

The News - Banner

www.News-Banner.com

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2023 BLUFFTON, INDIANA • Wells County's Hometown Connection \$1.00

'The first and last person they see'

How BHMSD staff members are connecting with students through bus driving.

By JONATHAN SNYDER
What do a school counselor, a lunch lady and a transportation director have in common? For the Bluffton Harrison Metropolitan School District, they all drive buses.

Currently, staff members at BHMSD are doubling as substitute bus drivers. While the district has no problem filling the daily need for drivers, the last few years have seen the demand for substitutes rise.

"I would say in the last five, seven years, it's been more of a struggle to get people interested and then also through the training process," said Superintendent Brad Yates.

Assistant Superintendent Julie Meitzler proposed the idea of using staff members as substitute drivers. After discussion with department heads, notices were sent out to the district staff. The BHMSD saw some interest from a variety of offices.

"I love the fact that they (the staff) jumped in," said Transportation Coordinator Kassandra Osborn, who substitutes as needed. "As a substitute driver ... they have to try to either read a map or read directions or have a student explain to them where they're supposed to be going. When we have staffers from the building ... they know a lot of the kids. That's one less stress on (the drivers)."



BHMSD social worker Stephanie White, left, and ISS advisor and secretary Ashlie Campbell both serve dual roles at BHMSD. (Photo submitted by Jessica Bricker)

Osborn clarified that knowing which pupils are trustworthy leads to an avenue for asking questions about the route. Riders already see

the substitutes as authority figures because of their past experiences and are willing to respond more favorably than to a driver they

have never met. It's also a joy for the kids to see some of their favorite teachers and staff members

(Continued on Page 2)

Summons for Santa Claus

The story behind the Indiana Supreme Court case. A years-long land dispute, Santa Claus v. Santa Claus, put Saint Nicholas in a different type of spotlight.



Postcard depicting Barrett's Santa statue. (Photo courtesy the Indiana Archives and Records Administration)

By CASEY SMITH
Indiana Capital Chronicle

It's not every day that Santa Claus winds up before a judge, but that's exactly where the big man found himself some nine decades ago — in a case that surely goes down in Indiana Supreme Court history.

The story truly begins even farther back, circa 1854, when the southern Indiana town of Santa Fe was established. Two years later, when the Spencer County town about 40 miles east of Evansville was working to establish a post office, federal officials refused their first application, given there was already a Santa Fe, Indiana, in Miami County.

Although the details have since been lost to legend, members of the town eventually decided on a new name, Santa Claus, for which the U.S. Post Office Department gave the greenlight.

Locals still referred to the town as Santa Fe. But because the town had — and continues to have — the world's only post office to bear the name of the famous holiday figure, the local post office started receiving thousands of letters to Santa from across the world. A group of volunteers, "Santa's Elves," has ensured that each child receives a reply from Santa since at least 1914.



The unveiling of Barrett's Santa statue on Dec. 23, 1935. (Photo courtesy the Indiana Archives and Records Administration)

The post office's fame further grew in the 1920s, when the postmaster general announced that there would never be another "Santa Claus" post office in the country due to the influx of holiday mail and the

staffing and logistical problems this caused. The increasing volume of holiday mail became so substantial that it additionally caught the attention of the nationally syndi-

(Continued on Page 2)

Social media guardrails fade and AI deepfakes go mainstream

Experts warn of election impacts

By ALI SWENSON and CHRISTINE FERNANDO
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Nearly three years after rioters stormed the U.S. Capitol, the false election conspiracy theories that drove the

violent attack remain prevalent on social media and cable news: suitcases filled with ballots, late-night ballot dumps, dead people voting.

Experts warn it will likely be worse in the coming presidential election contest. The safeguards that attempted to counter the bogus claims the last time are eroding, while the tools and sys-

tems that create and spread them are only getting stronger.

Many Americans, egged on by former President Donald Trump, have continued to push the unsupported idea that elections throughout the U.S. can't be trusted. A majority of Republicans (57 percent) believe Democrat Joe Biden was not legitimately elected presi-

dent.

Meanwhile, generative artificial intelligence tools have made it far cheaper and easier to spread the kind of misinformation that can mislead voters and potentially influence elections. And social media companies that once invested heavily in correcting the record have shifted their priorities.

"I expect a tsunami of misinformation," said Oren Etzioni, an artificial intelligence expert and professor emeritus at the University of Washington. "I hope to be proven wrong. But the ingredients are there, and I am completely terrified."

AI DEEPFAKES
(Continued on Page 2)

Biden orders strikes on Iranian-aligned group after troops hurt

By AAMER MADHANI, ZEKE MILLER and QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. President Joe Biden ordered the United States military to carry out retaliatory airstrikes against

Iranian-backed militia groups after three U.S. service members were injured in a drone attack in northern Iraq.

National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson said one of the U.S. troops suffered critical injuries in the attack

that occurred earlier Monday. The Iranian-backed militia Kataib Hezbollah and affiliated groups, under an umbrella of Iranian-backed militants, claimed credit for the attack that utilized a one-way attack drone.

Iraqi officials said that U.S.

strikes targeting militia sites early Tuesday killed one militant and wounded 18. They came at a time of heightened fears of a regional spillover of the Israel-Hamas war.

Iran announced Monday that an Israeli strike on the outskirts of the Syrian capital of Damascus killed

one of its top generals, Seyed Razi Mousavi, who had been a close companion of Gen. Qassem Soleimani, the former head of Iran's elite Quds Force. Soleimani was slain in a U.S. drone strike in Iraq in January 2020.

(Continued on Page 2)

Inside

Local/Area

Obituaries 3

Police Notebook . . . 3

Opinion

Justin Peepers 4

Also...

Sports 1a-2a

Classifieds 4a

Diversions 3a

Outside

Partly sunny today, chance of rain tomorrow

Today	Thursday	Friday
High 45	High 44	High 42
Low 35	Low 32	Low 29

More Weather on Page 2

Online

Follow us on Facebook!
Go to www.facebook.com/newsbanner

Place Your Classified Ads 24/7

Vol. 95 No. 47

WEDNESDAY
December 27, 2023

close to home; far from ordinary

Ossian Assisted Living

215 DAVIS ROAD
OSSIAN, IN
PH: 260-622-7821

www.ossianhealthand rehab.com

How to contact us:

Call us: 824-0224
or 1-800-579-7476
email@news-banner.com

On the Web:
www.news-banner.com

Follow us at:
twitter.com/newsbanner

Connecting with students

(Continued from Page 1)
driving them around.

"I think the connections ... I can make that are beneficial would be things like if they're having some conflict on the bus with a peer, more than likely I'm going to know both of the kids involved," said elementary school Guidance Counselor Kole Meyer, who takes routes occasionally. "And that's a beautiful thing because it just enriches that relationship they have with their bus driver."

Meyer obtained his Commercial Driver's License two summers ago after extensive learning on his own time. His original plan was to become a bus driver after retirement, but the need

accelerated his plans.

"We (Meyer and his wife) just kept seeing the need for bus drivers," said Meyer. "And so I started thinking, well, maybe I shouldn't wait until then. It's just another avenue to be super positive (and) to be a role model."

After studying a 30-page manual from the BHMSD transportation department, Meyer then had to study the manual from the Indiana Department of Transportation, the CDL manual from the Bureau of Motor Vehicles and then take his CDL test in Fort Wayne.

It takes a lot of work outside the office to get certified, but the opportunity to build connections with their

passengers makes the effort worth it. Every minute of extra time spent with them can mean a world of difference.

"We've all heard this for years that the teachers are such an influence on students and make such an impact," said Osborn. "Well, it's really everybody within the corporation (that) does, whether it's, maybe it's a custodian that notices a student ... having a bad day, or it's a cafeteria worker or it's a secretary. Bus drivers are the same thing."

Even though the BHMSD is still searching for substitute drivers, the moment when pupils see someone caring for them at the first and last opportunity holds a

lot of weight for both kids and staff.

"For a majority of our students, they (bus drivers) are the first person that the student sees and the last person that they see on any given school day," said Yates. "So they get to have that opportunity that our drivers have that opportunity to kind of take a checkpoint on those students."

"They (bus drivers) also can say, 'Hey, have a great night. I'll see you tomorrow,'" said Meyer. "So they can start and stop ... begin and end each day for these students in such a positive way. And so that is incredible."

jonathan@news-banner.com

Summons for Santa

(Continued from Page 1)

cated "Ripley's Believe it or Not!" cartoon strip in 1929. Even more letters rolled in after that.

At its peak, the office managed almost 3 million letters to Santa, according to the Indiana Archives and Records Administration.

Making money off Santa Claus

Of course, with the town's fame came an interest from some to monetize the connection to Old Saint Nick.

That included Vincennes entrepreneur Milton Harris, who along with associate James Martin opened Santa's Candy Castle in December 1935 — sponsored by the Curtiss Candy Company. The red-brick castle was the town's first tourist attraction.

Another Santa Claus Town attraction followed, Santa's Workshop and Toy Village, which featured a series of miniature fairytale-themed buildings sponsored by various national toy manufacturers.

Harris planned other expansions of Santa-related attractions and envisioned a town transformed into a Christmas village, where toys and candy would be made and given freely. Various corporations would sponsor the efforts.

As part of the scheme, he secured a lease from property owners Gearoge and Matilda Reinke for 32 acres near the Candy Castle.

But it wasn't long before Harris' project caught the attention of a rival entrepreneur, Carl Barrett, the Chicago president of the Illinois Automobile Club.

Disliking what he called Harris' materialism, Barrett planned his own tourist attraction: Santa Claus Park.

Four months after Harris leased the land from the Reinkes, Barrett descended on Santa Claus to purchase the very same swath of land.

Seeking to put pressure on Harris — who had a head start on his Santa Claus attraction — Barrett also rushed to put up a massive statue of Santa Claus. He dedicated the 22-foot-tall statue of Santa Claus atop the highest hill in town on Christmas Day in 1935 — the same day Harris opened the Candy Castle.

Barrett boasted the statue was made of solid granite, and insisted, too, it was "blessed" by a fallen meteor just before the dedication.

The Chicago entrepreneur's claims could have landed him on the naughty list, however. The statue was revealed to be concrete when cracks formed just a few years later. The nearby crater was also exposed as nothing more than a large hole filled with metal scraps.

Santa goes to court

But even before the infamous statue's reveal, a years-long feud between Barrett and Harris had already begun.

A month earlier, Harris filed a complaint in the Spencer County Court, alleging that Barrett and his associates were not honoring the terms of the

lease that Harris had signed with the Reinkes.

The Vincennes man pointed to a specific passage in the lease: "It is agreed and understood by the parties that the second party (Harris) shall have the exclusive right during the term of this lease to conduct on said real estate any and all business having any relation to the Santa Claus idea."

Harris maintained in his complaint that he was committed to "the building of permanent and lasting improvements" in the Santa Claus village. Barrett, he argued, sought to "embarrass, hinder, damage, delay and injure" those efforts by "wrongfully erecting and threatening to build and erect various buildings, structures and signs" on the land first leased by Harris. He emphasized that Barrett was "prohibited" from developing the land without written permission.

Court documents indicate that Barrett indeed gave little credence to the lease, telling the Reinkes when he purchased the land that it "didn't amount to anything."

But Barrett pushed back in other filings and in the press, saying his non-profit enterprise was for the "good of children," while Harris' venture sought commercial gains. Harris told the court he intended for his Christmas village to eventually take a non-profit model.

After the case was transferred, a Martin Circuit Court judge Fabius Gwin disagreed with Barrett, upholding Harris' lease and awarding the plaintiff \$5,100 in damages.

Even more extreme, the county court's ruling quieted Barrett's title to the land, effectively giving ownership of it to Harris for at least the next 25 years.

Specifically, Gwin said in his ruling that Harris "is given the exclusive right" during the lease period "to conduct on said real estate any and all business having any relation to the Santa Claus idea, such as manufacturing and selling toys and each and every article, item or thing having any relation to, connection with, or spirit of Santa Claus in his traditional and commercial relation to Christmas time."

Barrett's team quickly appealed. His legal team held that Harris's "Santa Claus of Santa Claus, Inc." had been incorporated after Barrett's "Santa Claus, Inc." and that Harris' incorporation should not have been accepted and was invalid as it was confusingly similar.

The county judge quickly rejected the argument, noting that the Indiana Secretary of State was given the quasi-legal authority to determine when a corporate entity's name was too similar to another and that the courts had no ability to alter that decision.

In October of 1939, the appellate court also rejected Barrett. Among other points, the ruling cited concerns with errors in the court records attrib-

uted to Barrett's counsel. The court said "the record has been mutilated, changed, and forged" to show that a written praecipe — a type of legal filing — was filed. The clerk, however, said no such document "was ever given to him."

Indiana's high court weighs in

Barrett wasn't willing to give up, though. His request to transfer to the Indiana Supreme Court was eventually granted, landing Santa Claus before the high court justices in May 1940.

The Supreme Court's final ruling provided mixed results for Barrett. He was forced to honor Harris's lease and would be subject to future damages if he continued to pursue the business of Santa Claus in Santa Claus.

But the judgment also produced a somewhat surprising reversal; Harris' initial damages were significantly reduced, and the action to quiet Barrett's title to the land was overruled.

Other costly lawsuits between the two men followed in the years to come. All the while, national news media brought additional attention to the legal battle, coined the story of "Too Many Santas."

Included in the saga was a later case in which Barrett — who after acquiring some of his competitor's stock — demanded either a promise of profitability or a dissolution of Harris leases. The attempt proved unsuccessful.

All the while, Barrett continued to promote his Santa Claus statue, village and other attractions, but few other aspects of the park were ever completed.

By the 1950s, both entrepreneurs' Santa Claus projects became vacant and neglected.

Barrett did find some success when oil was discovered in the area in 1938. Harris' leases didn't extend rights to extract oil, but because Barrett had purchased the land outright, he was able to do so.

Although no oil mogul, Barrett went on to run the Rush Creek Oil Company in New Harmony until his retirement. He died in Evansville in 1978.

Harris struggled to secure sponsors for his attractions and only ever completed a small toy shop and workshop, in addition to the Candy Castle. After World War II, Harris lost his position as the controller of the Santa Claus business for good, this time against retired industrialist Louis J. Koch, who opened a toy factory on the outskirts of town.

In August 1946, Koch opened Santa Claus Land. Harris died soon after in Vincennes in 1950.

The park's name was later changed to Holiday World in 1984. It's still owned and operated by the Koch family, attracting more than 1 million visitors annually.

Koch secured another pivotal win when he discovered that the town had never officially changed its name. The realization meant he could organize his unincorporated area as the first — official — Santa Claus, Indiana.

Weather

Wednesday, December 27, 2023

(24-hour observations at 9:13 p.m. Tuesday)

High: 53; Low: 41; Precipitation: None

Wabash River Level (at the Main Street bridge): 1.36 feet at 9:45 p.m. Tuesday

Wells County forecast

Today: Partly sunny, with a high near 45. North wind around 5 mph.

Tonight: Cloudy, with a low around 35. North wind around 5 mph.

Thursday: A 40 percent chance of rain, mainly after 1 p.m. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 44. North wind around 5 mph becoming west in the afternoon.

Thursday Night: A 30 percent chance of rain, mainly before 1 a.m. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 32. West wind around 5 mph.

Friday: A 30 percent chance of rain. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 42.

Friday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 29.

Saturday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 41.

Saturday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 29.

Sunday: Mostly cloudy, with a high near 39.

Sunday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 27.

New Year's Day: Partly sunny, with a high near 36.

Monday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 24.

Tuesday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 37.

Social media

(Continued from Page 1)

GO MAINSTREAM

Manipulated images and videos surrounding elections are nothing new, but 2024 will be the first U.S. presidential election in which sophisticated AI tools that can produce convincing fakes in seconds are just a few clicks away.

The fabricated images, videos and audio clips known as deepfakes have started making their way into experimental presidential campaign ads. More sinister versions could easily spread without labels and fool people days before an election, Etzioni said.

"You could see a political candidate like President Biden being rushed to a hospital," he said. "You could see a candidate saying things that he or she never actually said."

Faced with content that is made to look and sound real, "everything that we've been wired to do through evolution is going to come into play to have us believe in the fabrication rather than the actual reality," said misinformation scholar Kathleen Hall Jamieson, director of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania.

The Federal Election Commission and Republicans and Democrats in Congress are exploring steps to regulate the technology, but they haven't finalized any rules or legislation.

A handful of states have passed laws requiring deepfakes to be labeled or banning those that misrepresent candidates. Some social media companies, including YouTube and Meta, which owns Facebook and Instagram, have introduced AI labeling policies. It remains to be seen whether they will be able to consistently catch violators.

SOCIAL MEDIA

GUARDRAILS FADE

It was just over a year ago that Elon Musk bought Twitter and began firing its executives, dismantling some of its core features and reshaping the social media platform into what's now known as X.

Since then, he has upended its verification system,

leaving public officials vulnerable to impersonators. He has gutted the teams that once fought misinformation on the platform, leaving the community of users to moderate itself. And he has restored the accounts of conspiracy theorists and extremists who were previously banned.

The changes have been applauded by many conservatives who say Twitter's previous moderation attempts amounted to censorship of their views. But pro-democracy advocates argue the takeover has shifted what once was a flawed but useful resource for news and election information into a largely unregulated echo chamber that amplifies hate speech and misinformation.

In the run-up to 2024, X, Meta and YouTube have together removed 17 policies that protected against hate and misinformation, according to a report from Free Press, a nonprofit that advocates for civil rights in tech and media.

In June, YouTube announced that while it would still regulate content that misleads about current or upcoming elections, it would stop removing content that falsely claims the 2020 election or other previous U.S. elections were marred by "widespread fraud, errors or glitches." The platform said the policy was an attempt to protect the ability to "openly debate political ideas, even those that are controversial or based on disproven assumptions."

ELECTION

OFFICIALS RESPOND

Election officials have spent the years since 2020 preparing for the expected resurgence of election denial narratives.

In Colorado, Secretary of State Jena Griswold said informative paid social media and TV campaigns that humanize election workers have helped inoculate voters against misinformation.

"This is an uphill battle, but we have to be proactive," she said. "Misinformation is one of the biggest threats to American democracy we see today."

Biden orders strikes

(Continued from Page 1)

Iranian officials vowed revenge for the killing of Mousavi, but didn't immediately launch a retaliatory strike. The militia attack Monday in northern Iraq was launched prior to the strike in Syria that killed Mousavi.

Biden, who was spending Christmas at the presidential retreat at Camp David, Maryland, was alerted to the attack by White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan shortly after it occurred Monday and ordered the Pentagon and his top national security aides to prepare response options to the attack on an air base used by American troops in Irbil.

Sullivan consulted with U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin. Biden's deputy national security adviser, Jon Finer, was with the president at Camp David and convened top aides to

review options, according to a U.S. official, who wasn't authorized to comment publicly and requested anonymity.

Within hours, Biden convened his national security team for a call in which Austin and Gen. CQ Brown, chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, briefed Biden on the response options. Biden opted to target three locations used by Kataib Hezbollah and affiliated groups, the official said.

The U.S. strikes were carried out at about 4:45 a.m. Tuesday in Iraq, less than 13 hours after the U.S. personnel were attacked. According to U.S. Central Command, the retaliatory strikes on the three sites "destroyed the targeted facilities and likely killed a number of Kataib Hezbollah militants."

"The President places no higher priority than the protection of American person-

nel serving in harm's way," Watson said. "The United States will act at a time and in a manner of our choosing should these attacks continue."

The latest attack on U.S. troops follows months of escalating threats and actions against American forces in the region since the Oct. 7 Hamas attack on Israel that sparked the devastating war in Gaza.

The dangerous back-and-forth strikes have escalated since Iranian-backed militant groups under the umbrella group called the Islamic Resistance in Iraq and Syria began striking U.S. facilities Oct. 17, the date that a blast at a hospital in Gaza killed hundreds. Iranian-backed militias have carried out more than 100 attacks on U.S. bases in Iraq and Syria since the start of the Israel-Hamas war more than two months ago.

FAST, RELIABLE FIBER INTERNET

SOLUTIONS FOR HOME AND BUSINESS

UNLIMITED DATA | UP TO 1* GBPS | 24/7 SUPPORT

SERVICE NOW AVAILABLE IN MANY AREAS.

Sign up today or get fiber-ready by signing the underground agreement.

Call for more details!

833.727.5563

twncomm.com/heartland



*Services provided by TWN Communications. Not available in all areas. Restrictions, terms and conditions apply. Taxes, regulatory, surcharges and other charges are applicable. A line connection fee may be applicable. Call for details or visit twncomm.com/terms-conditions for additional information and terms and conditions of services. Residential customers on qualifying internet plans will receive download/upload speeds of 25.0 Mbps to 1.0 Gbps, per respective plan. A 30-day notice is required to cancel service.

OBITUARIES

Oscar L. Heyne, 90

Oscar L. Heyne, 90, passed away Sunday, Dec. 24, 2023, at Lutheran Hospital in Ft. Wayne, following an extended illness.

Oscar was born March 3, 1933, in New Bremen, Ind. to Frank L. Heyne and Alvina (Reier), both parents preceded him in death. He graduated from St. John's High in Mariastine, Ohio.

Following graduation, Oscar served in the United States Navy from 1950-1954 during the Korean War. Upon being discharged from the Navy, Oscar returned to his hometown and shortly thereafter moved to Bluffton. He worked for the Bluffton Branch of the United States Post Office for 34 years. He was a member of St. Joseph Catholic Church, where he served in various capacities there throughout his life. Oscar was a long-time member of the American Legion Post 111 and VFW Post 2809.

After retirement, he enjoyed woodworking, making wooden flag cases for veteran's families and helped them obtain the medals and ribbons for the veteran's service. His talent in woodworking is evident in many homes around the county, as well as the Bluffton City Hall, library and local churches. He enjoyed playing games and socializing, he was involved in a card club for many years. Oscar enjoyed taking his family camping and to get together with his siblings, coaching little league baseball and teaching catechism classes. During the last year he suffered several health issues and declined considerably. Oscar had given his heart to Jesus and was ready to change his address to heaven.

He married Nancy (Mauer) Kipp in Bluffton, on Oct. 16, 1976 in Bluffton, she passed away May 20, 2008. He is survived by four sons, Douglas (Teresa) Heyne of Monroe, Ind., Darel (Sue) Heyne of Titusville, Fla., David (Angela) Heyne of Orlando, Fla. and Duane (Virginia) of Bluffton; one daughter, Kathy (Don) Curtin of Harlin, Ind.; daughter-in-law, Debbie Heyne of Cincinnati, Ohio; one sister, Joyce Flinn of Celina, Ohio; 19 grandchildren and many great-grandchildren, in addition, he is survived by a sister-in-law, Ruth Heyne of Celina, Ohio; and a brother-in-law, Harry Eckrote.

In addition to his parents and wife, he was preceded in death by a son, Denis Heyne in 2017; daughter, Carolyn Kipp in 1990; one grandson, Justus Heyne; three brothers, Lester, Ralph and Earl Heyne; two sisters, Rosie Albright and Norma Jean Eckrote.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11:00 a.m. Friday, Dec. 29, 2023, at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Bluffton, Fr. David Violi will officiate. Receiving of friends will take place at the church on Friday from 10:00 a.m. until service time. Burial will take place at Marion National Cemetery, Marion, IN at a later date.

Memorials can be made to the Wounded Warrior Project.

Online condolences can be made to goodwincalearnharnish.com.

Goodwin - Cale & Harnish Memorial Chapel, Bluffton, IN. have been entrusted with funeral arrangements.

Donald E. Owens, 74

Donald "Uncle Buck" E. Owens, 74, of rural Keystone, died Saturday morning, Dec. 23, 2023, at his residence.

Don was born in Illinois Feb. 7, 1949, to Harold W. and Mary E. (Harouff) Owens. Both parents preceded him in death.

Survivors include a daughter, Dawn (Jay) Brickley of Bluffton; three grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; three brothers, Clifton Owens of Bluffton, Homer Owens of Muncie, and Ronald Owens of Hartford City; and a sister, Dorothy Owens (John Gilbert) of Camden, S.C.

A receiving of friends and family will be held Tuesday, Jan. 9, 2024, from 2:00 until 4:00 p.m., at Goodwin - Cale & Harnish Memorial Chapel in Bluffton, followed immediately by military rites at the funeral home, conducted by the American Legion in conjunction with the United States Army Honor Guard. The family requests casual attire to worn at Don's visitation (preferably something John Deere or Harley Davidson), in honor of Don's love for tractors and motorcycles.

Private burial will be held at Marion National Cemetery.

Online condolences may be made at www.goodwincalearnharnish.com.

James L. Klosterman Jr., 71

James L. Klosterman Jr., 71, of Bluffton, died Tuesday evening, Dec. 26, 2023, at River Terrace Retirement Community in Bluffton.

Funeral arrangements are pending with Goodwin - Cale & Harnish Memorial Chapel in Bluffton.

Police Notebook

INCIDENTS

City:

Friday, 4:06 p.m., Valley Park Apartments. Welfare check requested for coparent and child. No issues.

Friday, 4:21 p.m., 700 block of West Silver Street. Caller reported multiple packages stolen from property, requested subject trespassed from residence.

Friday, 5:05 p.m., 700 block of West Silver Street. Caller requested subject trespassed from property.

Friday, 9:33 p.m., Walmart. Caller reported man who had previously stolen items was in store attempting to steal again.

Saturday, 4:11 p.m., 800 block of Kimberly Drive. Caller reported dog barking and believed someone may have been outside. Officer checked the area.

Saturday, 10:15 a.m., Pine Grove Apartments. Caller reported fraud in reference to a home purchase.

Saturday, 12:07 p.m., 900 block of West Wabash Street. Caller requested welfare check for subject.

Saturday, 12:46 p.m., Walmart. Caller reported they hit a pole in grocery pickup area.

Saturday, 1:21 p.m., 1400 block of West Washington Street. Caller reported ex boyfriend violated protection order.

Saturday, 1:34 p.m., Dollar General South. Caller reported theft.

Saturday, 2:53 p.m., 300 block of Grassland

Court. Caller requested assistance contacting property owner.

Saturday, 2:54 p.m., Walmart. Subject warned and given trespass warning at Walmart for rude behavior.

Saturday, 6:00 p.m., Capri Meadows. Welfare check requested for dog, caller advised dog is over fed and not taken outside enough.

Saturday, 9:33 p.m., Capri Meadows. Caller reported a noise complaint.

Saturday, 11:03 p.m., First Fleet. Caller reported woman took keys and vehicle without permission

Saturday, 11:57 p.m., 100 block of West Wiley Avenue. Report of a custody issue.

Sunday, 2:16 a.m., 300 block of North Williams Street. Report of dog barking. Owners informed of ordinance.

Sunday, 3:22 a.m., Bluffton Senior Villas. Caller reported unknown man smoked cigarette on her porch.

Sunday, 9:38 a.m., Valley Park Apartments. Caller reported possible registered sex offender attempted to speak to children.

Sunday, 7:50 p.m., 70 block of Sunset Drive. Caller reported suspicious noise. Nothing located.

Sunday, 11:03 p.m., 800 block of South Main Street. Caller reported dog attacked their chickens.

Monday, 5:43 p.m., Calvary Lutheran Church. Report of Boy Scout trailer

door open.

Monday, 10:14 p.m., 400 block of West Washington Street. Report of noise complaint.

Monday, 11:18 p.m., East Dustman Road and West Shore Drive. Caller located street sign.

Tuesday, 1:03 p.m., 300 block of West Miller Street. Report of theft of a vape and hair straightener.

County:

Friday, 1:40 p.m., 200 South and South 300 West, Liberty Center. Report of a trailer parked in roadway.

Friday, 10:28 p.m., 1800 West 400 North, Markle. Welfare check requested for subject that had not responded in several days.

Saturday, 5:29 p.m., South Hoosier Highway and Meridian Road, Bluffton. Report of a vehicle in roadway. Vehicle towed after several unsuccessful attempts to contact owners.

Saturday, 8:04 p.m., 8900 South Main Street, Petroleum. Caller reported issues with custody exchange.

Sunday, 1:53 a.m., West Lancaster Street and Westgate Road, Bluffton. Driver cited for driving while suspended.

Sunday, 8:14 a.m., 900 North and Marzane Road, Markle. Report of a missing stop sign. County highway replaced the sign.

Sunday, 11:37 a.m., 300 East Ind. 218, Poneto. Report of a subject on abandoned property. Subject

advised he was searching for his brother after he was released from prison and believed the clothes left in barn on property were his. Advised clothes belonged to a different homeless person that was recently found in the barn and to stay off of property.

Monday, 4:27 p.m., 7700 East 300 South, Bluffton. Report of two dogs running at large.

Monday, 6:27 p.m., Ind. 1 and East 1000 South, Keystone. Subject advised she lost control of vehicle and slid into ditch.

Tuesday, 3:16 a.m., Ind. 1 and Industrial Parkway. Driver pulled over for speeding 70 in a 55 mph zone. Driver had suspended license for no insurance accident, advised she was not suspended and had insurance that began that day. Driver later admitted she renewed the insurance during the traffic stop and was escorted to wait for a ride. Issued citation for driving while suspended, failure to provide proof of insurance, and speeding.

Ossian: Friday, 4:06 p.m., 650 East and 750 North, Ossian. Caller reported horse loose in roadway.

Friday, 5:22 p.m., 1000 East 950 North, Ossian. Caller reported Grinch stole her Christmas decorations.

Sunday, 7:56 a.m., 100 East and East 700 North, Ossian. Caller reported 15 cows in the roadway.

Crouch taps mayor to head rural affairs office

By NIKI KELLY
Indiana Capital Chronicle

Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch has chosen outgoing Terre Haute Mayor Duke Bennett to become the new executive director of the Office of Community and Rural Affairs.

Bennett, who was defeated in his bid for a fifth term in November, will begin in his new role at OCRA in Indianapolis on Jan. 8.

"The next chapter in Indiana's history is quality of life, in large and small communities around the state, and Mayor Bennett understands this," said Crouch, Indiana's Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Development. "As communities and cities strive to build economically thriving places where people want to live, work and grow, Mayor Bennett will spread the collaborative spirit he cultivated in Vigo County around the state. Indiana will be in good hands with Mayor Bennett leading the Indiana Office of Community

and Rural Affairs into the future."

Bennett, from Terre Haute, is finishing his last term as that city's mayor. He was first elected mayor in 2007, and his four terms ties him for second longest serving mayor in Terre Haute history. In addition to being mayor, Bennett has also served as a Special Deputy Sheriff with the Vigo County Sheriff's Department for more than 20 years.

Young upstart Democrat Brandon Sakbun defeated Bennett, who sits on the board of Accelerate Indiana Municipalities, which is an organization representing more than 460 cities and towns as members. AIM's goal is to help shape the dynamic municipalities of the future and make government work better for the benefit of all Hoosiers.

"I am thankful and honored for this opportunity from Lt. Gov. Crouch," said Bennett. He graduated with an associate's degree

from Indiana Vocational Technical College in 1980 and earned his bachelor's

in Business Administration from Indiana Wesleyan University in 2006.

Yergy's BBQ
Voted #1 Locally Owned Restaurant in Wells County!
260-824-4950
1415 South Main Street, Bluffton, IN 46714

Arnold Lumber Co.
425 S. Winchester St., Decatur, IN
Hours: Mon-Thurs 7AM-5PM
Fri 7AM-4:30PM • Sat 7AM-11:30AM
260-724-3108 • Fax 260-724-4505
FABRAL METAL WALL AND ROOF SYSTEMS
1-800-903-4206 | Check Us Out on Facebook

Julie Myers Jerry Flack & Associates
101 N. Main St. Bluffton, IN Corner of Main & Market
"We are Senior Citizens working with Senior Citizens" 260.824.1618
MARKET PLACE (UNDER 65) PLANS
TIME FOR ANY PLAN CHANGES?

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.

First day bison hike at ouabache

On Monday, Jan. 1, the First Day Bison Hike will be held at Ouabache State Park beginning at 10 a.m. by the Bison Exhibit.

Meet for the feeding and then participate in the 1 mile hike on Trail 1 around the enclosure. The route will follow a gravel path and may be wet due to the weather.

Free park admission and program.

Get Ready for Winter. Call and Schedule a Check Up Today!
MR. KOOL
Heating and Cooling
#1 Best Heating & Cooling Co. Best Plumbing Service
(260) 824-1126 • mrkoolbluffton@gmail.com • 610 N. Main St. Bluffton, IN 46714
COS210004

WE HELP YOU GET SOCIAL SECURITY, MEDICARE AND MEDICAID READY!
Jerry Flack & Associates
WE REPRESENT MANY - MANY - MANY INSURANCE COMPANIES
WE HAVE ALL THE MEDICARE AND MEDICAID OPTIONS AVAILABLE
MARKETPLACE ANNUAL ENROLLMENT IS NOV 1ST - DEC 15TH
The Price Tag is the Same Everywhere Consider Local for Better Service
ANNUAL ENROLLMENT OCT 15 TO DEC 7 CALL US
WHEN YOU HAVE PROBLEMS AND YOU WILL HAVE PROBLEMS YOU WILL HAVE US TO COUNT ON
MEDICARE SUPPLEMENTS - MEDICARE ADVANTAGE PLANS - PRESCRIPTION DRUG PLANS.
Life Insurance - Long Term Care Insurance - Investments - Individual and Small Group Health - Dental - Vision - Hearing - Cancer Insurance
Folks on Medicare A and B and Diabetic can get FREE Nice Looking Diabetic Shoes Every Year from Us | We Do FREE Information/ Education Seminars In Your Business (Again Former Teachers)
WE CAN MEET: IN OUR OFFICE - IN YOUR HOME - IN A FAVORED LOCATION
In the 1882 Building at Main & Market with the mural on the outside wall • 260-824-1618

Time to start looking over the annual 'Top' lists of 2023

As we near the end of the year, I always look forward to reading news articles that are published about top happenings and such from the past 365 days.

We'll soon publish our annual Top 10 news stories from Wells County as we recap what our staff viewed as the most newsworthy events of the year.

Chances are you'll see the same type of articles about state, national and international events as well. There certainly is no shortage when it comes to major events happening on the state, national and international stages this year, but I digress.

On a more light-hearted note, it's also fun to see what the year's top Christmas songs and movies were.

CBS News recently did a story on Billboard's top Christmas songs. Three of them were released before I was born; two of them came out before my parents were born. I'm guessing most of us could sing them without needing a copy of the lyrics.

I think I have listened to all five of these songs at least 10 times or more this year. It wouldn't be Christmas without playing them over and over again.

Any guesses about which songs topped this year's Hot 100 Christmas songs?

Drum roll ...

No. 5: Burl Ives' 1964 hit "A Holly Jolly Christmas"

No. 4: Wham!'s 1986 song "Last Christmas"

No. 3: Bobby Helms' 1957 song "Jingle Bell Rock"

No. 2: Brenda Lee's 1958 song "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree"

No. 1: Mariah Carey's 1994 song "All I Want For Christmas Is You"

For a couple of weeks, however, "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree" topped the Billboard's Hot 100 chart for the first time since the song was released almost seven decades ago. The song was streamed some 35 million times between the Friday after Thanksgiving until the following Thursday.

Each of the Top 5 songs are on the Christmas playlist that my wife and I have been listening to for the past month each time we are in the car or when we're doing chores around the house.

I think I heard each song even more in the myriad of Christmas movies we've been watching these past couple of weeks.

Any guesses on this season's top Christmas movies from Nov. 10 and Dec. 10 according to an article in Forbes?

No. 5: "Four Christmases"

No. 4: "The Santa Clause"

No. 3: "Home Alone"

No. 2: "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation"

No. 1: "Elf"

I thought "A Christmas Story" — one of my favorites each year — might have made the Top 5 but instead it was No. 10 on the list Forbes published.

And in case you're wondering ... "Die Hard" did make the list, coming in at No. 13. We'll leave the ongoing debate about whether it is a Christmas movie for another day.

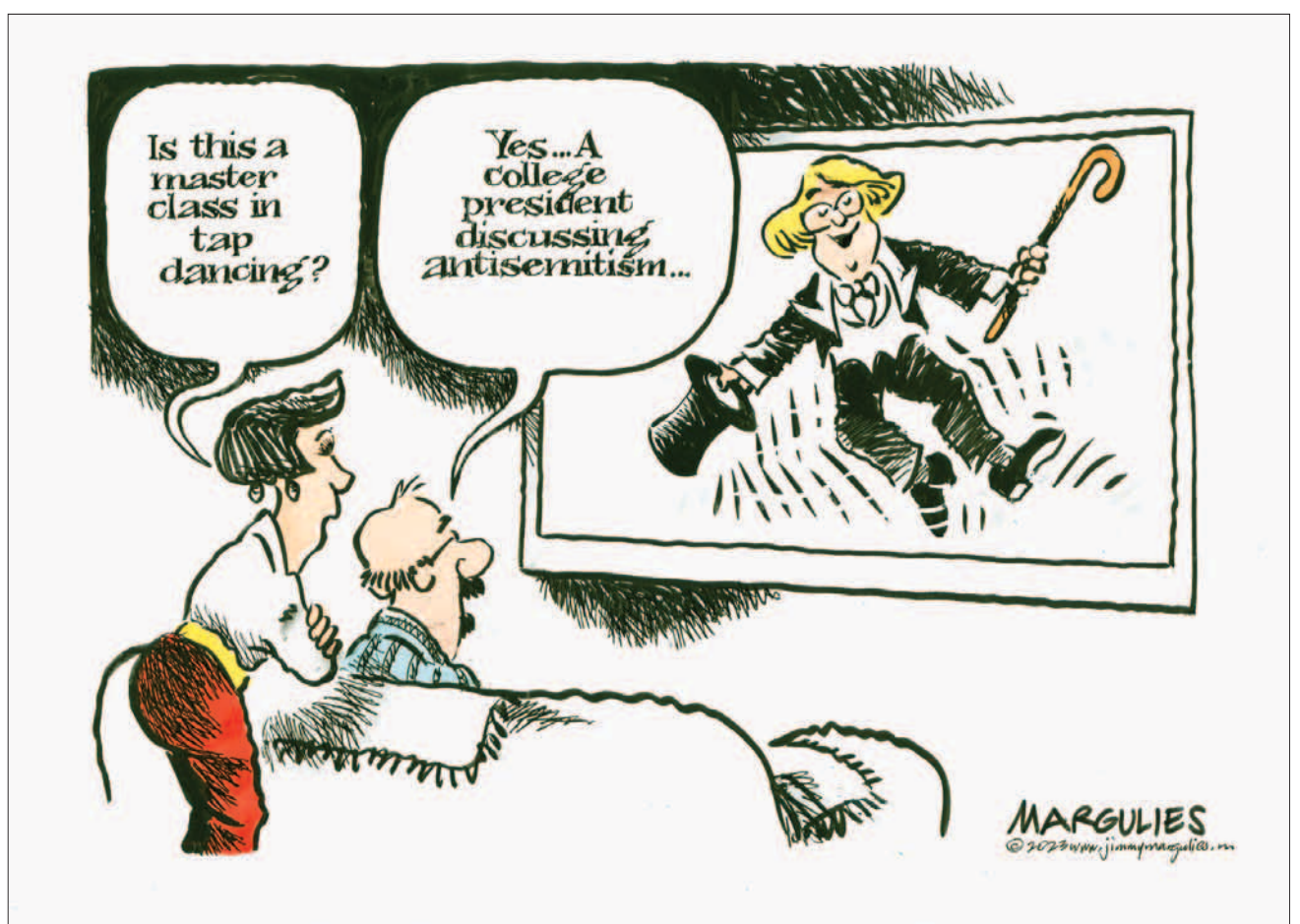
My rankings would probably look a bit different for both the top movies and songs.

How about yours?

jdpeeper2@hotmail.com



Justin Peeper



Harvard's Claudine Gay should resign

She plagiarized *her acknowledgments*. I take no joy in saying this, but Harvard President Claudine Gay ought to resign. Her track record is unbecoming the president of the country's premier university. Remaining on the job would send a bad signal to students about the gravity of her conduct.

This was not my original instinct. I thought, and continue to believe, that Gay's accusers and their allies were motivated more by conservative ideology and the desire to score points against the most elite of institutions than by any commitment to academic rigor. This was, and is, accompanied by no small dose of racism and the conviction that a Black woman couldn't possibly be qualified to lead Harvard.

In addition, the initial reports of plagiarism seemed small-bore. Gay's missteps did not seem to involve sweeping appropriations of carefully crafted words or thoughtful ideas but a failure to put mostly boilerplate language inside quotation marks.

Moreover, plagiarism in the digital age is a there-but-for-the-grace-of-God event; every writer should worry about the risk of the accidental cut-and-paste. I like to think I'd recognize and remove any language I hadn't written, but who can be certain? It is always best to cite — and even over-credit — the work of others. Charitableness begins at home.

And yet. The instances of problematic citation in the work of Gay, a political scientist, have become too many to ignore. Some go well beyond routine use of the same language. The Washington Free Beacon's Aaron Sibarium reported that "in at least 10 instances, Gay lifted full sentences — even entire paragraphs — with just a word or two tweaked."

In her 1997 doctoral dissertation, for example, Gay quoted from a paper by Bradley Palmquist and D. Stephen Voss, then her colleagues in the Harvard political science department, about turnout rates among Black voters. "This is one sign that the data contain little aggregation bias," they wrote. "If racial turnout rates changed depending upon a precinct's racial mix, which is one description of bias, a linear form would be unlikely in a simple scatter plot (resulting only when changes in one race's turnout rate somehow compensated for changes in the other's across the graph.)"

Gay's dissertation — which nowhere cites Palmquist and Voss — contains nearly identical language. "This is one sign that the data contain little aggregation bias," she wrote. "If racial turnout rates changed depending upon a precinct's racial mix, which is one way to think about bias, a linear form would be unlikely in a simple scatter plot. A linear form would only result if the changes in one race's turnout were compensated by changes in the turnout of the other race across the graph."

That's not sloppiness. That's plagiarism. Harvard's own material underscores this conclusion.

"Plagiarism is defined as the act of either intentionally OR unintentionally submitting work that was written by someone else," its manual for students advises. "If you turn in a paper ... in which you have included material from any source without citing that source, you have plagiarized."

Perhaps the most disturbing example is the least academic — Gay's borrowing of words from another scholar, Jennifer L. Hochschild. In her acknowledgments for a 1996 book, Hochschild described a mentor who "showed me the importance of getting the data right and of following where they lead without fear or favor" and "drove me much harder than I sometimes wanted to be driven."

Gay's dissertation thanked her thesis adviser, who "reminded me of the importance of getting the data right and following where they lead without fear or favor," and her family, who "drove me harder than I sometimes wanted to be driven."

Now, can I just say? Acknowledgments are the easiest, and most fun part, of writing a book, the place where you list your sources and allies and all the people who helped you get the manuscript over the finish line. Why not come up with your own thanks? What does it say about a person who chooses to appropriate another's language for this most personal task?

Harvard said it launched an inquiry into Gay's conduct after being contacted by the New York Post in October about plagiarism allegations. It said an independent panel of three respected political scientists with no ties to Harvard had examined Gay's published works and found instances of "inadequate citations" that, "while regrettable, did not constitute research misconduct" because there was no evidence of intentional deception or recklessness.

It said Gay had submitted four corrections to two articles and, after questions were raised about her dissertation, promised to update that document as well to fix "duplicative language without appropriate attribution." Most of the scholars involved told the Harvard Crimson that they were untroubled by the conduct.

Really? Here's what Harvard tells its students. "Taking credit for anyone else's work is stealing, and it is unacceptable in all academic situations, whether you do it intentionally or by accident."

And: "It's not enough to have good intentions and to cite some of the material you use."

And this: "When you write papers in college, your work is held to the same standards of citation as the work of your professors."

Which raises the question: Is the university president's work being held to the same standards? It sure doesn't look that way.

ruthmarcus@washpost.com.



Ruth Marcus

Submit your Letters to the Editor via:

- Our website link (Submit your Letter)
- Fax: (260) 824-0700
- E-Mail: email@news-banner.com
- Mail: PO Box 436, Bluffton IN 46714
- Drop-off: 125 N. Johnson St., Bluffton

All letters must be signed and must include a phone number or address in case verification is desired. Letters are edited for brevity and clarity. **Letters must be no more than 500 words.** Please mark your correspondence as a "Letter to the Editor," or if you wish to express an opinion to us but do not want it published, please mark as "Not for Publication."

Today in History

By The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, Dec. 27, the 361st day of 2023. There are four days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Dec. 27, 1979, Soviet forces seized control of Afghanistan. President Hafizullah Amin, who was overthrown and executed, was replaced by Babrak Karmal.

On this date:

In 1822, scientist Louis Pasteur was born in Dole, France.

In 1831, naturalist Charles Darwin set out on a round-the-world voyage aboard the HMS Beagle.

In 1904, James Barrie's play "Peter Pan: The Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up" opened at the Duke of York's Theater in London.

In 1932, New York City's Radio City Music Hall first opened.

In 1945, 28 nations signed an agreement creating the World Bank.

In 1958, American physicist James Van Allen reported the discovery of a second radiation belt around Earth, in addition to one found earlier in the year.

In 1985, Palestinian gunmen opened fire inside the Rome and Vienna airports in terrorist attacks that killed 19 people; four attackers were slain by police and security personnel. American naturalist Dian Fossey, 53, who had studied gorillas in the wild in Rwanda, was found hacked to death.

In 1995, Israeli jeeps sped out of the West Bank town of Ramallah, capping a seven-week pullout giving Yasser Arafat control over 90 percent of the West Bank's 1 million Palestinian residents and one-third of its land.

Was Napoleon a dullard?

The figure of Napoleon has long been an object of fascination, but the new Ridley Scott biopic makes one wonder why. Perhaps you took the time to see it over the holidays.

The film, perhaps inadvertently, partakes of the spirit of the times. The so-called Great Man theory of history — that it is exceptionally talented men who bend events to their will — is out of favor. Accordingly, the movie renders the stereotypical great man, Napoleon, as doltish and uninteresting.

No man is a hero to his valet, goes the old saying. But can't he at least be a hero, or a compelling persona, to the director of a \$200 million movie about him?

Apparently not. Napoleon can be considered a proto-fascist dictator, or an enlightened reformer, or some of both, but he could never be considered dull, at least not until portrayed by a stolid Joaquin Phoenix, seemingly unaware that the general was a sparkling personality, a hugely energetic reformer and an inspiring leader of men.

As the Wall Street Journal critic Kyle Smith puts it, "Mr. Phoenix's Napoleon could never have commanded so much as a squadron of the Salvation Army."

The Great Man theory is now considered simplistic and even dangerous, and has about it the stale stench of dead white males. Academic historians tend to obsess with broad economic and social forces or with

minutiae, while the largest impersonal force of all, the climate, occupies an outsized place in the political debate of advanced countries.

We don't have to swoon like the philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, who enthused after catching sight of Napoleon in Jena about "this world-soul, riding out of the city on reconnaissance."

Rich Lowry

But the general and emperor demonstrates that great men matter — not that they are virtuous or good, or that they can overcome every obstacle put in their way by themselves or others, or that large-scale factors don't count, but that individual leaders take a hand in shaping events, sometimes decisively.

Would any Macedonian other than Alexander the Great have toppled the Persian empire and marched on India? Would any Frenchman besides Charlemagne have united much of Europe under his rule and brought about an intellectual and cultural renaissance? Would any Russian other than Peter the Great have modernized the Russian empire, defeated the Turks and Swedes, and built St. Petersburg?

How different the 20th century would have looked without Hitler, Stalin and Mao.

By the same token, only Napoleon — who rose to power in France only six years fleeing his native Corsica with almost nothing — would have

undertaken his historic campaign of institution-building in France and conquest in Europe. Many of his changes in France proved worthy and enduring, while his ambitions in Europe were rightly resisted by other powers, England foremost among them.

At the end of the day, he was a captain of war who knew one thing above all — the offensive to seek and destroy the enemy army. He had speed on his side, a feel for topography and the flow of battle, and innovative tactics. These enabled him to destroy enemy armies and pick apart coalitions arrayed against him for years, as his legend grew.

As always happens, though, his rivals learned from him, and his military advantages slipped away. He lost a long battle of attrition, in masses of broken men, horses and weapons. His operational prowess, synonymous with great victories at Ulm and Austerlitz, didn't translate into success in the ultimate geopolitical war. It all ended in ashes and exile, twice. Napoleon was unforgivably careless with the blood and treasure of France, and that of the rest of Europe that struggled so mightily to stop him.

It's not a story that should occasion hero worship, or romantic images like the famous Jacques-Louis David painting of Napoleon crossing the Alps. But it's not a story devoid of interest, or featuring a slightly ridiculous dullard at its center. Hollywood, in a rank distortion, somehow has made it so.

Rich Lowry is on Twitter @RichLowry

The News-Banner

(USPS 059-200)

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

News-Banner Publications, Inc.

George B. Witwer, Chairman of the Board
Doug Brown, President, Publisher
Dianne Witwer, Secretary/Treasurer

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

Holly Gaskill, Editor

Mark Miller, Opinion Page Editor

Opinions expressed on this page do not necessarily represent the views of this newspaper.

Celebrating and grieving at Christmas: her memory lives on

As I write the first draft of this column, it is December 19, 2023—the 20th anniversary of the death of my daughter at age 18 1/2. (Danielle was big on those 1/2 years. No party, no cake, but we celebrated it in some fashion.) And December 20 would be Danielle's half birthday.



Anna Spalding

Danielle loved Christmas: the lights, the decorations, the music; shopping, baking cookies, wrapping gifts. She loved the nativity and played with it regularly during the season. When she learned that the wise men weren't at the manger scene when Baby Jesus was born and, instead, traveled miles and miles and reached the Christ child later, she established the tradition of moving those three figurines every day closer and closer to the creche. Finally, on the Feast of the Epiphany, they arrived with gifts to celebrate the birth. As a young teenag-

er, Danielle played the role of Mary in the living nativity, a highlight of her religious education experience.

I get great joy from telling stories of Danielle and hearing others share their memories of her. While this time of year is especially difficult, there are others times that stir up the grief. Her absence at the Thanksgiving table is still felt. Her favorite was Aunt Brenda's "Dirt Dessert." I celebrate her birthday, June 20, with her favorite childhood meal: hotdogs, macaroni and cheese (Kraft—don't try to slip in an off-brand or homemade.), and cottage cheese (She was particular about the brand and the size of the curd and couldn't be fooled.). Dessert was a Dairy Queen cake—always—her preference, not mine.

I grieve things that will never be. Because Danielle was an only child (except for her exchange-student sisters and brothers: Dubravka, Carlos, Andrea, José, Patti, Erika, and Miguel), I will never be the mother-of-the-bride. I won't be some little darling's grandma. I am fortunate to have become a step-



mom when I married Jim. I treasure Melanie and Matt and Megan. They own prime property in my heart, but an empty lot will always exist there. And they understand that. They have their own grief, having lost their mom to colon cancer when they were all teenagers. They, too, feel the weight of that loss on certain anniversaries.

I look forward to some grief triggers because they also spark happy memories. Yes, you can feel grief and joy at the same time. Hearing folks talk about their kids' or grandkids' accomplishments in sports reminds me of Danielle's years in swim club. Sitting outside in the baking sun or "parked" on uncomfortable bleachers in a humid indoor pool was a joy (maybe not at the time) as I watched Danielle glide through the water. I will never forget one indoor meet when she was 11 or 12 and chose to swim a special event, a 1-mile race. All ages swam at the same time because so few had registered for that event. She was the youngest and the last

one out of the pool. But if you know anything about swim club parents, you know they cheer for each other's kids. Every parent in those bleachers was on his or her feet cheering with her dad and me as Danielle finished those last few laps. She completed that challenge and was awarded a gold medal for her effort (being the only one in her age group). After she had time to recover, I asked her if she'd ever consider swimming that event again. "No way!" she exclaimed, "Not in a million years."

Hearing about marching band competitions reminds me of Danielle's experiences as a Norwell Marching Knight. She gave up her clarinet during the summer to be a part of color guard so she could wave and twirl and toss flags and rifles. She loved it and the friends she made... Except for the summer of the nasty ankle sprain when she found herself in the percussion pit. She didn't hate it: she was still a part of the band. Percussion just wasn't her thing.

Twenty years sometimes seems like a long time, yet some days it feels like yesterday. Some memories of that time are vivid and up close. Others are cloudy and far away. I even have some funny

memories from the days of her viewing and her funeral. Yes, funny ones. Ask me sometime about penguin underwear. Right, Mark? And about a Build-a-Bear named Frank. Right, Rhonda and Cathy?

Here's the Thing: Lots of us are missing someone this holiday season. There are empty chairs around meal tables. And hearts though mending remain broken. Things may trigger grief bursts: songs, scenes in movies, mention of a favorite book, a dessert, and so much more. But grief is "normal, natural, and necessary" (Stephen Ministry Training Manual, 2020). We can be of comfort to each other all year long by speaking names and sharing stories. Forget those empty platitudes. Let memories come live on.

Let's talk.

annaspalding1956@gmail.com

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.

Five county teachers awarded mini grants from Tri Kappa



At Bluffton High School Tri Kappa member Liza Mann, at right, presented a mini grant to Nicole Williamson and Kristi Eicher. (Photos provided)



At Northern Wells High School a mini grant was presented to Liza Tarr, center, by Tri Kappa member Lisa Mann, at left, with Kam Meyer, at right.



At Southern Wells the mini grants were awarded to Becca Miner, Caleb Sleppy and Shelly Ivans.

Five Wells County school teachers have been awarded mini grants of \$250 each to fund a creative project in their classroom. Bluffton's Beta Phi chapter of Tri Kappa announced the recipients this week.

Southern Wells

Becca Miner: Students will use hands on scientific tools for measuring and predictive scientific learning.

Caleb Stucky: Write

Time students will use ReWrite max tablets for interactive math, handwriting and quick answer learning.

Shelly Ivans: Art and STEM Glow Time students will use black lights and fluorescent lights to learn the science of UV light.

Bluffton

Kristi Eicher and Nicole Williamson: Life Skills Project with students building and selling door hangers to develop life and work experience.

Norwell

Lisa Tarr: Upper level Spanish Hellas Units students developing Spanish fluency in Spanish arts, music, literature and sciences.

The intention of these grants is to encourage Wells County teachers to implement creative classroom projects in the areas of need where school budgets fall short or tax dollars cannot be used. Reaching a large group of area chil-

dren is one of the goals and priorities of the mini-grant program.

Upon completion of the 2023-2024 school year the recipients must provide a final report showing how the mini grant funds were spent and a summary of the success and learning of the classroom project.

Bluffton's Tri Kappa sorority yearly holds two main fund-raisers: Street Fair Shirt Sales and Nut and Candy Sales. Money

from these events are used to support Wells County

charity, culture and educational projects.

1,000 BOOKS BEFORE KINDERGARTEN



Several children recently completed the 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten Program at the Wells County Public Library by reading and listening to 1,000 books with the help of family members.

At left, Kaehria Fiechter (holding her prize book "Monkey Time") is pictured with her mom, Taye, and her sisters, Stowe and Oaklyn.

At right, Burke Pfister (holding his prize book "Very Little Red Riding Hood") is pictured with his parents, Breanna and Spencer.



The 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program is sponsored by the United Way of Wells County, the Wells County Foundation, and the Friends of the Library. The program not only helps prepare children for school, but instills the value of reading and life-long learning. For more information visit the Wells County Public Library's website at www.wellscolibrary.org and click on the "Children" section.

Online Directory

Check out these websites of local & area companies and businesses.

WELLS COUNTY 4-H GROWS HERE extension.purdue.edu/wells	MR. KOOL Heating and Cooling mrkoolheatingandair.com	DAZEY'S SUPPLY dazeys.com/bluffton-in
Genesis Pest Services genesispestservices.com	JC'S GARAGE DOOR SALES & SERVICE jcsgaragedoor.com	Daniel's JEWELERS daniels-jewelers.net
THEGM FAMILY thegmfamily.com	3 RIVERS 3riversfcu.org	Myers FUNERAL HOMES A Tradition of Caring myersfuneralhomes.com
FISHER'S GARAGE DOORS fishersgaragedoors.com	Riverstone DENTAL riverstonedental.net	Bluffton Tire bluffontire.com
INNOVATIVE CONCEPTS AUDIO VIDEO SECURITY NETWORKING icav.us	HIDAY AUTOMOTIVE GROUP hidaymotors.com	Edward Jones EdwardJones.com
Lengerich MEATS lengerichmeats.com	Jerry Flack & Associates jerryflackinsuranceandinvestments.com	LaFontaine Center ARHF Community lafontainecenter.org
Still Waters FAMILY DENTISTRY stillwatersfamilydentistry.com	bi-countyservices.com bi-countyservices.com	Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home thomarich.com
ABC CINEMA 130 W. Monroe St. Decatur, IN • 260-724-SHOW	State Farm Erin Daugherty 260.827.0527 www.MyBlufftonStateFarm.com	HOME COURT HOME CARE homecourthomecare.com
Migration Wednesday, December 27th 6:20pm Thursday, December 28th 6:20pm Friday, December 29th 6:20pm & 8:30pm Saturday, December 30th Migration - Saturday Sensory Show 4pm, 6:30pm & 8:40pm Sunday, December 31st 2:20pm Monday, January 1st 6:30pm	WONKA Wednesday, December 27th 6pm Thursday, December 28th 6pm Friday, December 29th 6pm & 8:40pm Saturday, December 30th 3:40pm, 6:20pm & 9pm Sunday, December 31st 2pm Monday, January 1st 6pm www.abcinemainc.com	NB Digital nb-digital.com

TYEGER'S PIZZA PARLOUR

TYEGERSPIZZA.COM
260-827-0700

931 N Main St., Bluffton, IN

SCAN FOR MENU →

[facebook.com/TyegersPizzaParlour](https://www.facebook.com/TyegersPizzaParlour)

Thank you for reading your local newspaper

The News-Banner

Have a Website? Tell the World!

Ask for our latest Website visitor statistics!
The power of print and the Internet, working for you! Call 824-0224 for more information.

Israeli military: Gaza offensive has expanded into urban refugee camps

By NAJIB JOBAIN,
WAFAA SHURAF
and SAMY MAGDY
Associated Press

RAFAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israeli forces on Tuesday expanded their ground offensive into urban refugee camps in central Gaza after bombarding the crowded Palestinian communities and ordering residents to evacuate. Gaza's main telecom provider announced another "complete interruption" of services in the besieged territory.

The military's announcement of the new battle zone threatens further destruction in a war that Israel says will last for "many months" as it vows to crush the ruling Hamas militant group after its Oct. 7 attack. Israeli forces have been engaged in heavy urban fighting in northern Gaza and the southern city of Khan Younis, driving Palestinians into ever-smaller areas in search of refuge.

The U.S. said Israel's minister for strategic affairs, Ron Dermer, was meeting with Secretary of State Antony Blinken and national security adviser Jake Sullivan to discuss topics including transitioning to a different phase of the war to maximize focus on high-value Hamas targets, improving the humanitarian situation, and planning for governance and security in Gaza after the war.

Despite U.S. calls for Israel to curb civilian casualties and inter-

national pressure for a cease-fire, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the military was deepening the fighting.

"We say to the Hamas terrorists: We see you and we will get to you," Netanyahu said.

Israel's offensive is one of the most devastating military campaigns in recent history. More than 20,900 Palestinians, two-thirds women and children, have been killed, according to the Health Ministry in Gaza, whose count doesn't differentiate between civilians and combatants. The agency said 240 people were killed over the past 24 hours.

The U.N. human rights office said the continued bombardment of middle Gaza had claimed more than 100 Palestinian lives since Christmas Eve. The office noted that Israel had ordered some residents to move there.

Israel said it would no longer grant automatic visas to U.N. employees and accused the world body of being "complicit partners" in Hamas' tactics. Government spokesman Eylon Levy said Israel would consider visa requests case by case. That could further limit aid efforts in Gaza.

Residents of central Gaza described shelling and airstrikes shaking the Nuseirat, Maghazi and Bureij camps. The built-up towns hold Palestinians driven from their homes in what is now Israel during the 1948 war, along with their

descendants.

"The bombing was very intense," Radwan Abu Sheitta said by phone from Bureij.

The Israeli military ordered residents to evacuate a belt of territory the width of central Gaza, urging them to move to nearby Deir al-Balah. The U.N. humanitarian office said the area ordered evacuated was home to nearly 90,000 people before the war and now shelters more than 61,000 displaced people, mostly from the north.

The military later said it was operating in Bureij and asserted that it had located a Hamas training camp.

The telecom outage announced by Paltel follows similar outages through much of the war. Net-Blocks, a group that tracks internet outages, confirmed that network connectivity in Gaza was disrupted again and "likely to leave most residents offline."

Senior Hamas official Osama Hamdan said several countries had sent proposals to resolve the conflict following news of an Egyptian proposal that would include a transitional Palestinian government in Gaza and the occupied West Bank. He did not offer details of the proposals.

REGIONAL SPILLOVER

Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said Israel faces a "multi-arena war" on seven fronts — Gaza and the West Bank, Lebanon, Syria,

Iraq, Yemen and Iran. "We have responded and acted already on six of these," he told the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee.

Iranian-backed militia groups around the region have stepped up attacks in support of Hamas.

Iranian-backed militias in Iraq carried out a drone strike on a U.S. base in Irbil on Monday, wounding three American service members, according to U.S. officials. In response, U.S. warplanes hit three locations in Iraq connected to a main militia, Kataib Hezbollah.

Almost daily, Hezbollah and Israel exchange missiles, airstrikes and shelling across the Israeli-Lebanese border. On Tuesday, Israel's military said Hezbollah struck a Greek Orthodox church in northern Israel with a missile, wounding two Israeli Christians, and fired again on arriving soldiers, wounding nine.

"Hezbollah is risking the stability of the region for the sake of Hamas," said Israel's military spokesman, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari.

In the Red Sea, attacks by Houthi rebels in Yemen against commercial ships have disrupted trade and prompted a U.S.-led multinational naval operation to protect shipping routes. The Israeli military said a fighter jet on Tuesday shot down a "hostile aerial target" above the Red Sea that the military asserted was on its way to

Israeli territory.

The USS Laboon, a Navy destroyer, and American fighter jets shot down 12 drones, three anti-ship ballistic missiles and two land-attack cruise missiles in the southern Red Sea that were fired by the Yemen-based Houthis over a 10-hour period Tuesday, according to the Pentagon. U.S. Central Command said there was no damage to ships in the area or reported injuries.

A MASS GRAVE

More than 85 percent of Gaza's 2.3 million people have been driven from their homes. U.N. officials say a quarter of the territory's population is starving under Israel's siege, which allows in a trickle of food, water, fuel, medicine and other supplies. Last week, the U.N. Security Council called for immediately speeding up aid deliveries, but there has been little sign of change.

In an area Israel had declared a safe zone, a strike hit a home in Mawasi, a rural area in the southern province of Khan Younis. One woman was killed and at least eight were wounded, according to a cameraman working for The Associated Press at the nearby hospital.

In response, Israel's military said that it wouldn't refrain from operating in safe zones, "if it identifies terrorist organization activity threatening the security of Israel."

Tis the season for giving: A guide for how to give, even a little

By THALIA BEATY
Associated Press

Christmas is over, but giving season for nonprofits is just starting to peak.

The end of the calendar year is when nonprofits make appeals far and wide to attract donors — in part because of holiday traditions or, for some, tax advantages. Nonprofits get about 30 percent of their annual donations in December — including 10 percent in the final three days of the year — according to marketing agency Nonprofits Source.

"This is one of the busiest times of the year for us as we assist donors with their year-end giving," said Erin Musgrave, a spokesperson for the Silicon Valley Community Foundation.

Many potential donors don't realize how much nonprofits value even small gifts, especially local organizations that meet community needs. And nonprofits and industry groups warn that donations are down this year, so gifts right now could help them a lot.

Only 11 percent of Americans itemize their taxes, which allows them to claim significant tax deductions for charitable donations.

That means most Americans don't give in December for tax reasons.

"They're thinking about the organization in their community that's having an impact and digging deep and giving," said Chuck Collins, director of the Program on Inequality and the Common Good at the Institute for Policy Studies.

As you watch commercial appeals and sort through donation requests, here are some things to consider:

WHERE SHOULD I DONATE?

Experienced donors often have a short list of criteria they use to help select nonprofits to support. It could be organizations that serve the area where they live or specific causes or issues with which they have a personal connection.

A question to ask yourself is: "What are the issues or communities that are important to me and where do I want to make a difference?"

A great way to find out about organizations in your area is to ask your friends, coworkers and neighbors. They may have interacted directly with a nonprofit that supports after-school programs, sends companions to

elderly residents, advocates around traffic safety or supports local artists. For any topic that is important to you, an organization in your area is likely working on it.

Another potential consideration is check if your employer will match donations to the nonprofit you want to support. If so, your donation could go even further.

If you feel burdened by all the urgent appeals everywhere from the checkout line to the mail or online, one tactic is to make a budget and set aside time to give to organizations important to you. Be realistic, make a plan and then, set aside the guilt.

DO I HAVE TO GIVE NOW?

No, simply put.

First, there's no obligation to give to nonprofits. Many people make a difference in their communities — donating blood, volunteering with their fire department, caring for neighbors and myriad other ways.

Second, many nonprofits actually prefer for donors to set up automatic monthly donations, even in very small amounts, rather than giving a lump sum at the end of the year. The automatic donation from your bank account or credit card means they can plan for how to spend those funds in advance, which often helps them save money and resources.

WHAT IF I DON'T

HAVE A LOT TO GIVE?

People who study philanthropy and advise donors like Vanessa Lee, a program officer who coordinates giving circles at the Chicago Foundation for Women, emphasize that giving back is not the purview of the ultrawealthy.

Additionally, donations from low- and middle-income people, who give smaller amounts, usually go directly to nonprofit organizations, in contrast to many of the wealthiest donors, Collins of the Institute for Policy Studies said. His organization has researched the giving behaviors of billionaires and found that a growing portion of the overall dollars donated each year goes to donor-advised funds

and foundations, not directly to nonprofits.

In one recent example, the CEO of Dell Technologies, Michael Dell, donated stocks valued at \$1.7 billion in October and December to the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation and to donor-advised funds for future charitable donations. Private foundations are obligated to grant out at least 5 percent of their assets each year but there is no minimum granting requirement for DAFs.

"The very wealthy are giving it to intermediaries they control and parking the money indefinitely," Collins said. "So there's a more of a tax advantage goal, whereas most people are giving, regardless of the tax consequence."

Americans ramped up holiday spending despite higher costs

NEW YORK (AP) — Holiday sales rose this year and spending remained resilient during the shopping season even with Americans wrestling with higher prices in some areas and other financial worries, according to the latest measure.

Holiday sales from the beginning of November through Christmas Eve climbed 3.1 percent, a slower pace than the 7.6 percent increase from a year earlier, according to Mastercard SpendingPulse, which tracks all kinds of payments including cash and debit cards.

This year's sales are more in line with what is typical during the holiday season, however, after a surge in spending last year during the same period.

"This holiday season, the consumer showed up, spending in a deliberate manner" said Michelle Meyer, Chief Economist, Mastercard Economics Institute. "The economic backdrop remains favorable with healthy job creation and easing inflation pressures, empowering consumers to seek the goods and experiences they value most."

The number of people seeking unemployment benefits has remained very low by historical standards and employers are still having a hard time finding enough workers.

Still, sales growth was a bit lower than the 3.7 percent increase Mastercard SpendingPulse had projected in September. The data released Tuesday excludes the automotive industry and is not adjusted for inflation.

Clothing sales rose 2.4 percent, though jewelry sales fell 2 percent and electronics dipped roughly 0.4 percent. Online sales jumped 6.3 percent from a year ago and in-person spending rose a modest 2.2 percent.

Consumer spending accounts for nearly 70 percent of U.S. economic activity and economists carefully monitor how Americans spend, particularly during the holidays, to gauge how they're feeling financially.

There had been rising concern leading up to the holiday about the willingness of Americans to spend because of elevated prices for daily necessities at a time that savings have fallen and credit card delinquencies have ticked higher. In response, retailers pushed discounts on holiday merchandise earlier in October compared with a year ago. They also took a cautious approach on how much inventory to order after getting stung with overstuffed warehouses last year.



Tammy Trout is proud to welcome patients in Bluffton.

Get convenient, quality care for your whole family.

The high-quality care you need can be found right here at the PPG — Family Medicine clinic in Bluffton, where Tammy Trout, PA, is proud to welcome new patients of all ages. As a family medicine provider, Tammy will partner with you throughout your well-being journey — helping you maintain your health, working to prevent disease and caring for you when you're sick. It's expert care for the whole family, right in your community.

To schedule an appointment, call (260) 375-3670.

1169 N. Main St., Suite 5
Bluffton, IN 46714

PARKVIEW
PHYSICIANS GROUP
FAMILY MEDICINE



Tammy Trout, PA
PPG — Family Medicine

Pistons set single-season record with 27th straight loss

By DAVE HOGG
Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — The Detroit Pistons set an NBA single-season record with their 27th straight loss Tuesday night, as Cam Johnson scored 24 points and Mikal Bridges added 21 to lead the Brooklyn Nets to a 118-112 victory.

Cade Cunningham scored 41 points but the Pistons (2-28) broke a tie with the 2010-11 Cleveland Cavaliers and 2013-14 Philadelphia 76ers. The 76ers hold the overall mark at 28, a skid that started in the 2014-15 season and carried over into 2015-16.

“A lot of this load is trusted to me, on the court and in the locker room,” Cunningham said. “Every day, I try to lead the squad, and I haven’t been successful at that — 2-28. It’s only right that I speak for

it and be the face of it.”

Cunningham scored 37 in the second half and shot 15 for 21 from the field, but Bojan Bogdanovic was the only other Pistons player with more than 15. Cunningham’s teammates shot 36.2% (25 for 69), including 28.6% (6 for 21) on 3-pointers.

“You have to be real about where we are,” Pistons coach Monty Williams said. “Nobody wants something like this attached to them, and the bottom line is it is my job. Coaches

are graded on their records.”

Nic Claxton and Day’Ron Sharpe each added double-doubles for the Nets, who beat the Pistons for the second straight game.

“I didn’t sleep very well last night, anticipating how tough this game was going to be,” Nets coach Jacque Vaughn said. “Any time you play a team back-to-back like that, it is really tough to win.”

Dorian Finney-Smith’s 3-point run that put the Nets up 105-97 with 4:53 to play.

Cunningham missed a pair of free throws, but came back with a 3-pointer and a three-point play to pull Detroit within 109-106 with 1:54 left.

After Johnson’s 3-pointer, a pair of layups from Cunningham made it 112-10. Finney-Smith, though, hit a baseline 3 to put the Nets up 115-110 with 38 seconds left.

“We had a little bit of execution and composure down the stretch,” Johnson said. “It didn’t always go our way, but we were able to pull it out.”

Alec Burks missed a 3-pointer, and the Nets clinched the game from the free-throw line as fans chanted “Sell the team! Sell the team!”

Brooklyn took an 11-point lead early in the third quarter, but the

Pistons responded with an 11-0 run to tie the game at 71. Cunningham scored 18 of Detroit’s 31 points in the period, keeping Detroit within 88-85 going into the fourth.

The Pistons started the game with a 22-8 run, giving hope to a large crowd, but the Nets outscored them 53-32 in the rest of the first half.

“To have a start like that and then kind of let it go in the second quarter — that’s the quarter that put us in the hole,” Williams said. “I think we had six turnovers in the second quarter. That’s something that has plagued us all year long.”

UP NEXT

Nets: Host Milwaukee on Wednesday
Pistons: At Boston on Thursday

Judges temporarily block law letting Tennessee pick 6 of 13 on local pro sports facility board

By JONATHAN MATTISE
Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — A panel of judges has blocked a new Tennessee law that would reconfigure the group overseeing professional sports facilities in Nashville by letting state leaders pick six of its 13 board members.

Late last week, three judges agreed the law targeting the Nashville Sports Authority likely violates home rule protections in the state constitution by singling out Nashville and failing to require approval by local voters or two-thirds of the metro council. The temporary injunction blocks the law while the lawsuit by the city proceeds through court. The law would have taken effect Jan. 1.

The ruling marks a fourth court decision

against the state in the broader legal battle over laws passed by Republican legislators this year that dilute Democratic-leaning Nashville’s control, ranging from oversight of the international airport, to the size of the combined city-county metro council.

Established by city officials under a corporate charter in 1995, the Nashville Sports Authority has 13 board members picked by the city’s mayor and approved by the metro council. The new law lets the mayor retain a slim controlling majority with seven appointments, while splitting the other six picks among the House and Senate speakers and the governor.

Nashville officials have cited home rule protections in their lawsuits against several of the other new state laws that limit their

(Continued on Page A2)

Yankees trade OF Estevan Florial to Guardians for RHP Cody Morris

NEW YORK (AP) — The Yankees traded former top prospect Estevan Florial to the Cleveland Guardians on Tuesday, acquiring right-hander Cody Morris for the 26-year-old outfielder.

Florial signed with the Yankees in 2015 and was rated their top prospect in 2019 by MLB.com before dropping to sixth in 2020, 10th in 2021 and 30th in 2022.

He made his big league debut in August 2020 and has played in just 48 major league games over four seasons, hitting .209 with one homer, 11 RBIs and six stolen bases.

Florial batted .230 with eight RBIs and three steals in 19 games for the Yankees this year while hitting .284 with 28 homers, 79 RBIs and 25 stolen bases in 101 games for Triple-A Scranton/Wilkes-Barre.

Morris, 27, made his big league debut in September 2022 and had a 6.75 ERA in six appearances with the Guardians this year, striking out nine and walking six in eight innings. He averaged 95.2 mph with his fastball in the majors, also throwing a cutter, curveball and change-up.

Morris was 2-1 with a 3.23 ERA in four starts and 17 relief appearances for Triple-A Columbus and Double-A Akron this year, striking out 56 and walking 27 in 39 innings.

New York appeared to have a glut of outfielders after acquiring Juan Soto and Trent Grisham from San Diego and Alex Verdugo from Boston. The Yankees traded right-handers Michael King, Jhony Brito, Randy Vásquez and Drew Thorpe to the Padres in the Soto swap along with catcher Kyle Higashioka.

High School Calendar

WEDNESDAY, DEC 27
BOYS BASKETBALL: (New Castle Holiday Tournament) Norwell vs. Decatur Central, 12 p.m. & Norwell vs. TBD at 5:30 OR 7:30 p.m.
THURSDAY, DEC 28
BOYS BASKETBALL: (Union City Holiday Tournament) Southern Wells vs. Elwood, 12 p.m.; Bluffton vs. Eastern Greentown, 1:30 p.m.; Southern Wells vs. Union City, 3 p.m.; Bluffton vs. Randolph Southern, 7:30 p.m.
GIRLS BASKETBALL: (Noblesville Holiday Tournament) Norwell vs. Snider 11:30 a.m. & Norwell vs. TBD at 6 OR 7:30 p.m.; Randolph Southern at Southern Wells, 7:30 p.m.
WRESTLING: Southern Wells at Spartan Classic, 9 a.m.
FRIDAY, DEC 29
BOYS DIVING: Bluffton, Southern Wells at 1st Annual Holiday Tournament (Union City High School), 4:30 p.m.

WRESTLING: Southern Wells at Spartan Classic, 9 a.m.
SATURDAY, DEC 30
BOYS BASKETBALL: Norwell at Adams Central, 7:45 p.m.
GIRLS BASKETBALL: Belmont at Bluffton, 7:30 p.m.
MONDAY, JAN 1
No events scheduled
TUESDAY, JAN 2
GIRLS BASKETBALL: Norwell at Carroll, 7:30 p.m.; Southern Wells at Daleville, 7 p.m.
WEDNESDAY, JAN 3
GIRLS BASKETBALL: Bluffton at North Miami, 7:30 p.m.
WRESTLING: Bluffton at Norwell, 6:30 p.m.
THURSDAY, JAN 4
SWIMMING & DIVING (CO-ED): Norwell at East Noble, 6 p.m.; Bluffton at South Adams, 5:30 p.m.

Minshew uses playoff experience to rally Colts after another loss

By MICHAEL MAROT
AP Sports Writer

Quarterback Gardner Minshew spent the past two Januarys preparing for meaningful games with the Philadelphia Eagles.

Now, in Indianapolis, he’s one of the veterans trying to teach his mostly younger, inexperienced teammates what it takes to make a playoff push. Clearly, there’s a lot of work to do.

“You start counting wins and you start doing schedule math and you look around, it’s like, ‘Well, they lost to Carolina, and we beat the Steelers,’” Minshew said describing the results from Week 15, leading into Sunday’s 29-10 loss at Atlanta.

“Well, you’ve got to go and earn it right now. Everybody thinks you’ve got all this time, you’re going to have all these chances to make playoff runs, and it doesn’t work like that.”

Minshew speaks from experience. As a rookie in 2019, he went 6-6 as the Jaguars starter and became a fan favorite. But after starting 2020 with a 1-6 mark, Minshew was benched. He only made one more start for Jacksonville, a loss, before he was out of a job.

The quirky quarterback landed in Philadelphia, making two late-season starts in each of the Eagles’ two playoff seasons. Then this season, he’s revived his career in Indianapolis with a 6-5 record to match his career-high victory total.

But with the Colts (8-7) in the playoff hunt with two home games remaining, Minshew and his teammates know there’s no margin for error — or Indy’s playoff drought could go to three seasons.

“I feel like Gardner said it perfectly, ‘Don’t take it for granted’ being in a situation in December where you can fight for a playoff spot,” linebacker Zaire Franklin said after Sunday’s latest setback. “Don’t feel like you beat a team on paper just because you all are supposed to be better than them. It’s hard to win in this league.”

Indy learned that lesson the hard way by getting blown out in its past two road games against backup quarterbacks and teams with worse records.

On Sunday, they’ll presumably face a similar scenario when the Las Vegas Raiders (7-8) and rookie quarterback Aidan O’Connell visit Lucas Oil Stadium.

For the Colts who endured an unforgettable two-game collapse that cost them a playoff spot in 2021, which started with a home loss to the Raiders, this seems eerily familiar. The question is whether Minshew’s message will resonate in this locker room.

“We have to take advantage of (the chances) when we’ve got them,” he said.



“I’m excited to how we respond and bring it next week.”

WHAT’S WORKING

Tight ends. Indy showed how much it values this position by opening the season with four TE’s on the active roster and another on injured reserve. Each week, it seems, a different player steps into the spotlight. Last weekend, it was two guys — Kylan Granson and Will Mallory. Granson had five catches for 62 yards while Mallory had four for 47. Indy finished with 20 completions for 201 yards passing.

WHAT NEEDS HELP

Running game. The Colts must become more consistent on the ground to make the playoffs — or win a postseason game. They beat the Steelers by rushing for 170 yards then had only 92 yards rushing against Atlanta. Not surprisingly, Minshew’s best performances this season have come when the offense has been more balanced.

STOCK UP

Michael Pittman Jr. How did Indy’s top receiver improve his stock by sitting out Sunday? Without him, the Colts struggled to do much downfield even as Atlanta used more defenders against the run and crowded the receivers.

STOCK DOWN

RB Jonathan Taylor. Whether it was the Falcons defense or the 2021 NFL rushing champ showing some rust after missing the previous three games, Taylor wasn’t himself. He had 18 carries for 43 yards, just 12 more than Minshew, and had no receptions for an average of 2.4 yards per touch.

INJURIES

Pittman was initially cleared through the concussion protocol Friday only to re-enter it after he showed additional symptoms after the flight to Atlanta. His status remains the biggest question this week. Indy also will be monitoring RT Braden Smith, who has missed three straight games with a knee injury, and No. 2 RB Zack Moss, who sat out Sunday (right arm). Safety Julian Blackmon also left Sunday’s game with a shoulder injury.

KEY NUMBERS

7 — It doesn’t seem to matter what the Colts do. Beating the Steelers kept them in the AFC’s No. 7 spot. So did losing to the Falcons. And the seven-loss Colts are still in the AFC South title chase, too.

NEXT STEPS

For the second time in three weeks, Indy must move quickly beyond an inexplicably flat outing. The high stakes should add to the motivation, especially for players such as Taylor and Pittman who were around two years ago and are still seeking their first playoff win.

Taylor sparks Gophers to win over Falcons in Quick Lane Bowl

DETROIT (AP) — Freshman Darius Taylor returned from a leg injury to rush for a career-high 208 yards, and Minnesota beat Bowling Green 30-24 in the Quick Lane Bowl on Tuesday.

Minnesota (6-7), which was selected for the bowl because it had the best Academic Progress Rate among five-win teams, won its seventh consecutive bowl game overall and fifth in a row under coach P.J. Fleck.

Taylor, who had missed the Gophers’ previous five games, had 35 carries, including a 17-yard touchdown run midway through the fourth quarter that gave Minnesota a 30-17 lead. The 5-foot-11 running back, a Detroit native, averaged 176 yards during a three-game stretch in September, but had only played in one game since.

“It’s so cool to watch him come back to his home city and his home state and do what he did in front of a lot of people who came to support him,” Fleck said. “He’s a really special individual, a great young person. And he’s going to be one of the faces of this program for a long time.”

Taylor’s return was crucial for Minnesota, which had senior Cole Kramer making his first career start at quarterback after Athan Kaliakmanis entered the transfer portal. Kramer was set to

leave the program after the regular season, but stuck around even though he is planning a wedding to fiancée Katie Miller, who was in the stands Tuesday and was shown frequently on the ESPN telecast.

“We’re bowl champs with a lot of injuries,” Fleck said. “A lot of people would have folded, but this team did not, and Cole deserves a lot of credit. I’m really happy for his leadership and proud of his leadership and thankful for him.”

Kramer went 8-of-16 passing for just 26 yards, but he came through in the red zone, throwing for two touchdowns and running for another. The Gophers ran the ball 44 times for 255 yards while holding Bowling Green to 82 yards rushing.

Conor Bazalak threw for two scores and ran for one for Bowling Green (7-6), which lost the Quick Lane Bowl for the second year in a row.

“I thought both teams played extremely hard,” Bowling Green coach Scot Loeffler said. “Both teams had some adversity that (they) had to overcome with people not playing. My hat’s off to Minnesota. They were able to make a few more plays than us.”

The Falcons led 10-9 at halftime, but the Gophers took control in the third quarter. Kramer capped an 11-play, 78-yard drive by

scoring on a 1-yard sneak. Bowling Green went three-and-out, and Minnesota scored six plays later on a 7-yard pass from Kramer to Jameson Geers.

Bazalak scored on a 2-yard run to get the Falcons within six points with 2:33 remaining, but Minnesota recovered the ensuing inside kick and ran out the clock.

Bowling Green struck first on a 46-yard pass from Bazalak to Odieu Hiliaire less than a minute and a half into the game. Kramer responded with a 4-yard strike to Elijah Spencer. The 2-point conversion attempt failed.

Kramer, who had thrown one pass — which was intercepted — during the regular season, connected on his first five passes.

It was the teams’ first meeting since Bowling Green won 14-10 at Minnesota on Sept. 25, 2011. Minnesota improved to 12-12 all-time in bowls, while Bowling Green fell to 5-10.

THE TAKEAWAY

Bowling Green: The Falcons had 116 yards of offense in the first quarter — 75 on their opening drive. But they were held to 35 yards the next two quarters.

Minnesota: Taylor led the Gophers in rushing despite missing seven games.

Judges block law

(Continued from Page A1)
power. Additionally, the sports authority lawsuit says that law would further violate the state constitution by removing board members before their terms expire.
Though the new law does not specifically mention Nashville-Davidson County, the judges called it "an untenable conjecture at best" to say the state meant for the changes to apply to other counties due to the parameters included by lawmakers.
In support of the change, prominent Republican lawmakers have reasoned that the state has authorized \$500 million in bonds to help build a new \$2.1 billion domed stadium planned for the Tennessee Titans. A planned performing arts center nearby is receiving \$200

million from the state as well, House Speaker Cameron Sexton has noted.
Tim Meads, a spokesperson for the state attorney general's office, said their team is reviewing the court's decision.
Earlier this year, the Republican-dominant Legislature passed the sports authority law and a series of others targeting Nashville after city leaders spiked a proposal in 2022 to host the 2024 Republican National Convention. The exchange escalated efforts in previous years to pass laws that upended policies state Republicans didn't like in Nashville, in addition to in left-leaning Memphis.
In one of the other lawsuits filed by Nashville offi-

cials, a judicial panel ruled the state cannot enforce a new law making it easier to pass changes through the metro council to the local fairgrounds speedway, which is being considered for upgrades in hopes of drawing a NASCAR race. The state declined to appeal that ruling.
Separately, judges blocked the law cutting the metro council from 40 to 20 seats before it would have taken effect for the August elections. That court case is ongoing.
Judges halted another change that would give the state a majority of the appointments to the board overseeing Nashville International Airport. The state has appealed in that case.

Browns will try to make playoffs with new kicker, Hopkins out & QB Thompson-Robinson on IR

By TOM WITHERS
AP Sports Writer
CLEVELAND (AP) — It's only fitting the Browns will try to clinch a playoff berth with a new kicker.
Nothing has been routine this season in Cleveland.
Dustin Hopkins will miss Thursday night's game against the New York Jets — and maybe longer — because of a left hamstring injury he sustained in the first half of Sunday's win over the Houston Texans.
With a win, the Browns will make the postseason for just the second time since 2002.
Hopkins, who has been one of the NFL's most accurate kickers in his first season with the Browns (10-5), is "week to week," coach Kevin Stefanski said Tuesday. Hopkins got hurt while chasing Texans returner Dameron Pierce on a 98-yard touchdown.
Stefanski said it's too early to say if Hopkins would be back for the postseason.
The Browns have been ravaged by injuries since the opener, so losing Hopkins is just the latest challenge for Stefanski and his staff, which has spent the season plugging holes up and down the depth chart.
On Monday, the Browns worked out several kickers before signing Riley Pat-

erson. He'll take over temporarily for Hopkins, who has made 33 of 36 field goals and all eight attempts beyond 50 yards.
Patterson has appeared in 37 games for Detroit and Jacksonville. He's made 58 of 66 field-goal attempts and 87 of 90 extra points. The Lions surprisingly released him in Week 15.
"Did a nice job in his workout, obviously has production in this league in this season," Stefanski said. "So a guy we're comfortable with."
The Browns also placed rookie quarterback Dorian Thompson-Robinson on injured reserve with a hip injury sustained against the Texans. Thompson-Robinson made three starts for Cleveland, which is on its fourth starting QB (Joe Flacco) because of injuries.
Thompson-Robinson came into the locker room briefly and was using a cane to assist him while walking.
P.J. Walker was activated from the practice squad and will back up Joe Flacco, who is 3-1 as Cleveland's starter. Walker made two starts earlier this season while Deshaun Watson was dealing with a shoulder issue. Walker also came off the bench at Indianapolis after Watson got hurt in the first quarter.
Cleveland's also got

punting issues.
Corey Bojorquez injured the quadriceps in his left kicking leg on Sunday and his status for Thursday is not yet known. Bojorquez is also the Browns' holder, complicating matters.
The team signed punter Matt Haack to the practice squad as insurance in case Bojorquez can't play. Haack has played with Miami, Buffalo and Indianapolis.
On Tuesday, Patterson and Haack went to practice at Cleveland Browns Stadium so they could at least become familiar with the conditions before facing the Jets.
Stefanski said Hopkins can be a great resource in helping Patterson.
"The big thing is kicking in Cleveland is a little bit different than everywhere else," Stefanski said. "So naturally he can share all the secrets of our stadium and the wind and those type of things. That's extremely helpful to have Dustin here with Riley in that regard."
NOTES: S Juan Thornhill (calf) was back at practice. He's missed the past three games. ... WR Amari Cooper (heel) was not on the field after setting a team record with 265 yards receiving on Sunday. His injury is not considered serious.

News-Banner Scoreboard

BASKETBALL

High School

Tuesday Boys' Scores
No Games.

Tuesday Girls' Scores
No Games.

College

Men's Basketball Scores
No Games.

Women's Basketball Scores
No Games.

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

W	L	Pct	GB	
Boston	23	6	.793	—
Philadelphia	20	9	.690	3
New York	17	12	.586	6
Brooklyn	15	15	.500	8½
Toronto	11	18	.379	12

Southeast Division

W	L	Pct	GB	
Orlando	18	11	.621	—
Miami	18	12	.600	½
Atlanta	12	18	.400	6½
Charlotte	7	20	.259	10
Washington	5	24	.172	13

Central Division

W	L	Pct	GB	
Milwaukee	22	8	.733	—
Cleveland	17	13	.567	5
Indiana	15	14	.517	6½
Chicago	14	18	.438	9
Detroit	2	28	.067	20

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

W	L	Pct	GB	
Dallas	18	12	.600	—
New Orleans	17	13	.567	1
Houston	15	13	.536	2
Memphis	9	19	.321	8
San Antonio	4	25	.138	13½

Northwest Division

W	L	Pct	GB	
Minnesota	22	7	.759	—
Denver	22	10	.688	1½
Oklahoma City	19	9	.679	2½
Utah	13	18	.419	10
Portland	7	21	.250	14½

Pacific Division

W	L	Pct	GB	
Sacramento	17	11	.607	—
L.A. Clippers	17	12	.586	½
L.A. Lakers	16	15	.516	2½
Golden State	15	15	.500	3
Phoenix	14	15	.483	3½

Monday's Games

New York 129, Milwaukee 122
Denver 120, Golden State 114
Boston 126, L.A. Lakers 115
Miami 119, Philadelphia 113
Dallas 128, Phoenix 114

Tuesday's Games

Orlando 127, Washington 119
Brooklyn 118, Detroit 112
Chicago 118, Atlanta 113
Indiana 123, Houston 117
Oklahoma City 129, Minnesota 106
Utah 130, San Antonio 118
Memphis at New Orleans, late
Sacramento at Portland, late
Charlotte at L.A. Clippers, late

Wednesday's Games

Philadelphia at Orlando, 7 p.m.
Toronto at Washington, 7 p.m.
Milwaukee at Brooklyn, 7:30 p.m.
New York at Oklahoma City, 8 p.m.
Phoenix at Houston, 8 p.m.
Cleveland at Dallas, 8:30 p.m.

Thursday's Games

Detroit at Boston, 7:30 p.m.
Dallas at Minnesota, 8 p.m.
Indiana at Chicago, 8 p.m.
Utah at New Orleans, 8 p.m.
Memphis at Denver, 9 p.m.
Miami at Golden State, 10 p.m.
San Antonio at Portland, 10 p.m.
Charlotte at L.A. Lakers, 10:30 p.m.

Sun Bowl
El Paso, Texas
No. 15 Notre Dame vs. No. 21 Oregon St., 2:00 p.m.
Liberty Bowl
Memphis, Tenn.
Memphis vs. Iowa St., 3:30 p.m.
Cotton Bowl
Arlington, Texas
No. 7 Ohio St. vs. No. 9 Missouri, 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 30

Peach Bowl
Atlanta
No. 10 Penn St. vs. No. 11 Mississippi, noon
Music City Bowl
Nashville, Tenn.
Maryland vs. Auburn, 2:00 p.m.
Orange Bowl
Miami
No. 4 Florida St. vs. No. 6 Georgia, 4:00 p.m.
Arizona Bowl
Tucson, Ariz.
Toledo vs. Wyoming, 4:30 p.m.

Monday, Jan. 1

ReliaQuest Bowl
Tampa, Fla.
No. 13 LSU vs. Wisconsin, noon
Citrus Bowl
Orlando, Fla.
No. 20 Iowa vs. No. 25 Tennessee, 1:00 p.m.
Fiesta Bowl
Glendale, Ariz.
No. 8 Oregon vs. No. 18 Liberty, 1:00 p.m.
Rose Bowl
College Football Playoff Semifinal
Pasadena, Calif.
No. 1 Michigan vs. No. 5 Alabama, 5:00 p.m.
Allstate Sugar Bowl
College Football Playoff Semifinal
New Orleans
No. 2 Washington vs. No. 3 Texas, 8:45 p.m.

College

2023-24 Bowl Game

Tuesday, Dec 19

Frisco Bowl
Frisco, Texas
UTSA 35, Marshall 17
Thursday, Dec. 21
Boca Raton Bowl
Boca Raton, Fla.
USF 45, Syracuse 0
Friday, Dec. 22
Gasparilla Bowl
Tampa, Fla.
Georgia Tech 30, UCF 17

Saturday, Dec. 23

Camellia Bowl
Montgomery, Ala.
N. Illinois 21, Arkansas St. 19
Birmingham Bowl
Birmingham, Ala.
Duke 17, Troy 10
Armed Forces Bowl
Fort Worth, Texas
Air Force 31, No. 24 James Madison 21
Famous Idaho Potato Bowl
Boise, Idaho
Georgia St. 45, Utah St. 22
68 Ventures Bowl
Mobile, Ala.
South Alabama 59, Eastern Michigan 10

Tuesday, Dec. 26

Quick Lane Bowl
Detroit
Minnesota 30, Bowling Green 24
First Responder Bowl
Dallas
Texas St. 45, Rice 21
Guaranteed Rate Bowl
Phoenix
Kansas vs. UNLV, 9:00 p.m.
Military Bowl Presented
Annapolis, Md.
No. 23 Tulane vs. Virginia Tech, 2:00 p.m.
Duke's Mayo Bowl
Charlotte, N.C.
North Carolina vs. West Virginia, 5:30 p.m.
Holiday Bowl
San Diego, Calif.
No. 16 Louisville vs. Southern Cal, 8:00 p.m.
Texas Bowl
Houston
No. 22 Oklahoma St. vs. Texas A&M, 9:00 p.m.

Thursday, Dec. 28

Fenway Bowl
Boston
No. 17 SMU vs. Boston College, 11:00 a.m.
Pinstripe Bowl
New York
Rutgers vs. Miami, 2:15 p.m.
Pop-Tarts Bowl
Orlando, Fla.
No. 19 NC State vs. Kansas St., 5:45 p.m.
Alamo Bowl
San Antonio, Texas
No. 12 Oklahoma No. 14 Arizona, 9:15 p.m.

Friday, Dec. 29

Gator Bowl
Jacksonville, Fla.
Clemson vs. Kentucky, 12:00 p.m.

After wrapping up division, Lions aim for bigger goals in playoffs

By DAVE HOGG
Associated Press
DETROIT (AP) — The Detroit Lions haven't been in this situation for decades. They have already clinched their first division title in 30 years, but the opportunities ahead of them include things no Lions fans have ever imagined in the 21st Century.
"We have checked the box on one thing, and now it is on to the next one," Lions coach Dan Campbell said. "We're fighting for the No. 2 seed, you know. If we can get to the No. 1, so be it, but right now we're looking at what we can achieve on our own initiative."
At worst, the Lions will finish as the No. 3 seed in the NFC, but wins against the Dallas Cowboys and at home against the Minnesota Vikings would clinch at least the No. 2 seed.
"That's no easy task," Campbell said. "We've got to go to Dallas. They haven't lost at home in I don't know how many games, and they play really well there. It's going to be loud, but we're looking forward to it."
To get the top seed, though, the Lions need a little help. They have to win their last two and have someone beat the San Francisco 49ers.
That means Detroit's best chance at a first-round bye is in the hands of an old friend, Los Angeles Rams quarterback Matthew Stafford. The Rams and 49ers play in Week 18, and both teams could need the win.
WHAT'S WORKING
The Lions have rushed for 2,116 yards and 24 touchdowns thanks to their 1-2 combination of David Montgomery (910 yards, 11 touchdowns) and rookie Jahmyr Gibbs (872 yards, nine touchdowns, plus 51 receptions). Detroit has hit 100 yards in its past eight games and at least 140 in its past five.
Gibbs was a first-round pick, but it meant the Lions

had to deal D'Andre Swift for a fourth-round pick, but he has become a key player-maker in the Lions offense.
WHAT NEEDS HELP
Detroit still has issues in the secondary. Nick Mullins threw for 411 yards and two touchdowns at 18.7 yards per completion on Sunday, and a more polished quarterback could have done even more damage. In the last minute, Mullins had Justin Jefferson open for what could have been the winning touchdown, but he couldn't make the throw.
STOCK UP
S Ifeatu Melifonwu stepped up against the Vikings. He had two sacks, two tackles for loss and jumped in front of Jefferson for the game-clinching interception.
STOCK DOWN
DE Aidan Hutchinson hit Mullins four times on Sunday, but didn't finish any of the plays. He has 6

1/2 sacks, but only two have come in the past 10 games.
INJURIES
Campbell said Tuesday that pass-rush specialist James Houston could return to practice this week. He's been out since breaking his ankle in Week 2, but could give Detroit's front seven a boost in the last two regular-season games or their first-round playoff matchup.
KEY NUMBER
30 — years since the Lions last celebrated a division title. That was an NFC Central title at the Pontiac Silverdome. The Lions will be hosting their first playoff game at Ford Field, their home stadium since 2002.
NEXT STEPS
Put the celebrations in the rearview mirror and get ready for the Cowboys. A victory in Dallas could help make the Lions a serious contender in the NFC.

FOOTBALL

NFL

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
x-Miami	11	4	0	733	463	314
Buffalo	9	6	0	600	403	276
e-N.Y. Jets	6	9	0	400	231	315
e-New England	4	11	0	267	212	322

South

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Houston	8	7	0	533	328	331
Indianapolis	8	7	0	533	354	372
Jacksonville	8	7	0	533	331	343
e-Tennessee	5	10	0	333	274	321

North

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
x-Baltimore	12	3	0	800	417	244
Cleveland	10	5	0	667	345	311
Cincinnati	8	7	0	533	318	345
Pittsburgh	8	7	0	533	257	291

West

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Kansas City	9	6	0	600	333	265
Denver	7	8	0	467	327	377
Las Vegas	7	8	0	467	285	294
e-L.A. Chargers	5	10	0	333	325	369

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
x-Philadelphia	11	4	0	733	392	366
x-Dallas	10	5	0	667	451	286
e-N.Y. Giants	5	10	0	333	214	371
e-Washington	4	11	0	267	309	453

South

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Tampa Bay	8	7	0	533	326	302
Atlanta	7	8	0	467	287	288
New Orleans	7	8	0	467	331	297
e-Carolina	2	13	0	133	236	381

North

FCC (Adams), LLC

HIRING Full-time

\$18.93/hour and up to \$21.01/hour

- Apply at www.fcc-na.com
- Apply in person
- Apply on Indeed

Scan our QR Code

Text our recruiters!
1-260-849-2305

FCC (Adams) is a World Leader in clutch technology.
-An equal opportunity employer-

STEFFEN GROUP

REAL ESTATE & AUCTIONS

SERVING WELLS COUNTY

10 YEARS

EXPERIENCE MATTERS

NICK HUFFMAN

REAL ESTATE BROKER & AUCTIONEER

260.827.8255

THE HIDEAWAY BEER & BOURBON

THURSDAY - Dollar Off Drinks
(Excludes Pop)

WEDNESDAY - KARAOKE

FRI. & SAT. - Live Music

Follow us on Facebook for our Events.

123 S JOHNSON ST. • 824-0455

WE WELCOME YOU!

Friday & Saturday Bands Weekly Drink Specials and Events!

Sundays Biscuits & Gravy 9am - until GONE!

Supporting family while on a budget

Dear Annie: I am the middle child of a family that once was very close. We are all grown up now, and our parents have passed away.

I believe it is up to us to keep our family together, but I'm having a lot of trouble with my youngest brother.

One time recently, he stayed over at my house and slept on the pullout couch rather than in the bedroom because my son was visiting at the time — staying with his children — and they had the spare room.

That was the reasoning he gave me. So I am no longer invited to anything the girls are in, including birthdays and Christmas parties at his house, but everyone else is.

Dear Sibling: Your brother is being unreasonable, but he feels wounded and protective of his own children. Start by telling him how much you love and care for him and his children.

Dear Annie: Our 23-year-old granddaughter and her son live with my husband and me. Her boy is 3, and she moved into our house seven months before his birth.

We are 79 and 75, and neither one of us is in the best of health. Plus, we are

on a fixed income. Yet we have completely supported them for three years.

Our granddaughter has worked on and off during that time, but she has never held a steady "career-oriented" job until recently.

I want for her to be on her own, but because of the child, I can't throw her out. I have tried tough love, threats, everything I can think of.

Dear Ailing Grandma: You and your husband have been very generous with your granddaughter and great-grandson. Now that she has secured a steady, career-oriented job, offer her encouragement and praise.

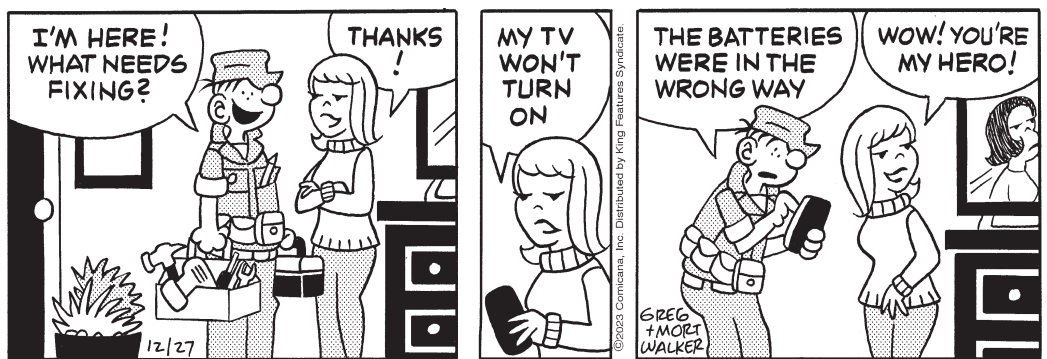
Where is the boy's father? You might help out by contacting a legal aid society that will track him down and force him to pay some child support.

Send your questions for Annie Lane to dearannie@creators.com. © 2023 CREATORS.COM

Dear Annie by Annie Lane



BEETLE BAILEY



BLONDIE



ZITS



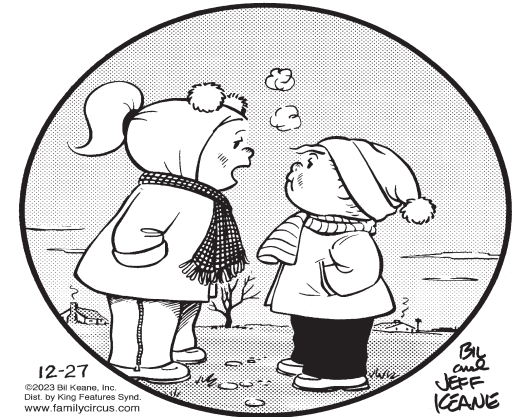
CRANKSHAFT



THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane

The LOCKHORNS



My Answer

By Dr. Billy Graham



Forgiveness is one of the most beautiful words in the human vocabulary

people practice forgiveness, sweetness replaces harshness.

Some people refuse to accept responsibility for what they have done, always blaming someone else for what happened.

It's not always possible to mend a broken relationship. We must be willing to go the extra mile in an effort to be reconciled with someone who has turned against us, and we should pray for them with a sincere heart.

A marvelous example of this is revealed in the life of Joseph. His brothers were jealous of him and sold him into slavery.

50, we see that Joseph did not hold it against them. The Lord used Joseph to save his family, and even a whole nation.

If we cannot find it in our hearts to forgive family and friends, we will never exhibit this attribute of Christ with others and know God's blessings.

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

©2023 Billy Graham Literary Trust. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

"When your hands and feet feel very cold that's because of the chill factory."

"WE STOPPED ARGUING ABOUT MONEY BECAUSE THE ISSUE WAS MOOT."

BUY IT SELL IT RENT IT FIND IT FILL IT GET IT DO IT IN THE CLASSIFIEDS! Place Your Ad 24/7/365! www.news-banner.com

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words.

Television schedule grid with columns for time slots (12:27, 1M, 4, D1, D2, 5 PM, 5:30, 6 PM, 6:30, 7 PM, 7:30, 8 PM, 8:30, 9 PM, 9:30, 10 PM, 10:30, 11 PM, 11:30, 12 AM, 12:30) and rows for various channels.

Continuation of the crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-41.

The Classifieds

Place Your Ad 24/7: GO TO www.news-banner.com AND CLICK ON "Classifieds"

OR CALL 824-0224 MON-FRI 8-5 • TOLLFREE 800-579-7476 • FAX 824-0700

WE ACCEPT



SEE your ad published every day in Wells County homes ...

All ads are searchable at classifieds.news-banner.com...

SUDOKU

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

King Classic Sudoku

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

©2023 King Features Syndicate, Inc.

Difficulty: ★★★

12/27

Services

GUARANTEED LIFE INSURANCE! (Ages 50 to 80). No medical exam. Affordable premiums never increase. Benefits never decrease. Policy will only be cancelled for non-payment. 833-535-1043 (I)

EMPLOYMENT

Help Wanted

CNC MACHINIST Hi, tired of working in a dead end job? Running the same machine, making the same part? Feel like you're not getting any better? Not learning any new machining skills? Take this opportunity to become a master machinist. Learn to operate multiple machines, make precision component parts, in our AS100 Certified Job Shop. Perhaps you retired too early and are looking for a part time position we are offering this too.
Email: jturnbull@dedricktool.com
260 824-3334

Help Wanted

THE TOWN OF Warren is now accepting applications for a general labor position serving all departments of the Town - Water, Electric, Sewer, Street, and Park as well as any other duties which could/would be assigned under Town operations. Prior Municipal work experience, background in electric work, and/or licensing preferred but not necessary to be considered. Applications can be found online at warrenindiana.us or picked up at Town Hall, 132 N. Wayne Street and will be accepted until January 15, 2024. Call 260-375-2656 for further information. Town of Warren, Indiana, is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

RENTALS

Office Space Rental

GREAT LOCATION

MAKE YOUR AD STAND OUT! Add a graphic or photo for an additional \$5. Contact the Bluffton News-Banner office, 125 N. Johnson St., 824-0224, or submit online at www.news-banner.com and click on classifieds.

VEHICLES

Auto/Trucks

2010 CHEVROLET MALIBU White 4 door 4 cyl black interior \$2,500.00 OBO 260-273-3393 rmoon1423@gmail.com

HELOISE HINT: Do not be an aggressive driver. Rapid accelerating, braking and speeding all waste gas and significantly lower your gas mileage. Email HELOISE@Heloise.com.

LINE CLASSIFIED AD DEADLINES:

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

December

GOODS & SERVICES DIRECTORY

Camelot Auto LLC
Get Holiday Cash NOW
260-307-1302
We Buy Junk Cars

Wickey Construction
Free Estimate on Metal Roofing & More
260-273-9776

As a resident of the Wells County community for decades, Attorney Gerret J. Swearingen, has devoted his legal practice to assisting clients in preserving the family assets from the high cost of Nursing Home and In-Home Healthcare.
As your guide through the "Medicaid Planning" process, Swearingen Elder Law will provide the right path to both protect your life savings and receive the quality of care we all deserve.
-OSSIAN-
1645 Hillcrest Dr., Suite 2A
Ossian, IN 46777
Attorney Gerret J. Swearingen

SWEARINGEN ELDER LAW
• Medicaid Planning • In-Home Healthcare Planning
• Durable Power of Attorney • Wills, Living Wills, & Advance Healthcare Directives
• Estate Planning & Deeds • Special Needs Trusts
• Long Term Care Planning
(260) 888-9256
FREE INITIAL CONSULTATION!

AMISH CREW
will do roofing, siding, remodeling, pole barns. Specializing in redoing old barns. Free estimates. Call 260-438-2508

STOR-N-GO STORAGE UNITS
2740 E. 200 N. • Bluffton, IN • 260.273.8345
with Security Cameras

Primary Contracting, LLC 260-223-4276 Ask for Edwin Wickey
House's and barns - Metal or Shingle Roofs
Decks or New Construction Additions Pole Barns
Free Estimates and Inspections for remodeling
AN MUNCH MORE! COMPETITIVE RATES!

Home Remodel and Repair
Locally Owned
Repair Bowed Basement Walls
Foundations repaired
Floor joist repair or replaced
Concrete • Doors
Windows • Painting
Tile • Small Jobs Welcome
Text me at 260-301-1269
Jim Baker

Sure-Flo Seamless Gutters
5" & 6" Continuous Gutters
Leaf Protection Systems
Large Color Selection - FREE Estimates
260-888-5062
www.seamlessgutter.net

Genesis Pest Services
Locally Owned by Geoffrey Horner
260-227-0742
geoff@genesispestservices.com

YOUR LOCAL AGENTS, HERE FOR YOU.
INDIANA FARM BUREAU INSURANCE
BLUFFTON OFFICE: (260) 824-2234
1307 Baker Place • Bluffton, IN
Mike Lampton | Michael Towne | Jacob Duncan

Jerry Flack & Associates
Jerry Flack & Julie Myers
Retirement Advisors
A Senior Citizen Answers Our Phone!
OFFICE 260-824-1618 • Corner of Main & Market • Bluffton, IN
ASSISTING IN:
• FREE Medicare Supplement Comparison
• Life Planning
• Safe Money Ideas
• Dental - Vision - Hearing

JC'S GARAGE DOOR SALES & SERVICE
All makes & models • broken springs & cables
Owner: James Fisher • Sales: Carl Fisher
"50 Years of Combined Experience"
Call us at 824-3262

A-1 U-Stor
Safe & Secure Self Storage
824-1846
• Safety Lighting • Clean Units
• 24 Hr. Access
• Video Cameras
www.a1-ustor.com
After hours & Saturdays
Call 273-9678 or 824-4782
In Monroe at corner of U.S. 27 and S.R. 124
Office at 1180 N. Main, Bluffton

MOVING? DOWNSIZING SHORT ON SPACE?
South Side Storage Poneto, IN
260-273-7946
312 W. St. Rd. 218
Jim Ameter

The HIDEAWAY BEERBOURBON
THURSDAY - Dollar Off Drinks (Excludes Pop)
WEDNESDAY - KARAOKE
FRI. & SAT. - Live Music
Follow us on Facebook for our Events.
123 S JOHNSON ST. • 824-0455

We Carry Prevagen and CBD Oil!
R Warren Pharmacy
(260)375-2135
Nature's Sunshine Distributor
222 N. Wayne St., Warren • 1-800-895-7035
Terry Daniels, Pharmacist • Melinda Daniels, RN

LANCASTER Senior Apartments
1800 S. Wayne St. | Bluffton
• 1 & 2 Bedrooms
• Maintenance Free
• All Ground-Level
• Private Entrances
• Water Included
260 824-5280
TDD: 7-1-1
For those 62+ or disabled, regardless of age.

For as little as ... **\$187** PER ISSUE
YOUR BUSINESS IN THE NEWS-BANNER Every Day!
Call 824-0224 or 622-4108
Jan. deadline is Tues., Dec. 26!

Zap Electric, Inc.
260-824-2927
Commercial-Industrial-Residential
24 Hr. Emergency Service
Charles Miller-Electrician
1233 W. Cherry St., Bluffton
FREE Estimates

Public Notice
NOTICE TO TAXPAYERS OF ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS
Notice is hereby given to the Taxpayers of the City of Bluffton, Wells County, Indiana, that the Common Council of said City will, at the Council Chambers, 128 East Market Street, Bluffton, Indiana, meet on the 16th day of January, 2024 at 5:30 o'clock P.M., to consider the following additional appropriations in excess of the 2024 budget.
Community Crossings Grant Fund \$1,973,365.92
APPROPRIATE TO:
Community Crossings Grant Budget 361 Paving/ADA curb \$1,973,365.92
Taxpayers appearing at said meeting shall have the right to be heard. The additional appropriations as finally made will be automatically referred to the Department of Local Government Finance. The Department will make a written determination as to the sufficiency of funds to support the appropriations made within fifteen (15) days of receipt of a Certified Copy of the action taken.
Tamara D. Runyon, IAMC, CMC, CPFA
City Clerk Treasurer
nb 12/27
hspaxlp

FOR SALE

Miscellaneous

EVEREST VX3 ICE & WATER VENDING MACHINE This Everest VX3 water/ice vending machine is the perfect addition to any business looking to boost their profits. With the ability to dispense both water and ice, this unit is sure to be a hit with customers. The machine is in great working condition and has been slightly used, making it a cost-effective option for those looking to invest in a vending machine. This unit is made in the United States and comes with a unit quantity of 1. Included is an all season insulation package, ice shield ozone disinfection, and cold fusion energy recovery. It is perfect for placement in other beverage and snack vending locations, as well as in restaurant and food service settings. Don't miss out on the opportunity to make extra money with this Everest VX3 vending machine. \$45,000.00 260-273-7020 glacierpure@outlook.com

Home Furnishings



ESTATE WASHER AND DRYER Excellent condition, \$75 each, 260-224-2685.

Lottery Numbers

Tuesday's Drawings HOOSIER LOTTERY
Cash 5 — 10-20-34-36-41
Cash4Life — 03-33-36-44-51, Cash Ball: 04
Quick Draw Midday — 02-08-12-15-18-19-34-49-51-52-54-55-57-58-63-68-69-73-75-80, BE: 08
Daily Three-Midday — 09-04-01, SB: 01
Daily Three-Evening — 08-08-08, SB: 05
Daily Four-Midday — 04-02-02-06, SB: 01
Daily Four-Evening — 04-00-03-02, SB: 05
Quick Draw Evening — 02-05-07-10-14-22-37-43-49-51-52-53-57-59-62-66-68-71-74-80, BE: 52
Hoosier Lotto — Estimated jackpot (for Wednesday): \$1.8 million
MEGA MILLIONS — 08-10-22-58-64; Mega Ball: 21; Megaplier: 3X.
POWERBALL — Estimated jackpot (for Wednesday): \$685 million

SUDOKU ANSWER

Difficulty: ★★★

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

SERVICES

Services

MARV'S CONSTRUCTION
Room additions, fix old saggy floors, all types remodeling. Redo bathrooms, old foundation repairs. Marv Schwartz: 260-525-8877.

GIVE A GREAT GIFT this Season. Send 100% guaranteed, delivered-to-the-door Omaha Steaks! This package comes with 8 FREE PureGround Filet Mignon Burgers! Order The Butcher's Deluxe Package! ONLY \$99.99. Call 1-833-498-2009 and mention code 74222BRM or visit www.omahasteaks.com/Deluxe8625 (I)

Public Sale Calendar

BIDDING STARTS CLOSING DECEMBER 27 - 10 a.m. EST - Whites Meat Market, owner. Complete liquidation. Meat saws, scales, display coolers, retail shelving, stainless sinks and tables, Herring Hall Marvin safe and much more! Auction pick up Dec. 29, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. EST, 46 W 400 S #1, Kokomo, IN. *Krueckeberg Auction & Realty LLC*, 260-724-7402, Kjauction.com.
DECEMBER 31-JANUARY 7 - Estate of Mary Lynn Lautzenheiser, seller. Personal property online only auction. John Deere mower, lawn & garden, furniture, Christmas, books, household. Open houses: Jan. 4 from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. and Jan. 6 from 10 a.m. to noon, 4917 E 100 N., Bluffton, IN. Isaac Stoller, sale manager, *The Steffen Group Inc.*, <http://www.steffengrp.com>, 260-824-3006.
BIDDING ENDS JANUARY 1 - Online only auction - Various consignors, seller. Modeline MCM floor & table lamps and Art Nuevo, Presidential collection, advertising, toys, early Moxie thermometer, 25+ Nativity scenes, antiques, vintage primitives, artifacts, trains, Fenton, Haviland & Franciscan china, antique furniture, military items, salesman samples and miniatures, coins & currency. Preview: Dec. 26 from 3 p.m.-6 p.m. and Dec. 28 from 3 p.m.-6 p.m., 102 South Jefferson, Ossian. Sale manager, Rod Fetters, *The Steffen Group Inc.*, www.steffengrp.com, 260-824-3006.
JANUARY 11 - 6 p.m. - Estate of Mary Lynn Lautzenheiser, seller. 4917 E. 100 N., Bluffton, IN. One-of-a-kind property w/ quick access to Bluffton, Decatur, Fort Wayne. Main home was once township school building, and has covered porch walk through to previous dance studio that has potential to be fourth living unit. Property also offers detached two car garage and two-unit apartment building. Open houses: Jan. 4 from 4-6 p.m., Jan. 6 from 10 a.m.-noon. Isaac Stoller, sale manager, *The Steffen Group Inc.*, <http://www.steffengrp.com>, 260-824-3006.
JANUARY 12 - 10 a.m. - Secured creditors & various consignors, owners. 815 Adams St., Decatur. Online only truck and equipment auction. Online bidding only. Offering 500+ lots! 2012-2014 Freightliner M2106 box trucks, dump trucks, day cabs, sleepers, utility trucks, bucket trucks, utility & semi trailers, SUV's, pickup trucks, 250+ various skid steer attachments, various truck parts, fencing, work benches, tool boxes and much more! Accepting consignments! *Krueckeberg Auction & Realty LLC*, 260-724-7402, Kjauction.com.
BIDDING NOW OPEN AND STARTS CLOSING JANUARY 17 - 6 p.m. EST. - Gary Meyer, owner. Online only commercial real estate auction! 1,376 sq. feet building, 2 bay service area, 15'x16' office space, paved parking lot, .46 acre triangle lot located on N. Main Street, (Hwy. 27)! Zoned: Commercial. Year built: 1950. Wabash Township, Section 29, Adams County, Indiana, South Adams School Corp. Auction preview Jan. 8, 4-5 p.m. or by appointment, 617 N. Main St., Geneva. *Krueckeberg Auction & Realty LLC*, 260-724-7402, Kjauction.com.
JANUARY 23 - 2-6 p.m. ET - Online - Farm: Susan Dunn Estate. Property Location: Three miles southeast of Markle, IN and Wells Co., Rockcreek Twp. 207.3+/- total acres, high quality farmland, mostly tillable. Tracts 1 & 2: Located on both sides of 200 N between 200 W and 300 W. Tract 3: Located at intersection of 300 N and 500 W. tract 1: 19.83+/- acres. Tract 2: 110+/- acres. Tract 3: 77.47+/- acres. *Halderman Real Estate & Farm Management*, 800-424-2324, halderman.com, Rick Johnloz, 260-827-8181.