

# The News - Banner

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## Southern Wells vies for a piece of Paddlefish Solar

### SWCS board, county officials discuss possible future of economic development payments

By HOLLY GASKILL

Community members flooded the media center of Southern Wells Junior-Senior High Tuesday night to stake their claim on possible economic development payments coming into the county with the Paddlefish Solar development.

The item had been touched on during the last school district board meeting, particularly regarding a large group's desire to build a new auxiliary gym. During the con-

versation, board members called community members to bring their requests to the Wells County Council.

Subsequently, Council President Seth Whicker asked SWCS Board President Todd Fiechter to discuss the matter at the upcoming board meeting. Also present were council members Vicki Andrews and Brian Lambert, Commissioner President Mike Vanover, Executive Director of Wells County Economic Development Chad Kline, and

Trena Roudebush and Mary Solada, who represented Paddlefish Solar.

The foremost item Kline and Whicker addressed was the timing of the economic development payments. In exchange for a 10-year total tax abatement, Paddlefish Solar will pay the county at least \$8.5 million. However, this total will be delivered in portions as the project begins its operation. Roudebush said the group is currently aiming to begin southern Wells County construction in 2026.

The project itself has also not yet been approved, Kline emphasized. The economic development agreement has been made, but

the company still has to get project plans approved by the Area Plan Commission and multiple other entities before it can consider breaking ground.

In short, the county is a long way from seeing \$8.5 million.

"If that project moves forward — and that's an important thing to understand," Kline reiterated.

That considered, Fiechter asked the officials present to consider pledging a certain percentage of the payments for the district's use. Fiechter stated the district currently receives roughly 60 percent of taxes and,

(Continued on Page 2)



From the front row left to right, Kim Barger, representing Valero, Erin Prible, executive director of the Chamber of Commerce, Jessica Bricker, Mark Brown, Valero plant manager, Dawn Donnelly, Brittany Kong, Matt Wilson; back row left to right: Joshua Peppers, Ryan Benedict, Jason Elzey, Ben Renkenberger, Bruce Snyder. Donnelly, Kong, Wilson, Peppers, Benedict, Elzey and Snyder, all representing Valero. (Photo by Jonathan Snyder)

## Bluffton council members take oath of office; approve fire salary amendment

By JONATHAN SNYDER

Bluffton Common Council focused on old business items in its meeting Tuesday, but two members looked towards their future on the board.

Council members Chandler Gerber and Scott Mentzer in front of other members — Janella Stroncsek, Rick Elwell and Josh Hunt — officially took the oath of office for Common Council at Tuesday's meeting because they will be absent on Jan. 1. The other members will be sworn in on the traditional date.

After the proceedings, the council then approved of a new amendment to the Fire Department's salary ordinance. Under the old ordinance, the methods and certifications needed to climb the ranking ladder were not as clear as they could be. The goal of the amendment is to make procedures

more relevant to what the fire department is doing now.

While the numbers for salaries are not changing, the wording of how full-time, part-time and paid-on-call employees can improve their rank is. Full-time and part-time employees have different ladders they climb to make it to the rank they want. Elwell stated that at the end of the day these are industry certifications that our firefighters will need if they wish to progress.

"We want good language for what we need," said Hunt.

Furthermore, Gerber introduced a discussion about the initial plan from Ferguson Marketing about the rebranding initiative for Bluffton. Before the council meeting Gerber met with Ferguson to discuss the bigger pic-

(Continued on Page 2)

## Valero Renewables Named 2023 Business Of The Year

By JONATHAN SNYDER

Valero Renewables's recent employee appreciation luncheon had an extra surprise for the workers — the announcement of the company as Business of the Year.

Valero was honored Tuesday with the award, as several members from the Wells Chamber of Commerce and community were in on the surprise.

As the workers were presented with a dessert and balloons, complementing the array of food already available, Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Erin Prible spoke about Valero's mark on the community, both financially and in manpower.

"Your commitment to filling gaps and making a positive impact on so many aspects of our community is truly commendable," said Prible.

Valero was officially nominated by Kim Barger, an administrative employee of Valero, and was supported by United Way Wells, the Boys and Girls Club of Bluffton and the 4-H Backpack Program.

Valero officially entered Bluffton in 2018 after acquiring the ethanol facility from Green Plains. According to Valero, 135 million gallons of ethanol can be produced per year from the Bluffton plant. The corn needed for ethanol production is primarily purchased locally, with Valero buying more

than 38 percent of the corn grown in the Bluffton area.

But Valero's impact stretches farther than local farmers as employees are encouraged to get involved in local community events. Valero employees helped direct runners on the appropriate path to take during The Chicks Run on June 22 of this year, collected health and hygiene supplies for Grace and Mercy Transitional Housing and helped pack bags for the Wells County Backpack Program in November. Valero has also donated more than \$320,000 to United Way Wells since 2019.

"We have made tremendous strides in 2023 ... we will set some high goals in 2024," said Barger. "I sincerely want to thank you for all of your hard work at the plant and for your generosity ... I hope to expand it (our community involvement) so we get more employees involved and more businesses involved."

Plant Manager Mark Brown has been with Valero for about 19 years, but recently took the role at the Bluffton plant a couple of months ago. Throughout the years, he has seen the needs of communities and is looking to continue the legacy left by the previous plant manager Justin Moen.

"I know Justin was involved with a

(Continued on Page 2)

## Zoning board discusses pickle over potential pickleball courts

By JONATHAN SNYDER

The Board of Zoning Appeals approved a variance to reduce the 25-foot requirement for road frontage for Bob Meyer's property on South Main Street.

Meyer requested a variance to reduce the requirement for road frontage on his property to 12.5 feet. This will not require any changes to the road itself, but rather the 25 feet of asphalt will be split between a building owned by ANS Enterprises, and Meyer's property.

Meyer plans on building a new indoor pickleball court facility with the property next to the ANS building. Meyer stated that there are a group of people in Bluffton who are avid players and the only indoor pickleball courts they can use are in the YMCA. Meyer's new project hopes to reduce the headaches caused by the YMCA's multi-purpose courts that pickle-

ball is played on.

Meyer stated that the new facility should allow people to play on their schedule with their friends. After paying a monthly fee for facility maintenance, players will be able to declare their intentions to play at specific times on a smartphone application. Players will then be sent a passcode to unlock the building at that time and the lights will automatically turn on for them. The facility is also meant to be attendant-free, so costs can be kept as minimal as possible.

After the present board members — Tim Rohr, Tyson Brooks and Bill Dowty — voted to approve the variance, they expressed their excitement over the potential of the new facility. Tracy Gentis and Jerry Petzel were absent.

"That'll be exciting," said Brooks. "That's cool."

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## Indiana lawmakers discuss chronic school absenteeism

### School officials say solving the statewide chronic absenteeism problem will require multiple approaches

By CASEY SMITH

Indiana Capital Chronicle

Indiana lawmakers are adamant that moving bills to help improve student literacy and bolster career readiness is high-priority in the upcoming legislative session. But their efforts could end up fruitless if the state can't solve another issue plaguing schools: Hoosier kids aren't showing up to the classroom.

The latest Indiana data shows

that about 40 percent of students statewide missed 10 or more school days last year, and nearly one in five were "chronically absent" for at least 18 days.

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

than before the pandemic.

Educators around the state say the reasons for absences vary, but family challenges some students face at home, along with hard-to-break tendencies to keep kids home when even mildly unwell — a habit borne out of the pandemic — are key factors. And schools are getting creative to try to combat the growing problem.

Education experts note that being absent as few as three days

out of the school year affects test scores and overall academic performance. Getting to school every day also helps kids develop a routine and increases their influential engagement time with adults.

The student demographic groups with the largest gaps in state language arts and math testing since the pandemic are more likely to be chronically absent.

To that end, Indiana Secretary of Education Katie Jenner, along with Republican state legislative leaders, have said that high rates of absenteeism are likely contributing to the state's dismal literacy rates.

One in five third-graders currently lacks foundational reading skills, which Jenner and others are calling "a crisis."

Lawmakers and local officials are in tandem that part of the response needs to include more targeted efforts to get kids showing up to school consistently.

But agreeing on new policies could prove more challenging. Some ideas emphasize increased relationship-building between schools and parents, and directing more resources at schools to help hire additional support staff,

(Continued on Page 3)

**Inside**

Local/Area

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


Opinion

Lee Hamilton . . . . . 4

Also...

Sports . . . . . 1a-2a  
Classifieds . . . . . 4a  
Diversions . . . . . 3a

**Outside**



Sunny and windy today, rain likely tomorrow night

Today	Thursday	Friday
High 43	High 45	High 46
Low 28	Low 34	Low 39

More Weather on Page 2

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Vol. 95 No. 42

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## Southern Wells

(Continued from Page 1)

considering the payments circumvent tax distribution, he believes the district should receive the same portion it would have without the tax abatement.

While recognizing the validity of the request, Kline and Whicker disputed several assumptions made in the statement. Whicker first advised that it was unlikely the company would've chosen to come to Wells County without the tax abatement.

Kline said the payments still bring in roughly 80 percent of the taxes that would have been collected and noted that the rate was very competitive within Indiana. He also emphasized that it would still be a net increase for the district, as the land itself will be taxed at 10 times its current agricultural usage. "It's not money lost," Kline said. The company has also pledged to invest at least \$250 million in the project.

Whicker added that there are also considerations for the southern part of the county outside the school district itself. He cited the county's EMS, which loses \$1.2 million annually, \$400,000 of which he said occurs in southern Wells.

"I think it would be a little bit irresponsible to start talking about how you're going to spend that money before you receive it — is that not finance 101?" Kline said.

"I'm not going to (commit to) that without a plan," Vanover added. "I have no way to know what the landscape will be like and that would be completely irresponsible."

Whicker also stressed that by the time these payments begin, the county and its officials could look quite different.

"I have no problem saying that a lot of that money needs to benefit this southern part of the county," Whicker said. "What does it look like? (That's) a whole other discussion, because we don't fully know what the needs are going to be in this part of the county."

Regarding the desire to build an auxiliary gym, Andrews advised the district may need to consider bonding the project. Vanover added that he would be willing to assist with future projects, but they would need to develop plans first.

All officials present expressed a desire to give the school district a share of the potential funds.

Lambert, in particular, endorsed 100 percent of the payments benefitting the southern part of the county. "That would be my goal, sitting in the seat that you guys helped me get elected into. That's my position, and that's where I stand," he said.

Superintendent Trent Lehman recalled his appearance at the tax abatement hearing over a year ago, when he had just started with the district. "I just asked that, when the time comes, (Southern Wells) have a seat at the table," Lehman said.

"If I'm still there, and I think I can speak for the others, but you will have a seat at the table," Whicker affirmed. "We will make sure of that." Whicker also asked the school board and community members to remain active in conversations.

Fiechter gave his thanks for the conversation and the discussion concluded with applause.

In closing, Lehman noted that the board would meet next at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 11.

During the meeting, the board also:

- Approved a virtual day on March 7 for grades 7-10 and 12 while juniors take the SAT at the school.
- Recognized Kaleb Shepard as the recipient of an HVAC scholarship and Southern Wells Teacher of the Year David Butler.

- Approved facility use requests from Post Prom Parents to use the Raider Dome May 3-5 and Paddlefish Solar to hold a public information meeting in the elementary cafeteria from 5-9 p.m. Jan. 24.

- Accepted donations from Calvary Lutheran Church for the elementary lunch fund; Heath Bros Ag, Coons Show Lambs, Pennville Lodge of Freemasons 212, Binegar Farms and Leas Electric for archery; Psi Iota Xi for the school libraries; Buckets for Santa for families in need; Clean Fuels National and an anonymous donor for overdue lunch accounts; and Six Mile Church Missions for past due lunch accounts in the junior-senior high school.

- Received resignations from elementary instructional assistant Cathy Leucke, Tonia Harris as second shift custodian and Taylor Roush as eighth grade volleyball coach.

- Approved the employment recommendation of Annette Thompson as FFA assistant adviser. An agreement for Chris Hartman and Abby Ramsey to receive stipends for a technology integration position was also approved.

- Approved fundraiser requests for mini cheer camp Feb. 20-24 and soft-ball calendars Dec. 20-Jan. 13.

- Approved a field trip request for juniors and seniors to travel to New York City Oct. 16-19, 2024.

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## Weather

Wednesday, December 20, 2023

(24-hour observations at 10:53 p.m. Tuesday)

High: 33; Low: 21; Precipitation: None

Wabash River Level (at the Main Street bridge): 1.24 feet at 10:45 p.m. Tuesday

## Wells County forecast

**Today:** Mostly sunny, with a high near 43. South wind around 10 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

**Tonight:** Mostly cloudy, with a low around 28. South wind around 5 mph.

**Thursday:** Mostly cloudy, with a high near 45. Southeast wind around 5 mph.

**Thursday Night:** A 20 percent chance of rain after 1 a.m. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 34. Southeast wind around 5 mph.

**Friday:** A 40 percent chance of rain. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 46.

**Friday Night:** Rain likely, mainly before 1 a.m. Cloudy, with a low around 39. Chance of precipitation is 60 percent.

**Saturday:** A 30 percent chance of rain before 1 p.m. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 49.

**Saturday Night:** Mostly cloudy, with a low around 41.

**Sunday:** A 20 percent chance of rain after 1 p.m. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 54.

**Sunday Night:** A 40 percent chance of rain. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 44.

**Christmas Day:** Rain likely. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 57. Chance of precipitation is 60 percent.

**Monday Night:** Rain likely. Cloudy, with a low around 46.

## Bluffton council

(Continued from Page 1)

fund the purchase of a new vehicle. The vehicle will allow everyone in Hannah's House to travel to events in one car instead of multiple trips. The matter was tabled at the last meeting so the council could find the appropriate pathway to fund the expense.

The initial plan is estimated to cost \$25,000 to \$35,000 to fully implement. Mentzer, Hunt and Elwell talked about specific parts of the Ferguson plan that were unclear. After further discussion on a potential cost for each section of the rebrand and the use of Chamber of Commerce material in the rebrand, the council requested more information from Ferguson before they take action.

Additionally, the council approved to give \$5,000 to Hannah's House to help

fund the purchase of a new vehicle. The vehicle will allow everyone in Hannah's House to travel to events in one car instead of multiple trips. The matter was tabled at the last meeting so the council could find the appropriate pathway to fund the expense.

The council also finalized the council appointees for the Bluffton Redevelopment Commission. Hunt and Gerber will join the Mayor's appointees, Stronczek, Elwell and Mentzer, on the Redevelopment Commission.

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## Business of the Year

(Continued from Page 1)

few things, and I plan on being involved in those same things," said Brown. "Maybe I can do a few more things within the community and let people know that we are here to be a member of the community and work with them."

Barger echoed Brown's sentiments about getting more organizations involved. She wants to see Valero reach places in Bluffton that they have not been yet.

"We are always trying to get our name out there," said Barger. "With the handful of organizations that ... we have a relationship with, they are very appreciative of what we have done. I still kind of feel with the rest of the community, they don't know who we are (and) what we do."



Mark Brown gives a speech congratulating the employees on their hard work for the community. (Photo by Jonathan Snyder)

One of Brown's goals for next year is to get on a first-name basis with some of the Bluffton Common Council members. He also hopes to further accelerate

Valero's ability to serve in different capacities.

"If you see the need of the community and you work with the community, the employees see that," said

Brown. "You've got a business that's not only there to do their thing but they're there to help the community."

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## Immigration fuels uptick in U.S. population growth

By MIKE SCHNEIDER

Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — The number of immigrants to the U.S. jumped to the highest level in two decades this year, driving the nation's overall population growth, according to estimates released Tuesday by the U.S. Census Bureau.

The United States added 1.6 million people, more than two-thirds of which came from international migration, bringing the nation's population total to 334.9 million. It marks the second year in a row that immigration powered population gains.

A decline in the number of deaths since the depths of the COVID-19 pandemic also contributed to the U.S. growth rate.

Population gains stem from immigration and births outpacing deaths.

After immigration declined in the latter half of last decade and dropped even lower amid pandemic-era restrictions, the number of immigrants last year bounced back to almost 1 million people. The trend continued this year as the nation added 1.1 million people, according to Census Bureau figures compiled by William Frey, a demographer at The Brookings Institution.

It is a sign of things to come. Without immigration, the U.S. population is projected to decline as deaths are forecast to outpace births by the late 2030s.

"The immigration piece is going to be the main source of growth in the future," Frey said.

The census determines how many U.S. congressional seats each state gets. If trends continue through the

2030 count, California could lose four U.S. House seats and New York three. Texas could gain four seats and Florida could add three, according to an analysis by the Brennan Center for Justice.

While low by historical standards, 2023's half-percent growth rate was a slight uptick from the 0.4 percent rate last year and the less than 0.2 percent increase in 2021.

There were about 300,000 fewer deaths this year compared with a year earlier. That helped double the natural increase to more than 500,000 people in 2023, contributing to the largest U.S. population gain since 2018, according to estimates that measure change from mid-2022 to mid-2023. The population increased in 42 states, up from last year's 31 states.

The vast majority of growth, 87 percent, came from the South, a region the Census Bureau defines as stretching from Texas to Maryland and Delaware. But the concentration of growth seen during the height of the pandemic in Texas, Florida, North Carolina and Georgia diminished in 2023.

"We peaked in the movement of people to those Sun Belt hotspots," Frey said. "It's tapering off a little bit."

South Carolina's 1.7 percent growth rate topped all other states, and its population rose by more than 90,000 residents. More than 90 percent of the growth came from domestic migration, or people moving from another U.S. state to South Carolina. Without domestic and international migration, the Palmetto State would have lost population in 2023 with almost 1,300 more deaths than births.

Florida had the next-highest growth

rate at 1.6 percent, adding more than 365,000 residents. That was also the second-highest growth in terms of raw numbers. Only Texas surpassed it, gaining more than 473,000 people. More people moved to Florida than any other U.S. state this year, with the almost 373,000 movers about evenly split between domestic and international. Significantly fewer residents died in Florida compared to last year, leading to a natural decrease of only around 7,600 people.

Of the 50 states, New York had the biggest rate of population decline, losing 0.5 percent. It also recorded the largest decline in pure numbers, with a drop of almost 102,000 residents, although it marks a much smaller decline than last year's 180,000-person drop. The almost 74,000 international arrivals and the state's natural increase of more than 41,000 residents couldn't offset the almost 217,000 New Yorkers who departed the state from mid-2022 to mid-2023.

California was still the nation's most populous state, with 38.9 million residents, though it lost more than 75,000 residents this year. The decline was an improvement from the more than 113,000-person drop last year. Texas was the second most populous state with 30.5 million residents.

For the first time, Georgia surpassed 11 million people in 2023, joining only seven other states above that population threshold.

"Barring something completely unforeseen, the 2020s are shaping up to be the South's decade," the Brennan Center for Justice said in a report on Tuesday.

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## The House set a model with the Santos expulsion

It won't be too long before George Santos fades into obscurity, at least as far as Congress is concerned. Before that happens, though, it's worth spending a moment on his expulsion, because this was one of those rare instances where the House set an example its future self should follow.

To understand why, it's helpful to remember two key points. First, the House Ethics Committee report issued in mid-November was a bombshell, laying out a case that, as the report put it, Santos "sought to fraudulently exploit every aspect of his House candidacy for his own personal financial profit." And second, separately from what was going on in Congress, Santos has been charged with illegally defrauding his donors and using their money for personal benefit, as well as with additional charges that include identity theft. That case is still in the courts.

Pressure to do something about Santos, of course, has been percolating in the House since even before he took office, after The New York Times published an exposé a couple of weeks before his swearing in. Its headline said it all: "Who is Rep.-Elect George Santos? His Resume May Be Largely Fiction." Months of revelations about his lies followed. Then came not one, but two separate attempts—both unsuccessful—to expel him. They failed in large measure because House members who were reluctant to take a step as momentous as expelling one of their own wanted to wait until the Ethics Committee investigation was finished.

When the bipartisan report was finally published, it left no room for doubt that committee members—the members of Congress most familiar with Santos's dealings—believed he should be kicked out of office. The first two sentences of the report made that clear, stating that "the evidence uncovered by the Investigative Subcommittee (ISC) revealed that Representative George Santos cannot be trusted. At nearly every opportunity, he placed his desire for private gain above his duty to uphold the Constitution, federal law, and ethical principles."

One key thing to remember is that in these highly partisan times, the House hasn't always been so patient. In recent years, the House has censured members (GOP Rep. Paul Gosar in 2021, Democratic Rep. Adam Schiff in 2023) by bringing those measures directly to the floor—thus bypassing not only the Ethics Committee and its bipartisan process, but its ability to constrain destructive partisan passions. In the Santos case, the fact that the House waited until the committee had done its work gave the next step bipartisan legitimacy—especially since the expulsion resolution members considered was one brought up by the GOP chair of the committee, rather than a separate measure that had been filed by two members of the Democratic minority.

At the same time, although there were plenty of legislators and commentators arguing that the House should wait until after Santos was tried on his legal charges, it moved ahead on its own. This was the right thing to do. It's worth remembering that the original name of the Ethics Committee when it was set up in 1967 (full disclosure: I sat on the commission that helped set it up) was the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, and that from the beginning, its role has been to consider the impact of members' actions on the integrity of the House. In other words, disciplinary proceedings are not about the legality of a member's actions, but about conduct that discredits the House as an institution. This is something members need to decide, not judges or juries.

Once the Ethics Committee did the key job of sorting out the basic facts and determining that what Santos had done harmed the House by discrediting it and its members, it was appropriate for the full House to act. It didn't need to wait for the legal charges to wind their way through the courts.

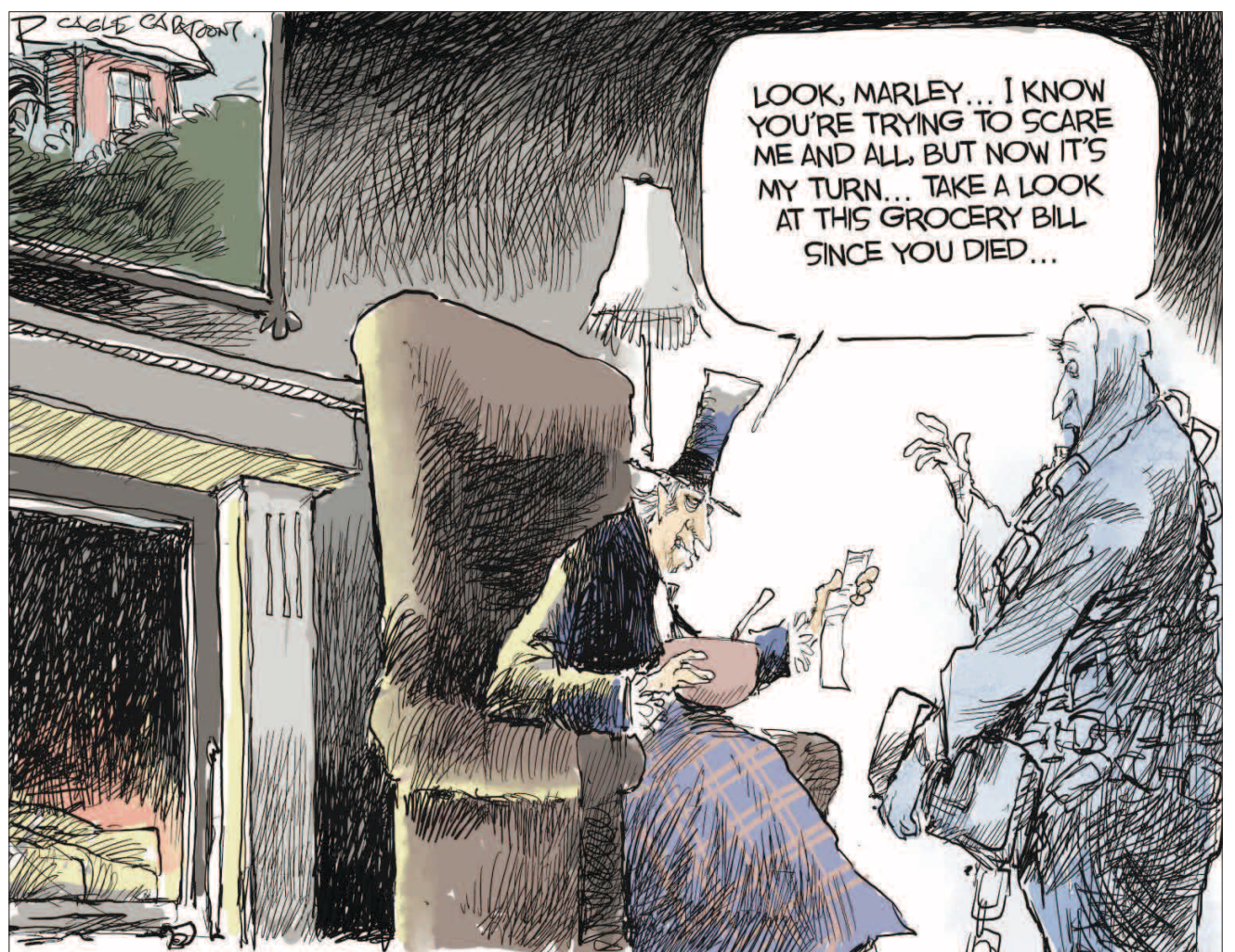
In the end, then, the House served itself and the American people well by putting two vital considerations front and center. First, it followed bipartisan procedure. Second, it focused on an assault on the integrity of the institution. Let's hope it valued the experience enough to repeat it in the future.

*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.*



Lee Hamilton

## Hoosier Opinions



## A gift that will keep on giving

Admit it. Unless you received a big-ticket item for Christmas last year - such as a car - you likely have forgotten what was under your tree.

Most gifts wear out, break, or are given or thrown away at some point. What if you could give a gift that would literally keep on giving and continue to influence the lives of others for generations to come? Would that be worth more than material stuff?

Such an opportunity exists through the Children's Scholarship Fund (CSF), which has been helping especially low-income parents have a choice and children a chance to have a better education and a better life.

I am a regular contributor to CSF and have seen the difference it has made in the lives of children, many of whom were locked in failing public schools thanks to certain politicians and teachers unions that oppose school choice for strictly political reasons, while some hypocritically send their kids to private schools. Illinois recently and cynically refused to continue funding a popular school choice program in the state that was benefiting 9,600 low-income kids. It expires Dec. 31.

CSF is showing positive results. President and CEO Darla Romfo says during just the current academic year scholarships are being provided to 33,945 students nationwide.

In New York City alone, CSF is providing scholarships to more than 7,000 children this year. They are attending more than 200 low-tuition private independent and faith-based schools in all five city boroughs.

The graduation rate for scholarship recipients beats those from public schools. Romfo notes 96.2 percent of CSF alumni in New York report graduat-

ing high school on time. I would argue they likely receive a better education than the 83.7 percent of public school graduates.

With the exception of Illinois, school choice is sweeping the nation. Just this year 10 states expanded or passed new Education Savings Accounts (ESA) programs, allowing money to follow a child to a private school, home school, or microschool, or to be used for education expenses such as tutoring.

Letters from grateful parents are heartwarming.

Here are just two of hundreds: Amanda, the mother of CSF Scholar Matthew, wrote this: "When Matthew and I talk about how much

we appreciate this award, I use the opportunity to remind him that as a recipient, we are grateful that he will be offered the opportunities to reach his full potential. But most importantly, I remind him that one day ... he will be able to help someone else and make a difference and an investment in their - and our - collective futures."

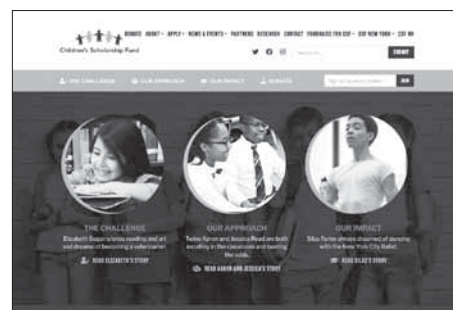
And this from Laticia, who wrote to tell about her daughter, Laya: "I would like to say thank you for believing in my daughter and giving her an opportunity for a better chance at life. We will not let you down. ... It means the world to our family."

What gift could mean more to the receiver and the giver than this? Having the opportunity to change a life for the better now and for many years into the future beats anything you can buy in a store or online that will soon be gone and forgotten. Check them out at [scholarshipfund.org](http://scholarshipfund.org).

[tcaditors@tribpub.com](mailto:tcaditors@tribpub.com).



Cal Thomas



## Trump's opponents not playing strictly by the book

You might have heard that Donald Trump is going to be a dictator if he wins the presidency next year. Among other things, he's threatening to target his political opponents.

Let's stipulate that Trump is a provocateur who freaks out his opponents even when he's on relatively good behavior. And his conduct after the 2020 election was genuinely alarming and deeply wrong. He shouldn't talk about going after his political enemies, let alone actually do it if he takes power again.

But the vapors over Trump's threatening statements are rich coming from people who have targeted their enemy by any means necessary for years now. The Russian-collusion investigation, the Hunter Biden cover-up and the ongoing, politically timed legal onslaught against Donald Trump are among the most shameful and tawdry efforts to destroy a political opponent in memory.

They all have involved the abuse of power by national-security or law-enforcement officials, with the connivance of a complicit press. This is Watergate-break-in-level political subterfuge, or the something drawn from fever dreams about Ronald Reagan's "October Surprise," except it has all happened in plain sight.

I'm not opposed to, or shocked by, political hardball. Count me out on all the saccharine clichés about how Ronald Reagan and Tip O'Neill were great friends despite some polite



Rich Lowry

political differences between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. The stakes in our debate are enormous, and that debate should be litigated robustly, even harshly.

But that's different from abusing investigative processes and leveraging the presumed professionalism and moral authority of current and former national-security and law-enforcement officials for a political campaign against one man.

The press coverage of Trump makes it sound as though we are starting on a fresh playing field, where everything has been strictly by the book since 2016.

You'd never know that back then, top law-enforcement officials began a poorly predicted investigation into Trump-campaign officials, lied to the FISA court, connived to win appointment of a special counsel, and then, that special counsel — puffed up by the press with "walls are closing in," "only Mueller knows" coverage — kept his investigation going well after he knew there was nothing there.

It's unmentioned that in 2020, two weeks before Election Day, former national-security officials, some of whom were highly respected, put their names to a letter meant to mislead about the Hunter laptop; Biden, from the debate stage, lied about that laptop and his son's business dealing; and Twitter censored the story and much of the rest of the media treated it as a non-event at best.

All of this was meant to keep the

laptop's true importance under wraps through Election Day, and — if Joe Biden and compliant Justice department officials had had their way — until this very day. If Hunter's original sweetheart plea deal hasn't blown up upon first contact with an independent-minded judge, he would have escaped serious legal consequences.

The entire affair was a rank distortion of the political and legal process. And, oh yeah, Biden Justice Department officials and Democratic prosecutors are currently trying to put the other side's leading contender for the White House in jail. As a warm-up act, they are also attempting to kneecap his business in a trial, or "trial," in which the verdict has already been decided.

Almost all these charges are unworthy, dubious or imprudent, but that hasn't stopped Trump's pursuers, most of whom have wanted their trials to start, for some reason, in March right after the Republican nomination will probably be decided.

Trump's critics would be on firmer ground objecting to his declared campaign of vengeance if they had been willing to forebear during any of these episodes; if they had ever insisted on neutrality or fair play; if they'd been willing to look beyond the man they loathe and make judgments based on truth and professional standards.

Instead, they've lit a fuse while pretending that they're opposed to pyrotechnics, with consequences as yet unknown.

*Rich Lowry is on Twitter @RichLowry*

## Who's Who

A continuing series on how to contact government officials

### BLUFFTON CITY ELECTED OFFICIALS

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Robert Bate (R), City Court Judge, Police-Fire Building, 200 E. Market St., 824-3392. Email: [court@blufftonindiana.gov](mailto:court@blufftonindiana.gov)

## Today in History

### By The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, Dec. 20, the 354th day of 2023. There are 11 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Dec. 20, 1803, the Louisiana Purchase was completed as ownership of the territory was formally transferred from France to the United States.

On this date:

In 1860, South Carolina became the first state to secede from the Union as all 169 delegates to a special convention in Charleston

voted in favor of separation.

In 1864, Confederate forces evacuated Savannah, Georgia, as Union Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman nearly completed his "March to the Sea."

In 1945, the Office of Price Administration announced the end of wartime tire rationing, effective Jan. 1, 1946.

In 1963, the Berlin Wall was opened for the first time to West Berliners, who were allowed one-day visits to relatives in the Eastern sector for the holidays.

## The News-Banner

(USPS 059-200)

Periodicals Postage Paid at Bluffton, IN 46714. Published every day except Sundays and principal holidays at 125 N. Johnson St., Bluffton IN 46714, Post Office Box 436

Evening News est. 1892 • Evening Banner est. 1899 • Consolidated 1929

### News-Banner Publications, Inc.

George B. Witwer, Chairman of the Board  
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# This year, consider a new type of resolution

As the year draws to a close, everyone starts thinking about those things that we need to change about ourselves so that we can proudly announce on New Year's Eve our resolutions for the coming year. We feel so confident that with the dropping of the glittery ball we will instantly dissolve habits that have been ingrained in our psyche. In a short two or three weeks, we are dismayed that we find ourselves drifting back to old habits.



**Kathy Schwartz**

May I propose a new system for the coming year.

First of all, I acknowledge that I am good for thirty days of trying something new. Secondly, I accomplish so much more when the tasks at hand are small. And finally, I am in favor of change that does not affect my bank account.

I begin by listing twelve actions that fit the criteria of requiring a short amount of time and do not cost a lot of money. Next, I put

them in the order in which I want to attempt to accomplish these tasks and assign them to months of the coming year.

Here are my tasks for 2024.

**January:** This month finds me wrapped up in my blanket and sipping a warm liquid, so this month's goal is to call a different friend or acquaintance every day to see how they are doing or how their holiday went. It can be a short call, but my husband would attest that it would be more likely a long one. It could be just to say thank you for a job well done or to share a memory from long ago.

**February:** This month is for love. I plan to hug at least one person every day. This is a little selfish on my part. When I hug someone, I get more than I give. A hug can be an embrace. A hug can be given in an email...(((hug))) or with words of kindness. A word of caution, some people are very protective of their personal space, so asking before hugging is a good idea.

**March:** Winter is breaking so traveling outside my house hap-



pens more often. With the emergence of the sun, the warm cozy feeling begins to grow inside. I want to spread that sunshine, so I plan to give a smile to at least one stranger every day. That means that 31 random people are going to be wondering just where they have met me.

**April:** Spring is on the horizon, and the air is filled with the aroma of promise. I want to present 10 people with a bunch of wildflowers from my woods. Many people are unable to get out and smell the wonderful fragrance that fills a wooded area this time of year.

**May:** How often do we forget to compliment someone? I hope to give a heartfelt compliment to someone every day. Caution should be taken to not make the compliment too personal because there is a tendency to label that type of compliment as creepy.

**June:** The summer months bring warm weather. I will seek out the neighborhood lemonade stands and purchase at least one glass to encourage these fledgling

entrepreneurs. In full disclosure: I probably won't drink them, but I will wait until I arrive home to dispose of them.

**July:** I must confess that an extraordinary number of deliveries are made to our address. Those July days can be brutal, so I plan to have a cold bottle of water waiting in my refrigerator to present to the UPS, FEDEX, or PRIME driver that is dropping off my package.

**August:** It's back to school we go. I know from experience that this can be straining on a new teacher's pocketbook. I also can't stay away from the school supply aisle at Walmart. Old habits die hard. I will gather a few supplies that every classroom needs and present them to a new teacher.

**September:** I occasionally find myself in a takeout line. I often think about paying for the person behind me and rarely do it. This month I hope to pay it forward to at least four people. Again, this will cause four people to wonder who I am.

**October:** Laughter is the best medicine. It warms your soul and spreads light to the dark corners of your mind. I find the best humor is the kind that makes the person telling the story the foolish one. It is

always better to laugh with someone, rather than laugh at someone. So everyone, be prepared to laugh with me.

**November:** It is the month of giving thanks. I will create a thankful jar. Every day I will write one thing I am thankful for on a slip of paper and place it in the jar. At the end of the month, I will have 30 things to be grateful for.

**December:** I say this every year, but I will mail my Christmas cards in December, not one- or two-months afterwards. Probably in the last five years, I have accomplished this perhaps twice. My friends will be shocked.

**Here's the Thing:** New Year's Resolutions are feasible. Make them simple and very positive. Take what is good about you and spread it around. I guarantee after a year of doing positive heart-warming things for others and yourself, you will look back on 2024 as the best year ever!

*Editor's Note: This is one of a series of articles written by a group of retired and current teachers — LaNae Abnet, Ken Ballinger, Billy Kreigh, Kathy Schwartz, and Anna Spalding. Their intent is to spur discussions at the dinner table and elsewhere. You may also voice your thoughts and reactions via The News-Banner's letters to editor.*

## Why wait until the new year to make a health resolution?

### Kasey Trenum Wealth of Geeks

According to a recent Forbes Health/One Poll survey, more than half of Americans abandon their new year's resolutions within the first three months. Number significantly drop off after that, with only 1% making it to December and 6% seeing an actual sustainable life change.

If New Year's Day is a time for fresh starts and new beginnings, why do so many make the same resolution each year but never achieve it? A new year brings another failed set of resolutions — another year of unwanted habits, pounds, or not working out. Why is it so hard to change?

That same Forbes study on New Year's resolutions found nearly 34% of respondents set goals around losing weight. An older survey from Within Health shows that 44% of Americans are currently on a diet, creating a \$76 billion diet industry. America has a problem.

### Why Do So Many Fail?

Why do almost half of those who make resolutions to lose weight quit in the first 30 days? While intentions are great, the start of a new year does not change discipline. A 2015 study indicated that people with higher self-control and discipline tend to lose more weight than those with lower self-control. A shift in self-discipline is vital to successful weight loss.

Terri Bly, LCP, believes most fail at their New Year's resolutions because they call for sweeping lifestyle changes. Humans are not created to make these kinds of changes. Instead, people should set smaller, more attainable goals that lead them to a larger goal. So, if nothing is magical about January 1, why wait until then to set actionable weight loss goals? Now is the time to take control of your health.

### Potential Benefits of a Low-Carb or Keto Diet

According to The Cleveland Clinic, there may be additional health benefits to a keto diet rather than just losing weight. Patients may also lower blood sugar and blood pressure, raise HDL cholesterol, and lower tri-

lycerides.

### How Does the Diet Work?

A low-carb or keto diet is a low-carbohydrate, moderate protein, and high-fat diet that forces the body to burn fat instead of sugar. By eating minimal carbohydrates, the body will deplete its sugar storage bins and shift its metabolism to burning fat since it's out of sugar to burn.

### What's the Difference?

Low-carb and keto have several differences. A low-carb diet is more lenient and easier to maintain long-term due to the increased flexibility with food choices. Strict and dirty keto both call for fewer carbohydrates than a low-carb diet. The main difference is that dirty keto, also called lazy keto, is much more flexible in food choices.

### Weight Loss Tips To Help

Make disciplined decisions. Losing weight is hard. Statista reports nearly 42% of American adults are obese. If losing weight were easy, the data would reflect a lower number. Discipline is what prompts tells you to continue on the hard days. Look for delicious recipes that let you enjoy your favorite flavors without sabotaging your progress. This Keto Ground Beef Casserole is a perfect comfort dish that will make you forget all about carbs.

Experts at the Mayo Clinic advise people to drink plenty of water. Men should drink about 15.5

cups (124 ounces) daily, and women should drink about 11.5 cups (92 ounces) each day.

Sleep, sleep, and more sleep. The Mayo Clinic sleep specialists recommend more than seven hours of sleep each night for adults.

If the scales aren't moving, don't panic. Get your body measurements before you start. Even if the scale isn't changing, your body will if you're sticking to your low-carb diet.

Plan your meals ahead of time. Meal planning and prepping will make you more successful by sticking to a set menu.

Change your mindset. Diets are short-term. Low-carb is a lifestyle. View your new changes as a long-term solution, not a temporary fix.

If you're serious about losing weight, you must shift your mindset and understand there is no magic bullet or overnight solution. Discipline and consistency are key. A low-carb or keto diet can be a great way to lose weight and improve your overall health, but it's essential to find a plan that you can stick to long-term.

You are not alone on this journey. There are many resources available to help you succeed. Talk to your doctor, a registered dietitian, or a certified personal trainer to create the right plan for you. Don't be afraid to reach out to friends and family for support.

## Coffee for emergency response personnel

John and Laura Martin would like to open their home for free coffee for the Bluffton police and fire departments and EMS beginning 8 a.m. Thursday, Dec. 21 through 11:59 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 26.

When the front porch light of the home, located at 322 W. Wabash St., is on, emergency response personnel are welcome to stop by for a free coffee and thanks for their service. Personnel can park behind the house, off Perry Street.

## Lillian Cornett named to the Dean's List at Bob Jones University

GREENVILLE, SC — Lillian Cornett, a Freshman Piano Pedagogy major from Ossian, was among approximately 800 Bob Jones University students named to the Fall 2023 Dean's List.

The Dean's List recognizes students who earn a 3.00-3.74 grade point average during the semester.

Located in Greenville, South Carolina, Bob Jones University provides an outstanding regionally accredited Christian liberal

arts education purposely designed to inspire a lifelong pursuit of learning, loving and leading.

BJU offers over 100 undergraduate and graduate programs in religion, education, fine arts and communication, arts and science, health professions, and business.

BJU has over 3,000 students from nearly every state and more than 40 countries. We are committed to the truth of Scripture and to pursuing excellence in all we do.

## Theater Thursdays at the library

Every third Thursday of the month the Wells County Public Library hosts free Theater Thursday for adults at the Bluffton library.

On Dec. 21 the film "Last Christmas" will be shown. Sponsors are the Friends of the Library and the Bluffton Parks & Recreation. Registration appreciated to (260) 824-1612 or online at wellscolibrary.org.

## Ouabache State Park office hours

The office at Ouabache State Park will be open 7 days a week through Dec. 24th.

Hours for the Wonderland of Lights will be from 6 to 9 p.m. each evening.

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Tuesday, December 26th 6:20pm  
Wednesday, December 27th 6:20pm

**Wonka**

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Saturday, December 23rd 2:40pm, 5:20pm & 8pm  
Sunday, December 24th 2pm  
Monday, December 25th 6pm  
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# Trump banned from Colorado ballot in ruling by state's Supreme Court

By **NICHOLAS RICCARDI**

**Associated Press**

DENVER (AP) — A divided Colorado Supreme Court on Tuesday declared former President Donald Trump ineligible for the White House under the U.S. Constitution's insurrection clause and removed him from the state's presidential primary ballot, setting up a likely showdown in the nation's highest court to decide whether the front-runner for the GOP nomination can remain in the race.

The decision from a court whose justices were all appointed by Democratic governors marks the first time in history that Section 3 of the 14th Amendment has been used to disqualify a presidential candidate.

"A majority of the court holds that Trump is disqualified from holding the office of president under Section 3 of the 14th Amendment," the court wrote in its 4-3 decision.

Colorado's highest court overturned a ruling from a district court judge who found that Trump incited an insurrection for his role in the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol, but said he could not be barred from the ballot because it was unclear that the provision was intended to cover the presidency.

The court stayed its decision until Jan. 4, or until the U.S. Supreme Court rules on the case. Colorado officials say the issue must be settled by Jan. 5, the deadline for the state to print its presidential primary ballots.

"We do not reach these conclusions lightly," wrote

the court's majority. "We are mindful of the magnitude and weight of the questions now before us. We are likewise mindful of our solemn duty to apply the law, without fear or favor, and without being swayed by public reaction to the decisions that the law mandates we reach."

Trump's attorneys had promised to appeal any disqualification immediately to the nation's highest court, which has the final say about constitutional matters.

"The Colorado Supreme Court issued a completely flawed decision tonight and we will swiftly file an appeal to the United States Supreme Court and a concurrent request for a stay of this deeply undemocratic decision," Trump campaign spokesman Steven Cheung said in a statement Tuesday night.

Republican National Committee chairwoman Ronna McDaniel labeled the decision "Election interference" and said the RNC's legal team intends to help Trump fight the ruling.

Trump lost Colorado by 13 percentage points in 2020 and doesn't need the state to win next year's presidential election. But the danger for the former president is that more courts and election officials will follow Colorado's lead and exclude Trump from must-win states.

Dozens of lawsuits have been filed nationally to disqualify Trump under Section 3, which was designed to keep former Confederates from returning to government after the Civil War. It bars from office anyone who swore an oath to "sup-

port" the Constitution and then "engaged in insurrection or rebellion" against it, and has been used only a handful of times since the decade after the Civil War.

"I think it may embolden other state courts or secretaries to act now that the bandage has been ripped off," Derek Muller, a Notre Dame law professor who has closely followed the Section 3 cases, said after Tuesday's ruling. "This is a major threat to Trump's candidacy."

The Colorado case is the first where the plaintiffs succeeded. After a weeklong hearing in November, District Judge Sarah B. Wallace found that Trump indeed had "engaged in insurrection" by inciting the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol, and her ruling that kept him on the ballot was a fairly technical one.

Trump's attorneys convinced Wallace that, because the language in Section 3 refers to "officers of the United States" who take an oath to "support" the Constitution, it must not apply to the president, who is not included as an "officer of the United States" elsewhere in the document and whose oath is to "preserve, protect and defend" the Constitution.

The provision also says offices covered include senator, representative, electors of the president and vice president, and all others "under the United States," but doesn't name the presidency.

The state's highest court didn't agree, siding with attorneys for six Colorado Republican and unaffiliated voters who argued that it was nonsensical to imagine that

the framers of the amendment, fearful of former confederates returning to power, would bar them from low-level offices but not the highest one in the land.

"President Trump asks us to hold that Section 3 disqualifies every oathbreaking insurrectionist except the most powerful one and that it bars oath-breakers from virtually every office, both state and federal, except the highest one in the land," the court's majority opinion said. "Both results are inconsistent with the plain language and history of Section 3."

The left-leaning group that brought the Colorado case, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, hailed the ruling.

"Our Constitution clearly states that those who violate their oath by attacking our democracy are barred from serving in government," its president, Noah Bookbinder, said in a statement.

Trump's attorneys also had urged the Colorado high court to reverse Wallace's ruling that Trump incited the

Jan. 6 attack. His lawyers argued the then-president had simply been using his free speech rights and hadn't called for violence. Trump attorney Scott Gessler also argued the attack was more of a "riot" than an insurrection.

That met skepticism from several of the justices.

"Why isn't it enough that a violent mob breached the Capitol when Congress was performing a core constitutional function?" Justice William W. Hood III said during the Dec. 6 arguments. "In some ways, that seems like a poster child for insurrection."

In the ruling issued Tuesday, the court's majority dismissed the arguments that Trump wasn't responsible for his supporters' violent attack, which was intended to halt Congress' certification of the presidential vote: "President Trump then gave a speech in which he literally exhorted his supporters to fight at the Capitol," they wrote.

Colorado Supreme Court Justices Richard L. Gabri-

el, Melissa Hart, William W. Hood III and Monica Márquez ruled for the petitioners. Chief Justice Brian D. Boatright dissented, arguing the constitutional questions were too complex to be solved in a state hearing. Justices Maria E. Berkenkotter and Carlos Samour also dissented.

"Our government cannot deprive someone of the right to hold public office without due process of law," Samour wrote in his dissent. "Even if we are convinced that a candidate committed horrible acts in the past — dare I say, engaged in insurrection — there must be procedural due process before we can declare that individual disqualified from holding public office."

The Colorado ruling stands in contrast with the Minnesota Supreme Court, which last month decided that the state party can put anyone it wants on its primary ballot. It dismissed a Section 3 lawsuit but said the plaintiffs could try again during the general election.

## Biden administration moves to protect old-growth forests as climate change brings fires, pests

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — The Biden administration moved on Tuesday to conserve groves of old-growth trees on national forests across the U.S. and limit logging as climate change amplifies the threats they face from wildfires, insects and disease.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said the agency was adopting an "ecologically-driven" approach to older forests — an arena where timber industry interests have historically predominated. That will include the first nationwide amendment to U.S. Forest Service management plans in the agency's 118-year history, he said.

The proposal follows longstanding calls from environmentalists to preserve older forests that offer crucial wildlife habitat and other environmental benefits. Timber companies have fought against logging restrictions on government-owned lands.

President Joseph Biden's administration appears to be aiming for a middle ground: It would sharply limit commercial timber harvests in old-growth forests while allowing logging to continue in "mature forests" that have not yet reached old-growth stage.

"This creates a commitment to resiliency, a commitment to restore and protect the existing old growth that we have from the threats that we see," Vilsack said in an interview.

Timber industry representatives said Tuesday's proposal would give its opponents new leverage to file legal challenges against logging projects that are intended to reduce wildfire risks for communities near forests. But environmental groups called for logging restrictions to be extended even further and include mature for-

ests, which cover more than 100,000 square miles of forest service land, about three times the area of old growth.

Old-growth forests, such as the storied giant sequoia stands of northern California, have layer upon layer of undisturbed trees and vegetation. There's wide consensus on the importance of preserving them — both symbolically as marvels of nature, and more practically because their trunks and branches store large amounts of carbon that can be released when forests burn, adding to climate change.

Underlining the urgency of the issue are wildfires that killed thousands of giant sequoias in recent years. The towering giants are concentrated in about 70 groves scattered along the western side of the Sierra Nevada range.

Many old-growth forests fell during the second half of the 20th century during aggressive logging on national forests. Others were cut earlier as the U.S. developed.

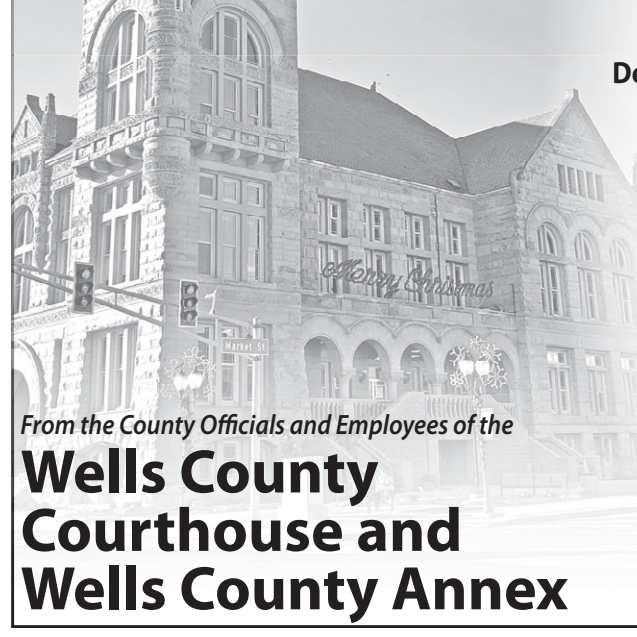
Logging volumes dropped sharply over the past several decades, but the demise of older trees due to fire, insects and disease accelerated. More than 5,100 square miles of old-growth and mature forests burned since 2000.

About 350 square miles of older forests were logged on federal lands during that time, according to a recent government analysis.

There's no simple formula to determine what's old. Growth rates among different tree types vary greatly — and even within species, depending on their access to water and sunlight, and soil conditions. Groves of aspen can mature within a half-century. Douglas fir stands can take 100 years. Wildfire frequency also factors in:

Ponderosa pine forests are adapted to withstand blazes as often as once a decade, compared to lodgepole pine stands that might burn every few hundred years.

## Merry Christmas to All!



From the County Officials and Employees of the

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## Tigers rout Eagles in girls' hoops, but adds to their injury report

By RICK SPRUNGER

CHURUBUSCO — Bluffton took care of business Tuesday night.

The Tigers breezed past a badly over-matched Churubusco squad 58-16 to improve to 12-1 on the season.

Churubusco, badly depleted by injuries to the point that it had to cancel the junior varsity game so it could move some players up, fell to 4-10.

But Bluffton is also banged up.

The Tigers, who have been making do without one starter in Konley Ault, played this game without a second one in Maryn Schreiber, who injured a wrist in Saturday's game against Adams Central.

"We're just waiting on an MRI report," said Bluffton coach Doug Curtis concerning Schreiber. "We're hoping to have her back for Thursday night (at Class 3A powerhouse Fairfield)."

But if playing without both Ault and Schreiber wasn't bad enough, 5-10 freshman Sophie Eisenhut went down hard under the basket late in the first quarter. She immediately came out of the game and never returned.

"She was wobbly," said Curtis while listing her as doubtful for the big game at Fairfield.

In truth, Bluffton didn't need any of those players against Churubusco. The Tigers used a 16-0 run to open up a 21-2 lead less than two minutes into the second quarter and were never headed.

Bluffton limited Churubusco to 1-for-12 shooting in the first quarter while forcing four turnovers in that period and three more on the Eagles' first three possessions of the second.

In fact, Churubusco managed just one field goal in each of the first three periods and two in the fourth as the score continued to mount.

The Bluffton lead reached 37-7 at half-

time and 50-10 after three quarters and peaked at 58-12 midway through the fourth.

Bluffton was led in scoring by Isabella Stout with 23 points and Haley Gibson with 18.

Stout added 12 rebounds to her point total, and Gibson connected on four three-pointers.

"We played exactly the way we want to play in a game like this," said Curtis. "We wanted to work on doing a better job on our matchups and work at improving our game regardless of who the opponent is or what the score is."

Bluffton finished 21-for-57 from the field for a less-than-stellar .351 shooting percentage but made up for that by practically playing handball off the offensive glass.

The Tigers won the battle of the boards by a crippling 39-26 margin.

Churubusco, meanwhile, hit on just five of 34 shots for a .149 percentage while turning the ball over 22 times.

Bluffton achieved a running clock on a three-point play by Marly Drayer that upped the count to 45-10 with 4:24 left in the third quarter.

sports@news-banner.com

### BLUFFTON 58, CHURUBUSCO 16 at Churubusco

**BLUFFTON (12-1):** Isabella Stout 9-19 5-5 23, Marly Drayer 1-4 1-1 3, Haley Gibson 7-16 0-0 18, Tressa Renner 1-5 3-4 6, Sophie Eisenhut 0-2 0-0 0, Madyson Sonnigsen 3-7 0-0 8, Cayah King 0-0 0-0 0, Madelyn Funk 0-2 0-0 0, Addison Yates 0-0 0-0 0, Savannah Hughett 0-2 0-0 0, Isla Gibson 0-0 0-0 0. **TOTAL:** 21-57 9-10 58.

**CHURUBUSCO (4-10):** Patty Wiggs 0-7 2-2 2, Alyssa Eby 0-2 0-0 0, Lilly Rinker 0-0 0-0 0, Bridget Timbrook 1-9 0-2 2, Jorja DeBolt 2-7 1-2 6, Mallory Schaefer 0-0 0-0 0, Jessica Price 0-2 0-2 0, Kailin Foote 1-5 1-3 4, Brooke Andis 0-1 0-0 0, Tessa Vernon 1-1 0-0 2, Nola Bianksi 0-0 0-0 0. **TOTAL:** 5-34 4-11 16.

**Bluffton 14 23 13 8 — 58**  
**Churubusco 2 5 3 6 — 16**

**Three-point shooting:** Bluffton 7-19 (Stout 0-1, Drayer 0-1, H. Gibson 4-8, Renner 1-2, Sonnigsen 2-6, Funk 0-1), Churubusco 2-18 (Wiggs 0-1, Eby 0-1, Timbrook 0-5, DeBolt 1-4, Price 0-1, Foote 1-5, Andis 0-1). **Rebounds:** Bluffton 39 (Stout 12, Sonnigsen 6), Churubusco 26). **Turnovers:** Bluffton 10, Churubusco 22. **Personal fouls:** Bluffton 13, Churubusco 7. **Fouled out:** None. **Technical fouls:** None. **JV Score:** No JV Game.



Haley Gibson drives in for a layup off a Churubusco turnover as the Eagles' Patty Wiggs pursues Tuesday at Churubusco. (Photo by Glen Werling)

## Southern Wells sloppy in home loss to Southwood

By ANDREW FEEBACK

If it wasn't one thing, it was another for the Southern Wells boys' basketball team Tuesday night.

Turnovers, missed shots and a lack of size up front all, added up to a 57-40 loss to the visiting Southwood Knights.

The score didn't even seem to reflect how one-sided it felt at times, with the Raiders trailing by nearly 30 in the second half.

The Knights (2-4) relentlessly came after the Raiders with a 2-3 zone that stretched out to half-court, trapping the ball and forcing the Raiders to make quick decisions. This led to 19 turnovers, and when the Knights weren't stealing the ball, the Raiders seemed hesitant to shoot it.

"I wasn't as pleased as I would like to be with our aggression offensively," coach Joel Roush said. "We wanted to attack that zone, we wanted to get it in the gaps and attack the basket. For some reason, we were reluctant to do so."

When they did shoot, the Raiders weren't finding the net too often. They finished 16 of 52 overall and were just 2 of 15 on three-point shots.

Southern Wells led 5-0 early after Chandler Oswald hit one of those triples and CJ Reber made a layup.

Then, Southwood's pressure started taking its toll. The Raiders turned it over five times in the opening quarter and saw the visitors go on an 11-2 run.

It became a 17-2 run early in the second, drawing a Raider timeout.

The Raiders' other three-pointer, courtesy of Caleb Johnson, along with a basket from Evan Pennington and a free throw from Perrin Gates, had Southern Wells within striking distance at 19-13.

Southwood ended the half with 10 straight points, and it only got worse from there.

The Knights' size on the interior posed a huge matchup problem for the Raiders.

Bryce Wilcox, a 6-6 forward, along with a 6-3 forward in Dalton Barney, combined for 20 points in the paint and blocked a handful of shots on the defensive end. Wilcox led all scorers with 14 points.

Will Winer, a 6-3 guard, also chipped in 10 points for the Knights.

The Raiders' lack of size was apparent throughout the night, though they were only out-rebounded by four.

With such an advantage in the front-court, the Knights saw little need to attempt any threes, finishing with two makes on just five tries.

Southwood used a 13-0 run in the third quarter to take a 46-17 lead, largely thanks to the play of Maddox Marshall, who was the third Knight to reach double figures with 13 points.

The Raiders outscored the Knights by 10 in the final frame to make the score a bit more respectable.

Perrin Gates topped the Raiders with 12 points while Chandler Oswald had 11.

Roush wants his team to be more aggressive on offense going forward.

"We're so aggressive and so connected defensively, I would like that to transfer over to the other end of the floor," he said.

Southern Wells will be off until a week from this Thursday. On Dec. 28, the Raiders will travel to Union City for a two-day tournament, in which they will face Elwood and Union City on the first day, and then one of Eastern Greentown, Randolph Southern or Bluffton on the second day.

Southern Wells lost the JV game 67-30. Landon Johnson scored 11 points, Joshua Aulbach had 10, Trey Slusher had six and Wade Tappy added three.

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(Box score on Page A2)



Southern Wells senior Evan Pennington (right) drives past Southwood's Will Winer in the first half of Tuesday night's game at Southern Wells. (Photo by Chad Kline)

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The Strategence Capital team congratulates Kaden Bussel on his completion of a Bachelor of Science in Business with a major in Finance from Purdue University Fort Wayne. We're also thrilled to welcome him as a full-time employee.

Kudos for everything you've accomplished, Kaden!

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Advice for giving advice

Dear Annie: I truly enjoy reading your column. At times, they are funny and really do make me laugh, and nearly always I can relate to certain situations that people write to you about.

advice. I simply wish to compliment you.

I do not know if you hold a license in psychology or as a therapist, but if you do not, you need to know you are a very wise person!

I graduated with my bachelor's degree in psychology because I always wanted to help people, and I am a great listener. My friends and family come to me and share their problems as I listen and give them encouragement.

Your advice, whether or not I happen to agree with it, is always thought-provoking. Delivering advice on touchy subjects is never easy, but you seem to do it effortlessly.

If you do hold a license, you made a good choice for yourself and career. You were born to help people with a conundrum.

That is all I wanted to say. Thank you for doing what you do. I'm sure many have been helped in a serious way. At the least, you've likely provided an easing of conscience and given hope in familial and friendship issues.

Dear Much Admiration: Wow! Thank you so much for your kind words, which mean a great deal to me. But you should know that it is the readers who make this column unique, with their letters and advice for me and others.

"How Can I Forgive My Cheating Partner?" is out now! Annie Lane's second anthology — featuring favorite columns on marriage, infidelity, communication and reconciliation — is available as a paperback and e-book. Visit http://www.creatorspublishing.com for more information.

It has always been my dream to be able to have a podcast or become a YouTuber. Or to have a column where I can help people as you do, give advice and talk about things that are going on in the world to give others encouragement.

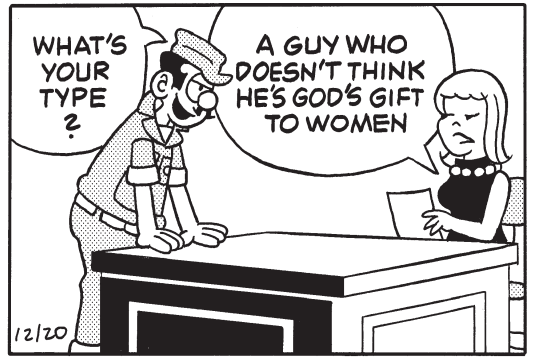
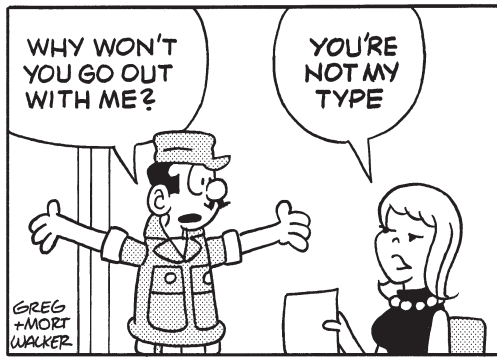
Dear Number One Fan: First off, thank you for your kind words, and thank you for being a teacher! It is one of the most important jobs that exist. If you love to write and give advice, just keep doing what you're doing.

Dear Annie: I'm not seeking

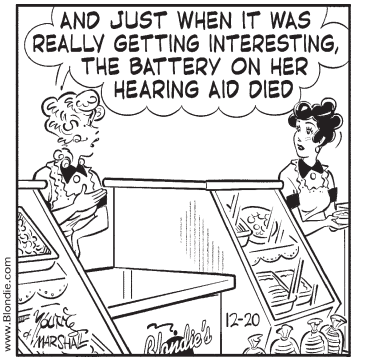
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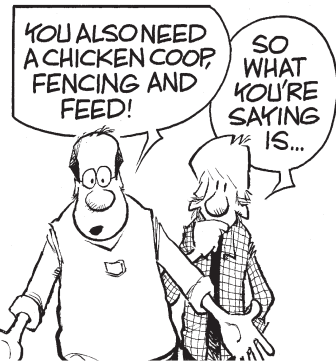
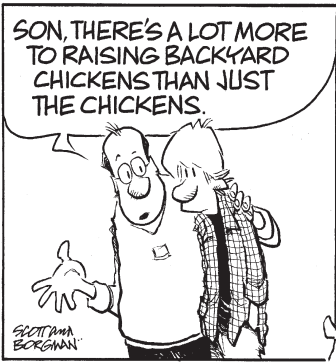
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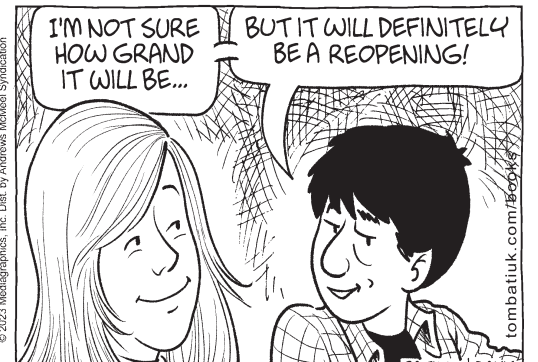
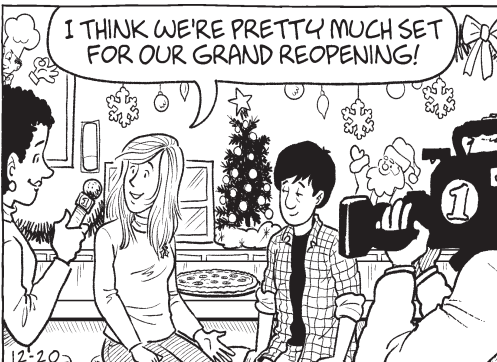
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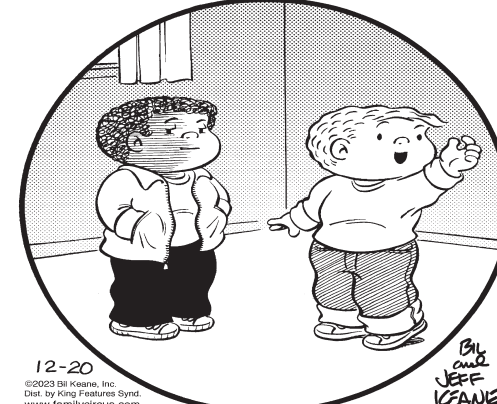


CRANKSHAFT



THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane



The LOCKHORNS



My Answer

By Dr. Billy Graham



The key to finding Heaven is finding Christ

Q: I read in an academic journal that artificial intelligence will create Heaven. The old term for AI is "deep fake." It's too bad more people do not know that AI is fake from beginning to end.

The GPS, alone, has changed how people travel. But there is something far greater that has been available to man since the beginning of time: a heavenly GPS that will bring us safely to our eternal destination in Heaven.

ine is the supernatural transformation that will take place for all of God's people when He transports us to His heavenly home. We are assured that in Heaven, we will be living in God's dwelling place forever, and it will be glorious beyond description.

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

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A: More important than Heaven capturing our imagination is the God of Heaven capturing our souls. Heaven is beyond the reach of satellites and telescopes but it doesn't mean that Heaven is beyond the reach of our hearts.

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Television schedule table with columns for time slots (12:20 to 12:30) and various channels (WIMN, CBS, etc.) listing programs and their descriptions.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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Yesterday's answer grid for the crossword puzzle, showing the filled-in words.

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

Difficulty: ★★★

12/20

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### Lottery Numbers

**Tuesday's Drawings HOOSIER LOTTERY**  
Cash 5 — 08-20-24-33-45  
Cash4Life — 09-17-26-29-41, Cash Ball: 03  
**Quick Draw MIDDAY** — 02-13-16-18-22-29-30-33-37-38-42-50-53-62-63-64-66-68-74-76, BE: 76  
**Daily Three-MIDDAY** — 02-00-06, SB: 07  
**Daily Three-EVENING** — 08-01-09, SB: 06  
**Daily Four-MIDDAY** — 06-04-04-05, SB: 07  
**Daily Four-EVENING** — 00-02-01-06, SB: 06  
**Quick Draw Evening** — 02-03-06-07-18-19-20-26-31-36-37-38-44-46-47-50-57-67-73-76, BE: 26  
**Hoosier Lotto** — Estimated jackpot (for Wednesday): \$1.4 million  
**MEGA MILLIONS** 17-26-50-58-61; Mega Ball: 11; Megaplier: 3X.  
**POWERBALL** Estimated jackpot (for Wednesday): \$572 million

### SUDOKU ANSWER

02/21					***				02/21
2	8	9	1	4	7	9	6	7	2
3	6	5	2	8	1	9	7	4	3
1	9	7	2	9	6	4	2	8	5
6	2	9	7	1	8	4	5	3	6
9	7	8	4	6	9	2	1	3	5
4	1	9	2	8	7	9	7	6	3
5	9	4	7	2	2	6	8	1	9
7	6	1	8	9	9	2	7	4	5
8	2	6	1	4	7	9	3	5	8

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