bowl
Las Vegas
Utah vs. Northwestern, 7:30 p.m.

Hawaii Bowl
Honolulu, Hawaii
Coastal Carolina vs. San Jose St., 10:30 p.m.
Quick Lane Bowl
Detroit
Bowling Green vs. Minnesota, 2:00 p.m.
First Responder Bowl
Dallas
Texas St. vs. Rice, 5:30 p.m.
Guaranteed Rate Bowl
Phoenix
Kansas

The Classifieds

SUDOKU

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.

King Classic Sudoku

7	5					8	1	
9	8					5		
1	3					8	2	
		7				9	3	
	4	5		6		2		8
								4
		1						
5	3	8				4	6	2
	2					5		9

Difficulty: ★★★

12/7

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NOTICE OF THE TAKING OF BIDS

BE IT KNOWN that the Town of Markle, ("Town") acting by its Town Council ("Council") has determined that a lease, rather than a sale, transfer, or exchange of certain real property that the Town owns commonly known as 197 E. Morse Street, Markle, Indiana 46770 ("Real Estate"), Parcel ID number 35-07-01-100-000-200-015 as designated on the real estate records maintained in the Huntington County, Indiana, Courthouse, would be in the best interests of the Town and the public; and the Property has been appraised to determine its aggregate current fair market rental value in accordance with IC 36-1-11.

On Wednesday, December, 20th, 2023, at 7:00 P.M. local time in the Council Meeting Room located at 154 E. Morse St., Markle, Indiana, the Council, for itself and on behalf of the Town, shall receive, open, and review bids for the commercial lease of the Real Estate materially as provided in a Commercial Lease Agreement form which is on file in the office of the Town's Clerk-Treasurer, located at 197 E. Morse Street, Markle, Indiana 46770. A copy of that form of Commercial Lease Agreement may be obtained from that Clerk-Treasurer's office upon request.

The minimum terms and conditions of the Commercial Lease Agreement are as follows: (1) Lease term to be not less than 5 years; (2) Annual rent to be not less than \$12,000; (3) Tenant to provide security deposit of not less than one month's rent; (4) Tenant to be responsible for all personal property taxes, real property taxes, and assessments; (5) Tenant to be responsible for all utilities; and (6) Tenant to be responsible for any and all buildout/construction costs, if any, with plans and specifications subject to the Town's approval.

Each bid must be sealed and clearly marked "Real Estate Bid" on the outside. Each bid must be in the form of Commercial Lease Agreement on file in the office of the Town's Clerk-Treasurer, and shall identify the bidder; bidder's mailing address and phone number; and the bid terms and conditions for the Lease. Sealed bids may be, but are not required to be, provided in advance to the Markle Clerk-Treasurer at 197 E. Morse Street, Markle, Indiana 46770 no later than 4:00 p.m. (local time). All bids timely received will be opened and read aloud. Late bids will be returned unopened.

The Real Estate may not be leased to a person who: (1) owes delinquent taxes, special assessments, penalties, interest, or costs directly attributable to a prior tax sale on a tract of real property listed under IC 6-1.1-24-1, or (2) is an agent of a person who owes delinquent taxes, special assessments, penalties, interest, or costs directly attributable to a prior tax sale on a tract of real property listed under IC 6-1.1-24-1. Any bid submitted by a Trust as defined in IC 30-4-1-1(a) must identify each beneficiary of the Trust and each settlor empowered to revoke or modify the Trust.

As determined by Council, the bidding for the commercial lease of the Real Estate will continue from day to day for a period not longer than sixty days. A bidder may raise the bidder's bid and that raise takes effect after the Town has given written notice of that raise to the other bidders. Council may, at any time on or after the initial date set to receive bids, lease the Real Estate to the highest and best bidder. Council may reject all bids received.

Terms and conditions of lease: Successful bidder(s) will be required to execute and return a Commercial Lease Agreement within ten days of notification. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PERSONS WITH A KNOWN DISABLING CONDITION WILL BE CONSIDERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH STATE AND FEDERAL LAW. ANY PERSON NEEDING REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS SHOULD CONTACT THE TOWN CLERK-TREASURER'S OFFICE. (See below)

TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF MARKLE, INDIANA
By: Stephanie Hensley as Clerk-Treasurer
Markle Town Hall
197 E. Morse Street
Markle, Indiana 46770
(260) 758-3193
clerk@markleindiana.com
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Lottery Numbers

Wednesday's Drawings HOOSIER LOTTERY

Cash 5 — 08-26-31-35-38
Lotto Plus — 09-20-28-34-37-41
Cash4Life — 08-14-38-40-46, Cash Ball: 04
Quick Draw Midday — 01-03-06-07-12-21-25-32-34-41-51-52-58-60-65-69-71-72-73-76, BE: 58
Daily Three-Midday — 09-07-01, SB: 04
Daily Three-Evening — 00-07-02, SB: 08
Daily Four-Midday — 09-02-04-09, SB: 04
Daily Four-Evening — 02-05-04-02, SB: 08
Quick Draw Evening — 04-15-16-18-21-22-23-24-34-36-37-39-41-43-46-62-64-72-74-79, BE: 24
Hoosier Lotto — 09-16-22-26-30-37
MEGA MILLIONS
Estimated jackpot (for Friday): \$395 million
POWERBALL
02-12-37-56-65 Powerball: 21; Power Play: 3X

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December

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THE BLUFFTON POLICE Department is seeking applications to fill the position of Ordinance Compliance Officer. This full-time civilian position is responsible for ensuring compliance with all city ordinances and is based in the police department working M-F 8a-4p. Duties include downtown parking enforcement and resolution of weed and junk complaints. The successful applicant must be at least 18 years old with a high school diploma or GED equivalent, possess a responsible driving history and clean criminal background. Knowledge of law procedures preferred. Application is available on the city's website www.blufftonindiana.net. For more information contact Chief of Police Kyle Randall at 824-3320 or kyle.randall@blufftonindiana.gov. Applications are due back December 22, 2023 by 4:30 p.m.

FOR SALE

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MICHIGAN CHRISTMAS TREES! Tim Murray's Fresh Cut Christmas Trees, Wreaths, Garland, Grave Blankets and Boughs! Also Michigan Maple Syrup. Located at Bummies Root Beer Stand, 1263 S. Main Street., Bluffton. Open Daily at 10am beginning Saturday, Nov. 25. Phone: 231-920-6194.

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Public Notices

PUBLIC NOTICE

THE JEFFERSON TOWNSHIP TRUSTEE WILL HOLD A SPECIAL MEETING AT 5:30 P.M. DECEMBER 21, 2023 AT 1645 HILLCREST DR. SUITE A CONFERENCE ROOM.

TOPIC: APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR TOWNSHIP ASSISTANCE FUND, POOR RELIEF.
LARRY HECKBER,
JEFFERSON TOWNSHIP TRUSTEE
nb 12/7 hspaxlp

NOTICE OF HEARING FOR BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS 11/9/2023

Notice is hereby given that the BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS will hold a Public Hearing in Conference Room 105 in the Wells Carnegie Government Annex, 223 W. Washington St., in the City of Bluffton, IN at 7:00 o'clock P.M. on the 19th day of December, 2023, for the purpose of reviewing and hearing comment on the request of ANS Enterprises, Inc., 424 E Townley, Bluffton, IN 46714 for the purpose of a Variance.
Current Zoning: B-3
Proposed Variance: To allow a reduced road frontage of 12.5' from the required 25' for a new parcel to be created.

Common Location: The subject property is located at 1780 S Main St., Bluffton, Indiana, 46714.
Brief Legal: The subject property is described as 2.593 acres in the SE quarter of Section 9 Township 26N Range 12E in Harrison Township.
Dated this 1st day of December, 2023
WELLS COUNTY BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS
Michael Lautzenheiser, Jr., Director
oj, nb 12/7 hspaxlp

NOTICE OF UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION

IN THE WELLS CIRCUIT COURT OF WELLS COUNTY, INDIANA
DOCKET NO. 90C01-2311-EU-000054
Notice is hereby given that LINDA J. MASTERSON was on the 21st day of November, 2023, appointed personal representative of the estate of CAROL J. MEEKS, deceased, who died on the 31st day of October, 2023, and was authorized to administer her estate without Court supervision.
All persons who have claims against this estate, whether or not now due, must file those claims in the office of the Clerk of the Wells Circuit Court within three (3) months after the date of the first publication of this notice, or within nine (9) months after the decedent's death, whichever is earlier, or those claims will be forever barred.
Dated at Bluffton, Indiana, this 21st day of November, 2023.
Beth Davis
Clerk, Wells Circuit Court
Matthew P. Hayes
Attorney for Personal Representative
Attorney No. 3200-02
GORDON & ASSOCIATES, P.C.
119 East Oak Forest Drive
Bluffton, IN 46714
(260) 824-9377
nb 11/30, 12/7 hspaxlp

SUDOKU ANSWER

8	6	1	9	5	9	8	7	4
2	7	9	7	1	8	6	5	3
8	9	7	6	5	2	1	4	9
9	7	1	1	8	6	9	2	7
1	8	6	2	9	4	5	7	3
9	2	6	6	7	9	1	1	8
4	9	2	8	9	6	7	3	1
7	6	9	4	2	1	9	8	6
6	1	8	9	6	7	2	9	1

At tribal summit, Biden says he's working to 'heal the wrongs of the past'

By COLLEEN LONG, SUSAN MONTOYA BRYAN and HALLIE GOLDEN
Associated Press
 WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden told Native American nations gathered for a summit Wednesday that his administration was working to heal the wrongs of the past as he signed an executive order that seeks to make it easier for Indigenous peoples to access federal funding, and have greater autonomy over how to spend it.

Biden also threw his support behind a request to allow Haudenosaunee Confederacy to compete under its own flag in the 2028 Olympics in lacrosse, a sport they invented.

Historically, federal policies attacked Native people's rights to self-governance and caused lasting economic damage. Biden said the actions at the summit were "key steps" that would help usher in a new era of tribal sovereignty. "A new era grounded in dignity and respect that recognizes your fundamental rights to govern and grow on your own terms," he said.

"It's hard work to heal the wrongs of the past and change the course, and move forward," Biden said.

Yurok Tribal Council Member

Phillip Williams described Biden's speech as inspirational.

"It felt like our highest official in the land acknowledges the crimes of the past," he said. "His contribution to society is to help to heal the tribal nations."

Biden signed the order as members of his administration and tribal nation leaders stood behind him on stage at the Department of the Interior. The order in part creates a clearinghouse for Native American and Alaska native tribes to find and access grants and it requests that federal agencies ensure that funding is accessible and equitable. It also gives them more authority over how to spend the money.

That news was welcomed by Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren, who said the funding they get from the federal government to help the hundreds of thousands of people on their reservation that extends across Arizona, Utah and New Mexico, can be difficult to spend.

"There's so much policies and things that are attached to it and requirements that are attached to it that sometimes it's just overwhelming to try to get it done," he said.

Tyson Johnston, self-governance executive director for the

Quinault Indian Nation in north-west Washington state, who is responsible for coordinating the relocation of their villages in the face of dangerous sea level rise, highlighted the importance of this type of autonomy when it comes to climate change.

In July, the Biden administration announced \$120 million in grant funding for tribes in the U.S. to boost their resiliency to climate change.

"All of us are going to have different adaptation strategies and different priorities moving forward. So boxing us in and keeping us in kind of bureaucratic red tape is really not going to work if we want to continue to make meaningful change," he said.

Biden hosted the summit in person last year and virtually the year before. This year, White House officials said, the goal was to provide an opportunity for tribal leaders to have more meaningful conversations directly with members of Biden's Cabinet.

While the federal government has an obligation to consult with tribal governments, some Native American and Alaska Native leaders have complained that federal agencies often treat the process as

a check-the-box practice despite efforts by Haaland to make changes.

From Nevada to Alaska, permitting decisions over mining projects, oil and gas development and the preservation of sacred areas, for example, have highlighted what some leaders say are shortcomings in the process.

The Democratic administration also announced more than 190 agreements that allow tribes to manage federal lands, waters and natural resources and a new study to help better interpret and tell the history of Native Americans, particularly during periods of federal reform.

"Yes, there are parts of our history that are painful, but there are also those that we celebrate and that show our resilience, strength and our contributions," said Interior Secretary Deb Haaland, a member of the Pueblo of Laguna.

Biden said he was throwing his support behind the effort to allow the confederacy to play under its own flag at the Los Angeles Olympics. The International Olympic Committee would have to make an exception to a rule permitting only teams playing as part of an official national Olympic committee to compete in the Games. The

Haudenosaunee have competed as their own team at a number of international events since 1990.

The Haudenosaunee Nationals Lacrosse Organization, established in 1983, is among the best in the world. The confederacy is made up of six different nations, the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, Senecas and Tuscarora Nation. It spans the border between the U.S. and Canada.

"Their circumstances are unique," Biden said. "They should be granted an exception to field their own team at the Olympics."

The Department of the Interior is also working on final revisions to a rule overhauling how human remains, funerary objects and sacred objects are repatriated. The new rules streamline the requirements for museums and federal agencies to identify possible items for repatriation.

Officials also announced that the White House Council on Native American Affairs, which is co-chaired by Haaland and Tanden, has published a guide outlining best practices and procedures for the management, treatment and protection of sacred sites. The document was recently finalized after taking into account feedback from tribal leaders.

McCarthy, booted as speaker, leaving Congress by year's end

By MICHAEL R. BLOOD and KEVIN FREKING
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Two months after his historic ouster as U.S. House speaker, Republican Rep. Kevin McCarthy said Wednesday that he is resigning and will leave Congress by the end of the year.

His announcement capped a stunning end to a House career for the one-time deli counter owner from Bakersfield, California, who ascended through state and national politics to become second in line to the presidency, until a cluster of hard-right conservatives engineered his removal in October.

McCarthy is the only speaker in history to be voted out of the job.

"No matter the odds, or personal cost, we did the right thing," McCarthy wrote in *The Wall Street Journal*, announcing his decision. "It is in this spirit that I have decided to depart the House at the end of this year to serve America in new ways."

Word about McCarthy's future had been expected, days before the filing deadline to seek reelection to the House. But his decision ricocheted across Capitol Hill, where his departure will leave the already paper-thin House GOP majority even tighter, with just a few seats to spare.

It adds to a wave of retirements in both parties, as many members seek higher office or look to escape the partisan rancor that often paralyzes the chamber. Republicans have been split by infighting and the rare expulsion last week of indicted GOP Rep. George Santos of New York, dashing hopes for major accomplishments and leaving the majority straining to conduct the basic business of governing.

It's also the end of an era for a generation of House Republicans led by McCarthy and former Reps. Paul Ryan and Eric Cantor, the so-called "Young Guns" whose book of the same title outlined a new style of GOP governance. Ryan and Can-

tor are gone, and McCarthy will soon exit.

McCarthy had brought the Republicans into the majority but found it was much more difficult to lead the GOP's factions.

His toppling from the speaker's post was fueled by grievances from his party's hard-right flank, including over his decision to work with Democrats to keep the federal government open rather than risk a shutdown.

House Speaker Mike Johnson of Louisiana, a Republican who succeeded McCarthy as speaker, tweeted that McCarthy "served faithfully and sacrificed substantially for the good of our country and our cause."

Speaking later with reporters, Johnson called McCarthy a "long and trusted friend" and said he was "sad to see him go."

Rep. Matt Gaetz, R-Fla., who led the effort to remove McCarthy, tweeted a one-word response after his announcement: "McLeavin."

He later chastised McCarthy, whose depart-

ture will further narrow the GOP's fragile hold on power. "I think he should have stuck around and helped us hold a strong majority," Gaetz told reporters. "But he left."

McCarthy, 58, arrived in the House in January 2007 after a stint in the California Assembly, where he was minority leader. In Congress, he maneuvered through his party's hierarchy before being elected speaker in January.

The dayslong floor fight that preceded his elevation to the House's top job foreshadowed a stormy tenure, at a time when former President Donald Trump remained the de facto leader of the party and deep divisions within the GOP raised serious questions about the party's ability to govern.

It took a record 15 votes over four days for McCarthy to line up the support he needed to win the post he had long coveted, finally prevailing on a 216-212 vote with Democrats backing leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York and six

Republican holdouts voting present. Not since the Civil War era has a speaker's vote dragged through so many rounds of counting.

McCarthy emerged from the fight weakened, especially considering Republicans held only a fragile margin in the chamber after a predicted "red wave" failed to materialize in the 2022 elections.

In the speaker's job, McCarthy's well-known savvy for fundraising and political glad-handing appeared ill-suited for corraling his party's hard-right members. Deals he cut to become speaker — including a rules change that

allowed any single lawmaker to file a motion to remove him — left him vulnerable.

When he became speaker, "he faced new challenges that required a different skill set," said Claremont McKenna College political scientist Jack Pitney, a one-time domestic policy analyst for House Republicans. And "the deals he made to become speaker made it almost impossible for him to succeed as speaker."

McCarthy, the son of a firefighter and a homemaker, has long depicted himself as a tireless battler. He is fond of quoting his father, who told him, "It's not how you start, it's how you finish."

Fighting between Israel, Hamas rages in Gaza's second-largest city, blocking aid from population

By NAJIB JOIBAIN, JACK JEFFERY and LEE KEATH
Associated Press

RAFAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israeli troops battled Hamas militants Wednesday in the center of the Gaza Strip's second-largest city, the military said, pressing a ground offensive that has sent tens of thousands of Palestinians fleeing to the territory's southernmost edge and prevented aid groups from delivering food, water and other supplies.

Two months into the war, Israel's offensive into southern Gaza was bringing to Khan Younis the same fierce urban fighting and intensified bombardment that obliterated much of Gaza City and the north of the territory in past weeks.

But in the south, the areas where Palestinians can seek safety are rapidly shrinking. Ahead of the assault, Israel urged residents to evacuate Khan Younis, the childhood home of two top Hamas leaders. But much of the city's population remains in place, along with large numbers who were displaced from northern Gaza and are unable to leave or wary of fleeing to the disastrously overcrowded far south.

Cut off from outside aid, people in U.N.-run shelters in Khan Younis are fighting over food, said Nawraz Abu Libdeh, a shelter resident who has been displaced six times. "The hunger war has started," he said. "This is the worst of all wars."

The U.N. says some 1.87 million people — over 80 percent of the population of 2.3 million — have already fled their homes, many of them displaced multiple times. Almost the entire population is now crowded into southern and central Gaza, dependent on aid. International officials escalated warnings over the worsening humanitarian calamity.

"Palestinians in Gaza are living in utter, deepening horror," U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk said at a news conference in Geneva. "My humanitarian colleagues have described the situation as apocalyptic."

Israel's campaign has killed more than 16,200 people in Gaza — most of them women and children — and wounded more than 42,000, the territory's Health Ministry said late Tuesday. The agency has said many are also trapped under rubble. The ministry

does not differentiate between civilian and combatant deaths.

Israel has vowed to fight on, saying it can no longer accept Hamas rule or the group's military presence in Gaza after the Oct. 7 attack that triggered the war. Hamas and other militants killed about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took captive some 240 men, women and children in that attack.

An estimated 138 hostages remain in Gaza after more than 100 were freed during a cease-fire last week. Their plight and accounts of rape and other atrocities committed during the rampage have deepened Israel's outrage and further galvanized support for the war.

URBAN WARFARE NORTH AND SOUTH

The refugee camp within Khan Younis was the childhood home of Hamas' top leader in Gaza, Yehya Sinwar, and the group's military chief, Mohammed Deif, as well as other Hamas leaders — giving it major symbolic importance in Israel's offensive.

Israeli military spokesman Daniel Hagari said Sinwar is "not above ground, he is underground," but would not elaborate on where Israel believes him to be. "Our job is to find Sinwar and kill him."

The military said its special forces at Khan Younis had broken through defense lines of Hamas fighters and were assaulting their positions in the city center. It said warplanes destroyed tunnel shafts and troops seized a Hamas outpost as well as several weapons caches. The Israeli accounts of the battle could not be independently confirmed.

Video released by the military showed commandos and troops moving amid sounds of gunfire down city streets strewn with wreckage and buildings with giant holes punched into them. Some took positions behind an earthen berm, while others inside a home fired out through a window, its flowered curtains fluttering around them.

Hagari said heavy fighting was also continuing in the north, in the Jabaliya refugee camp and the district of Shujaiya.

Hamas posted video it said showed its fighters in Shujaiya moving through narrow alleys and wrecked buildings and opening fire with rocket-propelled grenades on Israeli armored vehicles. Several of the vehicles are shown bursting into flames.

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Genesis Pest Services genesispestservices.com	JC'S GARAGE DOOR SALES & SERVICE jcsgaragedoor.com	Daniel's JEWELERS daniels-jewelers.net
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FISHER'S GARAGE DOORS fishersgaragedoors.com	Riverstone DENTAL riverstonedental.net	Bluffton Tire blufftontire.com
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