

The News - Banner

www.News-Banner.com

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2023

BLUFFTON, INDIANA • Wells County's Hometown Connection

\$1.00

A taxing review

Will Indiana's income tax go away? What would replace it? Answers are being sought by interim legislative task force led by local state senator

By MARK MILLER

While the common perception may have been that the State and Local Tax Review Task Force was created during the 2023 Indiana legislative session to endorse a plan to eliminate Indiana's personal income taxes, it's chairman, State Sen. Travis Holdman, says it was more of a question.

He frames that as "Could we get rid of the state income tax in order to be more competitive?" Which led legislative leaders to broaden the scope of the ad-hoc committee.

"It's been 20 years since there's been any kind of a holistic review of Indiana's tax structure," the Wells County Republican and Majority Caucus Chair said. Hence the series of hearings that began in August and will continue throughout 2024 is putting everything up for review. "It's all on the table," he said, "property taxes, corporate, sales, and income taxes."

Nonetheless, Holdman does not hide his preference that the state at least sets a goal to eliminate the personal income tax.

What is important, he says, is that "we signal to people that we are moving in that

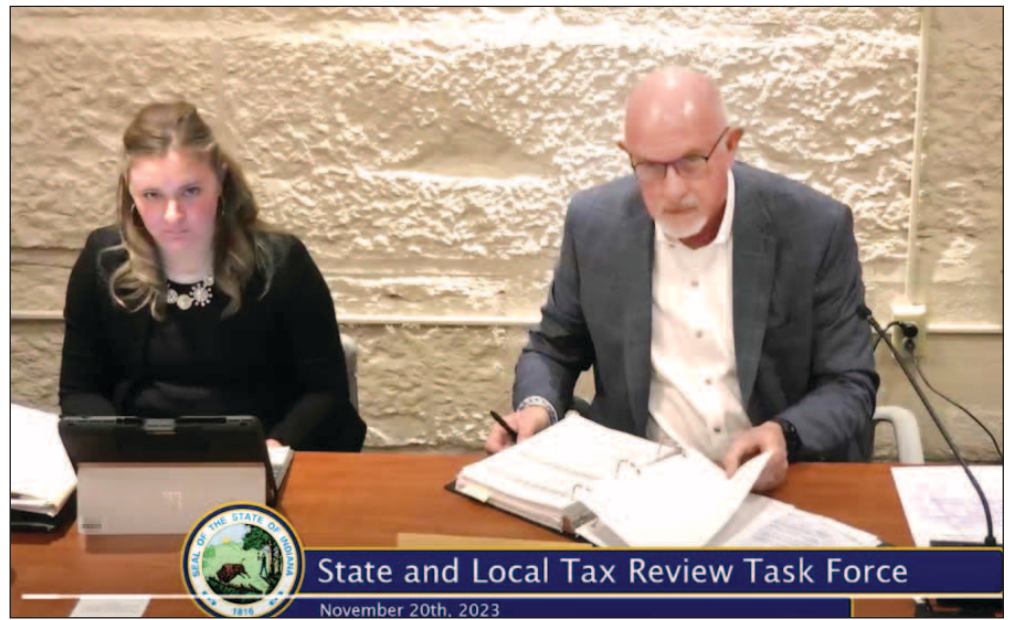
direction, and to businesses looking to relocate that we are setting a goal for ourselves to get there. We may not ever reach zero percent but at least we continue to be competitive with other states throughout the country, many of which are targeting a zero-percent income tax."

The Task Force members include Holdman, Rep. Jeffery Thompson (R), Sen. Ryan Mishler (R), Sen. Eddie Melton (D), Sen. Fady Qaddoura (D), Rep. Jack Jordan (R), Rep. Edward DeLaney (D), and Rep. Gregory Porter (D). The Task Force also has four non-legislature members, Dan Huge, public finance director of the Indiana Finance Authority; Zac Jackson, director of the Budget Agency, Cris Johnston, director of the Office of Management and Budget; and Juston Ross, state educational institution economist. As vice-chair, Rep. Thompson will assume leadership of the Task Force after the group's January meeting.

Although reluctant to take the credit, the second-term senator who represents all of Wells County as well as Adams, Jay and Blackford counties and a small portion of



State Sen. Travis Holdman



Wells County's State Senator Travis Holdman, at right, opens the Nov. 20 meeting of the State and Local Tax Review Task Force in a basement hearing room of the Indiana Statehouse. At left is Krista Ricci, the senior fiscal analyst for the Senate. This image was taken from the live stream of that hearing. All of the hearings are archived and can be viewed at <https://bit.ly/SALTR23>.

Allen County, was a leader in creating the joint study committee.

"A fellow legislator asked me why we were doing this," he explained. Indiana has worked its way up to being a leader in "friendly tax climates" in the nation. According to the Tax Foundation, a nonpartisan think tank, Indiana has the 10th-best business tax climate in the nation.

"But we used to be ninth," Holdman pointed out. The Indiana state income tax rate has been reduced over the past several years and is on track to be set at 2.9 percent in 2026. Meanwhile, other states have voted

to further reduce their rates.

"If we stand still, we will get passed by other states," he continues. "We have to keep moving. But we're not going to get there overnight," he continued. "It will be a long process."

In their testimony to the Task Force in October, Tax Foundation representatives Audrey Yushkov and Katherine Loughead — both of whom have strong Hoosier backgrounds — told the group that "the state and local tax landscape is rapidly changing and becoming increasingly competitive, and

(Continued on Page 2)

Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month

Hundreds of deaths predicted this holiday season in the United States

By SYDNEY KENT

The National Safety Council estimates approximately 375 people will die on U.S. roadways this New Year's Day holiday period.

The Wells County Sheriff's Department has offered a preemptive reminder: "We're going to be anywhere, 24/7, 365, looking for impaired drivers."

"All of our units are looking out," Deputy James Agler advised. "We especially have our nose in the air right now, as we know it is occurring more during this season. We consistently see an influx of drinking and driving around the holidays and end of the year."

On a state level, Indiana has experienced a 22 percent increase in impaired-driving fatalities from 2019 to 2022. According to the Wells County Prosecutor, Colin Andrews, 102 individuals were arrested for driving under the influence in 2022. As of last week, the county has already met that number.

"Drunk driving is the highest frequency arrest we make in Wells County," Agler continued. "We are not special in

that way, many other countries make frequent arrests for driving under the influence as well. Every deputy's goal when we're patrolling — although yes, we do look for speeding and lack of headlights — our primary goal is to make sure everyone on the roadway is safe to be on the roadway."

SAMHSA advises parents and caregivers to consider safe socialization through open communication about alcohol and drug use, particularly when combined with driving, setting curfews, and ensuring teens are celebrating in substance-free environments. Those who may consume alcohol are encouraged to select a designated driver rather than waiting for alcohol or drugs to lose their effect.

"If you have to get sober before you get behind the wheel, you're too drunk," Agler emphasized. "Always get a designated driver. Don't drink and drive buzzed. Just don't do it."

The News-Banner will continue to monitor and analyze data related to impaired driving incidents.

sydney@news-banner.com

Lawyers begin prosecuting cases of sexual assault, other crimes in U.S. military

By LOLITA C. BALDOR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. military on Thursday opened a new chapter in how it investigates and prosecutes cases of sexual assault and other major crimes, putting independent lawyers in charge of those decisions and sidelining commanders after years of pressure from Congress.

The change, long resisted by Pentagon leaders, was finally forced by frustrated members of Congress who believed that too often commanders would fail to take victims' complaints seriously or would try to protect alleged perpetrators in their units.

The new law was fueled by a persistent increase in sexual assaults and harassment across the military. The Air Force, the Marine Corps and the Navy all saw reported sexual assaults go up last year, but a sharp 9 percent drop in reports from the Army — the largest military service — drove the overall number down. In 2021, reported assaults spiked by 13 percent.

Under the law, new special counsels will have the authority to make prosecution decisions on a number of major crimes, including murder, rape and several other sexual assault-related offenses, kidnapping, domestic violence, making or possessing child sexual abuse images, stalking and retaliation.

In a statement, Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III called it "the most important reform to our military justice system since the creation of the Uniform Code of Military Justice in 1950."

It's unclear, however, what impact the change will have on the broader problem of sexual misconduct in the military, including if it will trigger an increase in prosecutions and, if so, whether that will have any deterrent effect.

Senior officials from the military services who are familiar with the new program said they already have more than 160 certified special trial counsels who will take over the prosecution decisions as of Thursday. Many of those lawyers, however, have already been involved, providing advice and support for months on cases that are underway. The officials spoke to reporters on the condition of anonymity to discuss the new program under rules set by the Defense Department.

As of Thursday, the special trial counsels will have sole authority to make prosecution decisions on new cases involving the major crimes. Any advice on already existing cases is nonbinding, the officials said.

According to the officials, the Army will have 65 certified trial counsels, the Air Force will have 40, the Marine Corps will

(Continued on Page 2)

Israeli air, ground strikes across Gaza kill dozens of Palestinians

By WAFAA SHURAF, SAMY MAGDY and JACK JEFFERY
Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israeli forces bombarded cities, towns and refugee camps across Gaza on Thursday, killing dozens of people in a widening air and ground offensive against Hamas that has forced thousands more to flee from homes and shelters in recent days.

The war has already killed over 20,000 Palestinians and driven

around 85 percent of the population of 2.3 million from their homes. Much of northern Gaza has been leveled, and it has been largely depopulated and isolated from the rest of the territory for weeks. Many fear a similar fate awaits the south as Israel expands its offensive to most of the tiny enclave.

Israel has vowed to dismantle Hamas — which is still putting up stiff resistance, even in the north — and bring back more than 100 hostages still held by the militants

after their Oct. 7 attack into southern Israel. The assault killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians.

Israeli officials have brushed off international calls for a ceasefire, saying it would amount to a victory for Hamas.

The United States — while providing crucial support for the offensive — has urged Israel to take greater measures to spare civilians and allow in more aid. But humanitarian workers say the amount of food, fuel and medical supplies entering is still far below

what is needed, and 1 in 4 Palestinians in Gaza is starving, according to U.N. officials.

STRIKES FROM NORTH TO SOUTH

An Israeli airstrike on a home in the northern town of Beit Lahiyeh — one of the first targets of the ground invasion that began in October — buried at least 21 people, including women and children, according to a family member.

Bassel Kheir al-Din, a journalist with a local TV station, said the

strike flattened his family house and severely damaged three neighboring homes. He said 12 members of his family — including three children ages 2, 7 and 8 — were buried and presumed dead, and that nine neighbors were missing.

In central Gaza, Israeli warplanes and artillery pounded the built-up Bureij and Nuseirat refugee camps, leveling buildings, residents said. Israel said this week it would expand its ground offen-

(Continued on Page 2)

Inside

Local/Area

Obituaries 3
Police Notebook . . . 3

Opinion

Marc Thiessen 4

Also...

Sports 6-7
Classifieds 7
Diversions 5

Outside



Drizzling rain today, rain and wind tonight

Today	Saturday	Sunday
High 41	High 43	High 41
Low 32	Low 31	Low 27

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. 49

FRIDAY
December 29, 2023

CLASSIC CAR
Mint condition. Garage kept. Runs great. Must see! Call 555-3210

Find that car you've always wanted in the Classifieds.

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



State income tax

(Continued from Page 1)

states that stand still risk falling behind." They noted that while Indiana's tax climate leads the Midwest, several of the neighboring states either have reduced their income tax rates or plan to.

Holdman notes that it is important to have a balanced tax climate that attracts both businesses and individuals. With people having more flexibility in where and how they work, states with no incomes taxes have generally seen significant migration from high-tax-climate states. He discusses a "Make My Move" initiative aimed at attracting higher-paying jobs and offering a \$5,000 stipend to attract people to Northeast Indiana.

"But we have to give equal attention to controlling expenditures and costs," Holdman added.

Since income taxes have accounted for about one-third of Indiana's general fund revenue since at least 2015, that revenue would have to come from other sources. Holdman sees sales tax as the primary target — "broadening the base," as he puts it, which means taxing groceries and services, along with a rate increase.

According to the Tax Foundation's presentation, Indiana's 7-percent sales tax is tied with Mississippi, Rhode Island and Tennessee as the second-highest state sales tax in the nation. (California leads the nation with a 7.25-percent.) However, since Indiana currently does not authorize its localities to impose local sales taxes, Indiana's combined state and local average sales tax is more competitive, placing Hoosiers pretty much in the middle of the pack.

Currently, groceries and many personal services are exempt from the sales tax. Holdman, recognizing that taxing groceries is perceived as "regressive" — putting more of a burden on lower income households — says the legislature would "consider ways to alleviate the impact on lower income people" if that proposal would be pursued.

The Tax Foundation study noted that "services have grown considerably as a share of personal consumption expenditures." It had been less than 40 percent in the early 1950s but is now more than 65 percent.



Two of the speakers at the Nov. 20 meeting of the Indiana Legislature's State and Local Tax Review Task Force took different approaches. Above left is Grover Norquist of the Americans for Tax Reform, an activist organization that advocates smaller government with minimal taxation. He shared the experiences of other states, cautioning Indiana to not move too quickly. Ultimately, he encouraged legislators to commit to a "zero income tax plan" in the long run. At right is Dr. Larry DeBoer, a Purdue University economist who gave a detailed overview of Indiana's property tax system. At one point he referred to it as "terrifically complex," but also shared that Indiana is not unique in that regard. DeBoer has developed a statewide reputation as a property tax expert who regularly interjects humor into his presentations. After he concluded, one task force member asked if he had any recommendations. "We don't do that," he replied. "We just give you the data and options. However, a little simplicity is in order but I have to tell you that the complexities of property taxes has kept me employed for 40 years."

The result is "the (sales) tax base has become narrower in almost every state," including Indiana.

The Tax Foundation's presentation also noted that Indiana's flat 4.9 percent corporate income tax "is already one of the lowest in the nation ... (and) is highly competitive with its Midwestern neighbors."

"I think we need to take hard look at the business personal property tax and set a path to eliminate the 30 percent floor," Holdman added. Indiana, he continued, has the highest floor for states that have a floor on valuation of the business personal property tax.

Meanwhile, the Indiana Chamber of Commerce is doing "a comprehensive study," Holdman shared. "They hired a national accounting firm to help with the research." Holdman called their effort a "deep dive into Indiana tax policies, but they will also look at cost controls and state spending."

The group's earlier hearings were dominated by presentations on the state's financial structures and funding processes while the specific tax discussions in October and November have focused primarily on income tax issues. Holdman expects

the next hearing, scheduled for Jan. 10 before the 2024 legislative session begins, will be focused on property taxes.

This is an area in which Holdman is focused on costs controls.

"The property tax structure needs to be cleaned up with an eye to controlling spending at the local level," he explained, "and being fair to all sectors. Schools should likely expect a referendum on all requests to spend above the tax caps." He also believes that controlling property taxes for Hoosiers age 65 and over is important.

The options for how property taxes fit into the state's overall tax climate and how they might be tweaked to improve the goal of a "friendly tax climate" gets into the property tax complexities. The best example of that might be the Maximum Levy Growth Quotient, which is a state-mandated limit on how much local property tax levies can grow each year. That is now capped at four percent.

"We're trying to come up with a new formula" as to how the MLGQ is determined, Holdman explained.

It is currently based on a six-year rolling average of

non-farm income, "which makes no sense to me. That is an ability-to-pay formula when the property tax is not (an ability-to-pay tax). It's a wealth tax. It's based on most people's primary asset. So we have a clash there."

Generally speaking, Holdman has a "so far so good" opinion of his interim effort.

"One of my goals was to make 'subject-matter experts' of the legislative body of (tax policies), which I think we're doing." He referenced several legislators not on the task force who have sat in on the hearings and several others who are serving on "break-out" groups that are studying specific areas of the tax structure. He is looking forward to the April meeting when some those break-out study groups are scheduled to come back with some recommendations; the Indiana Chamber study should be finished by then.

"I think, so far, we've accomplished a lot of what we set out to do," mostly by doing research, he continued. "Hopefully, we can set a long-term goal of eliminating the individual income tax which may take 10-12 years to get there."

miller@news-banner.com

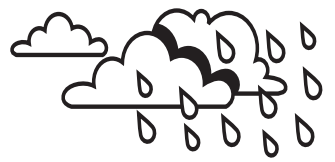
Weather

Friday, December 29, 2023

(24-hour observations at 9:07 p.m. Thursday)
High: 42; Low: 34; Precipitation: 0.13 inches of rain
Wabash River Level (at the Main Street bridge): 1.31 feet at 9:45 p.m. Thursday

Wells County forecast

Today: Patchy drizzle before 1 p.m., then a slight chance of rain after 1 p.m. Cloudy, with a high near 41. Southwest wind around 5 mph. Chance of precipitation is 20 percent.



Tonight: A 20 percent chance of rain before 1 a.m. Cloudy, with a low around 32. West wind 5 to 10 mph.

Saturday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 43. West wind 10 to 15 mph.

Saturday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 31. Southwest wind 10 to 15 mph.



Sunday: A slight chance of rain and snow showers after 1 p.m. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 41. Chance of precipitation is 20 percent.

Sunday Night: A 20 percent chance of showers before 1 a.m. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 27.

New Year's Day: Partly sunny, with a high near 38.

Monday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 23.



Tuesday: Sunny, with a high near 39.

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

Wednesday: Partly sunny, with a high near 39.

Wednesday Night: A slight chance of snow showers. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 26.

Thursday: Partly sunny, with a high near 38.

U.S. military

(Continued from Page 1)

have 33 and the Navy will have 24, with 23 attorneys who are not yet certified assisting in the cases. About 10 more are expected to be certified in the summer.

The lawyers will be scattered around the U.S. and the world, with larger numbers at bases and locations where there are more service members and more crime.

The officials said they expect each trial counsel to handle as many as 50 investigations and roughly eight to 12 trials a year.

An independent commission that studied sexual assaults in the military suggested in its report that the use of special counsels would have a positive impact. It said the special counsels would make better decisions on what cases should go forward, resulting in higher conviction rates. Increased convictions, the report said, will encourage more accused perpetrators to make plea agreements, which alleviates the need for victims to testify at trials.

"These outcomes will also increase confidence in the public that the military is correcting its course in the prosecution of special victim cases," the report said.

Sean Timmons, managing partner at the Tully Rinckey law firm, which specializes in military cases, said the change doesn't really get at the underlying behavioral problems. As a result, he said, it is unlikely to have any real impact or deterrent effect on misconduct by service members. He said that it could result in more people being fired

as a result of board proceedings but that in agreements in which the victims don't testify, the cases may end up being weaker.

"My analogy of that is we're rearranging the chairs on the Titanic," said Timmons, a former Army judge advocate general. "Nothing will really change other than semantics and appearances. That's the unfortunate reality."

The military services have long struggled to come up with programs to prevent sexual assaults and to encourage reporting, including a number of new initiatives in recent years. But they have yet to show any real progress in lowering the number of reported assaults, and anonymous surveys still indicate that many more victims opt not to report.

Defense officials have long argued that an increase in reported assaults is a positive trend, both in the military and in society as a whole. Greater reporting, they say, shows there is more confidence in the reporting system and the support available for victims.

Nate Galbreath, acting director of the Pentagon's sexual assault prevention and response office, said in April the department was using a budget infusion of \$479 million this year to hire as many as 2,400 personnel for a new prevention workforce. He said about 350 had already been hired and as the number grew they would be placed in military installations around the world to help commanders address some of the risk factors that lead to sexual assault.

Israeli strikes

(Continued from Page 1)

sive into central Gaza. The Israeli military typically launches waves of airstrikes and shelling before troops and tanks move in.

A hospital in the nearby town of Deir al-Balah received the bodies of 25 people killed overnight, including five children and seven women, hospital records showed Thursday. Nonstop explosions could be heard throughout the night in the town where hundreds of thousands of people have sought shelter, with many spending cold nights sleeping on sidewalks.

"It was another night of killing and massacres," said Saeed Moustafa, a resident of the Nuseirat camp. He said people were still crying out from the rubble of a house hit Wednesday by an airstrike.

"We are unable to get them out. We hear their screams, but we don't have equipment," he said.

Farther south, in Khan Younis, the Palestinian Red Crescent said a strike near its Al-Amal Hospital killed at least 10 people and wounded another 12. Much of the city's population has left, but many are sheltering near Al-Amal and another

hospital, hoping they will be spared from the bombardment.

A strike Thursday evening destroyed a residential building in the town of Rafah, at the southernmost end of Gaza, killing at least 23 people, according to the media office of the nearby Al-Kuwaiti Hospital said.

Outside of Gaza, Israeli security forces shot and killed a Palestinian man who they say got out of his car and stabbed two security workers at a checkpoint between the West Bank and east Jerusalem.

The security workers were in moderate condition, according to the Magen David Adom rescue service.

The occupied West Bank has experienced a surge in violence since Oct. 7, with more than 300 Palestinians killed in unrest and clashes with Israeli forces.

ANOTHER WAVE OF DISPLACEMENT

Rami Abu Mosab, who lives in the Bureij refugee camp, said thousands of people have fled their homes in recent days because of the intense bombardment. He plans to remain there because nowhere in Gaza is safe.

"Here is death and there is death," he said, "To die in

your home is better."

Bureij and Nuseirat are among several camps across the region that were built to house hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees from the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation. They have since grown into crowded residential neighborhoods.

Some 700,000 Palestinians fled or were driven from their homes during that conflict, an exodus the Palestinians refer to as the Nakba, or catastrophe. Some 1.9 million have been displaced within Gaza since Oct. 7.

As Israel has broadened its offensive, fleeing Palestinians have packed into areas along the Egyptian border and the southern Mediterranean coastline, where shelters and tent camps are overflowing. Even in those areas, Israel

continues to strike what it says are militant targets.

The U.N. humanitarian office said the scale and intensity of the fighting impedes its aid deliveries. The office, known as OCHA, cited blocked roads, a scarcity of fuel and telecommunications blackouts as some of the obstacles hampering the humanitarian response.

Still, it said the U.N. World Food Program provided food parcels to about a half-million people in U.N. shelters in southern and central Gaza since Saturday.

The Israeli military blames the high civilian death toll on Hamas, which positions fighters, tunnels and rocket launchers in dense residential areas. But the military rarely comments on individual strikes.



STRONGHOLDGLASS

L.L.C.

AUTO • COMMERCIAL • HOME

-Your One Stop Glass Shop-

Heavy Glass Shower Doors • Auto Glass • Vinyl Windows,
Custom Mirrors as well as Commercial Work

www.strongholdglassllc.com • 1325 West Wiley, Bluffton • 260-824-4715

BUSINESS OR PERSONAL

401(k)s | Asset Management | Banking Services | Bonds
College Planning | UITs | Financial Planning | Insurance & Annuities
IRAs | Stocks | Personalized Goal Planning | Mutual Funds
Pension & Profit Sharing Plans | Research | Retirement Planning

RAYMOND JAMES


Raymond James Financial Services, Inc.
Member FINRA/SIPC

INVEST FOR THE FUTURE

Kim Gentis
Financial Advisor
Financial Advisor Wealth
Management Professional

(260)824-8070
kim.gentis@raymondjames.com
1245 N. Main St., Bluffton, IN 46714

Investment Advisory Services are offered through
Raymond James Financial Services Advisors, Inc.



Right coverage. Right price. Right here in town.



Erin Daugherty, Agent
1085 N Main Street Suite B
Bluffton, IN 46714
Bus: 260-827-0527
erin.daughertyyz8@statefarm.com

Here's the deal. The right insurance should help you feel confident and comfortable. I'm the right good neighbor for that. Call me today.

Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there.™



State Farm
Bloomington, IL
2001292

Follow us on Twitter at...
twitter.com/newsbanner

OBITUARIES

Emma Jean Fox, 87

Emma Jean Fox, 87, of Fort Wayne and formerly of Markle, passed away Wednesday morning, Dec. 27, 2023 at Stillwater Hospice in Fort Wayne.

Emma Jean was a 1955 graduate of Markle High School. She was a lifelong member of Markle United Methodist Church. Emma Jean was a member of the Red Hatters and PSI IOTA XI Sorority of Markle. She enjoyed fishing, playing cards, cribbage and traveling.

Emma Jean was born Sept. 27, 1936 in Warren, the daughter of the late Merritt and Alberta (Dungan) Sutton.

She was united in marriage to William Goeglein on Jan. 27, 1956 in Markle. William preceded her in death in Aug. of 1974. She later married Jay Fox on Jan. 31, 1976 in Garrett, Ind. Jay preceded her in death in June of 2009.

Survivors include two sons, Nile (Lisa)



Goeglein of Albany, Ind. and Alan (Rexette) Goeglein of Ossian; three daughters, Connie (Larry) Conner of Fort Wayne, Janet (Curt) Robinson of Indianapolis, and Joyce (Bob) Gowdy of Charlotte, N.C.; a sister, B. Joan Buroff of Fort Wayne; 10 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren; and one great-great-grandchild.

Visitation will be held Tuesday, Jan. 2, 2024 from 1:00-5:00 p.m. at the Myers Funeral Home Markle Chapel, 415 N. Lee Street, Markle, Indiana.

Funeral services will be Tuesday, Jan. 2, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. at the Myers Funeral Home, Markle Chapel.

Memorial donations can be made out to Ride to Provide or Cancer Services of N E Indiana sent in care of Myers Funeral Home, P.O. Box 403, Markle, IN 46770.

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

Stanley "Tom" Hart, 75

Stanley "Tom" Hart, 75, of Bluffton, passed away at 9:30 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 20, 2023 at Ossian Health & Rehab Center in Ossian. He was born Wednesday, April 28, 1948, in Decatur. Tom was a graduate of Geneva High School.

After graduating high school, he began working at Franklin Electric in Bluffton. He saw many changes while there, including the name changes to Bluffton Motor Works, and currently to WEG. He retired after nearly 50 years there. Tom had also been a Union president of I.U.E. local 802 for several years, which he thoroughly enjoyed. Anyone who knew Tom knew he was an avid book reader and collector. He attended many conventions over the years meeting his favorite authors. Tom was a big history buff and would never miss the chance to give you a lesson about something if the time was right. Let's not forget those Hoosiers. In the words of his daughter, "Dad was a Gigantic IU fan!" But, his biggest hobby was spending time with his grandkids when he could. There were fun vacations, family meals, and lots of trips to the zoo.

Loving survivors include his daughter,



ters, Sheri (Brian) Crickard, of Bluffton, Tomi Cardin, of Fort Wayne; son, Jason Hart, of Eugene, Ore.; granddaughter, Cassandra Crickard, of Bluffton; and grandson, Cody Crickard, of Bluffton.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Marvin E. and Nema (Stanley) Hart.

Family and friends may gather to share and remember at Downing & Glancy Funeral

Home 100 N Washington Street Geneva, Tuesday, Jan. 2, 2024, from 2:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

A service to celebrate Tom's life will be at Downing & Glancy Funeral Home 100 N Washington Street Geneva at 11:00 a.m. Wednesday, Jan. 3, 2024 with the Pastor Steve Rogers officiating. Interment will follow in the Riverside Cemetery in Geneva.

Preferred memorials may be sent to The American Diabetes Association 6415 Castleway W. Drive Indianapolis, IN 46250

Arrangements are being handled by Downing & Glancy Funeral Home in Geneva.

Online condolences may be made at www.glancyfuneralhomes.com

Iris E. Stultz, 86

Iris E. Stultz, 86, of rural Bluffton, passed away Wednesday morning, Dec. 27, 2023, at Ossian Health Care and Rehabilitation Center.

Iris was born in Decatur on Dec. 5, 1937, to Betty Jane August. Her mother, along with her stepfather, Elmer D. Smeltzer, preceded her in death. Iris married Darrell L. Stultz at their home on Dec. 25, 1956. He passed away on Aug. 31, 2021.

Iris graduated from Bluffton High School in 1956. She was a long-time member of Living Water United Church, where she served for several years as a Sunday school teacher. Iris was a homemaker and mother to her five children. She also worked as a cook for Bluffton Harrison Metropolitan School District for 28 years, and for a few summers at Ouabache State Park.

Iris was a member of the American Legion Post 111 Auxilliary. She enjoyed cooking and taking care of her dogs, cats, and horses. She especially loved her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Survivors include two daughters, Nina



Stultz of Bluffton and Dawn Koepke (Scott Brown) of Fort Wayne; a son, Scott Stultz of Bluffton; two brothers, David (Betty) Smeltzer of Mich., and Gary Smeltzer of Bluffton; a sister, Jane Bennett of Uniondale; six grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; and a great-great-grandchild on the way.

Aside from her parents and husband, Iris was preceded in death by two daughters, Carla and Donna Stultz; a grandson, Adam Studebaker; and two sisters, Carolyn Smeltzer and Margene McGahey.

Visitation will be Tuesday, Jan. 2, 2024, from 2:00 until 7:00 p.m., at Goodwin - Cale & Harnish Memorial Chapel in Bluffton. Services will be held on Wednesday, Jan. 3, at 10:30 a.m., at the funeral home, with one hour of visitation prior to the service. Pastor Clark Stoller will officiate. Burial will follow at Fairview Cemetery in Bluffton.

Memorial contributions may be made to Living Water United Church.

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

Quieter year for health care bills

By WHITNEY DOWNARD

Indiana Capital Chronicle

After several years with back-to-back, complex health care legislation, stakeholders still believe there's work to be done while allowing for in-progress initiatives to mature.

The upcoming session will be a non-budget year in which leaders have urged their members to prioritize emergency legislation and speed — a move that would grant the 125 General Assembly members up for election more time to campaign.

Sen. Ed Charbonneau, R-Valparaiso, doesn't anticipate the same big legislation of 2023. As the Chair of the Senate Health and Provider Services Committee, he authored, co-authored and sponsored several hefty bills, including public health funding, monitoring pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) and tracking prices at five prominent non-profit hospital systems.

"I think, too often, we come back and make changes before the original stuff we did has a chance to take hold and show whether or not we made the right decision the first time around," Charbonneau said. "This will probably be a good session to see how we did ... (and) how they play out."

But others see the need for "constructive" changes quicker rather than later, including the very hospitals who took a hit in the 2023 session.

Brian Tabor, the president of the Indiana Hospital Association, said the organization is working on a proposal to address interwoven issues related to the state's Hospital Assessment Fee and Medicaid rates — the latter of which hospitals claim is so low they must shift costs to private insurers, thus raising prices.

"We have a lot of hospitals across the state that are struggling badly right now and we can't wait until the budget session to bring this forward," Tabor said.

Tabor said such moves wouldn't require reopening the budget but would still necessitate legislation to change existing statute. However, after a \$1 billion Medicaid accounting snafu earlier this week, addressing Medicaid rates will be a hard sell in 2024. But Tabor said the entity's proposal includes a state assessment on managed care plans, which could be used to leverage federal funding and offset Medicaid costs alongside hospital expenses.

Whatever happened with the consumer database?

The Indiana Department of Insurance, a relatively small agency, has several big responsibilities when it comes to legislative priorities for containing growing health care costs. An agency spokesperson wouldn't agree to an interview request and didn't respond to an emailed list of questions provided Friday, Dec. 15.

Following 2020 legislation, the department must build out and maintain an All Payers Claims Database,

which will collect claims data from various health payer sources — including insurers, health maintenance organizations, PBMs and others — in a consumer-facing dashboard.

"... we think that it'll be helpful to see a big picture view of all the healthcare and healthcare claims," IDOI Commissioner Amy Beard told the interim Health Care Costs Oversight Task Force in August.

But implementing the highly anticipated dashboard has been a lengthy process and it's uncertain how much of an impact it would have on health care costs.

IDOI tasked Onpoint Health Data in a four-year, \$8.2 million contract to design and maintain the APCD, which appears to be nearing a launch date, based on a review of three meetings' worth of materials that includes demo websites and contract data.

At the last APCD advisory board meeting in September, the IDOI presentation included previews of what the website might look like and Jonathan Handborough, the APCD's executive director, reported that the majority of submitter registrations had been completed.

Also in August, during a State Budget Committee meeting, Beard detailed the fines for health payers who don't submit claims data to the APCD.

"The civil penalty ensures appropriate accountability for reporting to the APCD and it is important to ensure that the APCD collects as much data as possible to achieve its legislative purposes, such as identifying health care needs and informing policy," Beard told the committee. "... The department is currently working closely with health payers to ensure their knowledge of the submission requirements and procedures as part of the implementation of this new program and is optimistic that compliance with these requirements will be high."

The proposed civil penalty will start at \$100 per day, per violation for the first 30 days before increasing to \$1,000 per day, per violation.

She also told committee members that IDOI had allocated \$5.5 million in their budget for the APCD.

But while a Hoosier may be able to compare the cost of a hip replacement across hospitals, not everyone is convinced it'll make a difference in bringing down prices. Charbonneau noted that employers, through company insurance poli-

cies, paid the majority of costs and Hoosiers choosing between options are likely to consider other factors.

"If I have insurance, I'm not going to pay that much attention to cost," he said. "If I have a hospital that I have right in the area, that's convenient ... I'm going to go there."

Consumers are less likely to travel further for a cheaper hip replacement if it's only their employers or insurers seeing the cost savings, he said.

Tabor, a member of the APCD advisory board, said the project had potential so long as it was "truly comprehensive." He noted that Onpoint also built Maine's APCD and included reams of information, including prescription drugs.

"What we don't need, I think, is another database that is only just about price," Tabor said. "When we started this discussion in 2020, there was a thought (of), 'We just need to have the hospital prices on there.' We have that now; that's available (elsewhere) ... I see (the APCD) also as being a tool to not just compare price but to truly help a consumer navigate cost, quality and what can be a complex health care system."

Still, he flagged the potential for a legal challenge, noting that federal law prohibited states from regulating certain large insurance plans and might not be able to legally compel them to submit to the APCD.

Other ongoing projects

In addition to the APCD, IDOI has at least two other legislative obligations: regulating PBMs and developing a monitoring system for prices at five nonprofit hospital systems, comparing those to a 285% Medicare rate.

For the latter, IDOI reported in August that it had issued a request for services to find a third-party vendor and hospitals were required to submit data by March 2024. By November, calculations should be finalized along with the Medicare comparison for a final report to the Health Care Cost Task Force in December.

Also at the August meeting, Beard told the committee about ongoing efforts to license PBMs and audit pharmacy claims alongside a semiannual report. Lawmakers spent a significant amount of time in the 2023 legislative session attempting to understand the costs and benefits of PBMs, ultimately landing on a reporting system to calculate claims and dictating that rebate savings be passed onto consumers.

Police Notebook

INCIDENTS

County:

Wednesday, 12:57 p.m., 500 block of South Jersey Street, Bluffton. Officer requested to bring patrol rifle to assist with execution of search warrant for possibly armed subject. No issues.

Wednesday, 5:27 p.m., 10000 South 200 West, Keystone. Report of subject possibly breaking into aban-

doned residence. Unable to locate.

Wednesday, 9:24 p.m., Ind. 116 and 200 West, Markle. Car versus deer.

Thursday, 10:24 a.m., 11000 North Marzane Road, Markle. Caller reported potential fraud via phone. Advised to block the phone number.

Ossian: Thursday, 3:57 a.m., 3700 East 1200 North, Ossian.

Officers responded to a domestic dispute.

ARRESTS

Kenneth Edward Shaw Jr., 33, Bluffton, invasion of privacy, a Class A misdemeanor. Bond set at \$1,500.

Jennifer Marie Smith, 42, Bluffton, dealing methamphetamine, and dealing cocaine or a narcotic drug, both Level 4 felonies. Bond set at \$30,000.

Gov. Holcomb announces \$18.1 million grant to support child care

Governor Eric J. Holcomb announced today the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration's Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning is awarding \$18.1 million in employer-sponsored child care grants to 64 businesses, community groups and school corporations. The initiative, part of Gov. Holcomb's 2023 Next Level Agenda, is mobilizing

employers and communities to create or expand child care offerings that address the needs of working Hoosiers.

"We wanted those who know first-hand the critical needs of their employees, and those who are best positioned to partner in their communities, to cre-

ate child care solutions for their workforce, and they delivered," Gov. Holcomb said. "This effort harnesses the combined efforts of businesses, community groups, and schools that want to support working Hoosiers' careers and our youngest learners across the state."

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

Corrections and clarifications

The caption for second photo in the "Generations of remembrance" article misidentified Collin Selking. The gentleman in the photo is Gene Donaghy.

Joy L. Cash
Calling: 2-7 pm,
Fri., Dec. 29 at the
funeral home.
Funeral: 3 pm Sat., Dec.
30 at Life Community
Church in Bluffton.

Goodwin - Cale & Harnish
MEMORIAL CHAPEL
A Tradition of Caring
Locally Owned and Operated Since 1922
St. Rd. 124 East, Bluffton
824-3852

VISITATION & SERVICES

Erin L. Pennington
Calling: 3-7 p.m. Friday,
December 29 and one hour
prior to the service.
Service: 1 p.m. Saturday,
December 30 at the funeral home.

Thoma/Rich, Lemler
Funeral Home
308 W. Washington St.
824-3850
www.thomarich.com

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

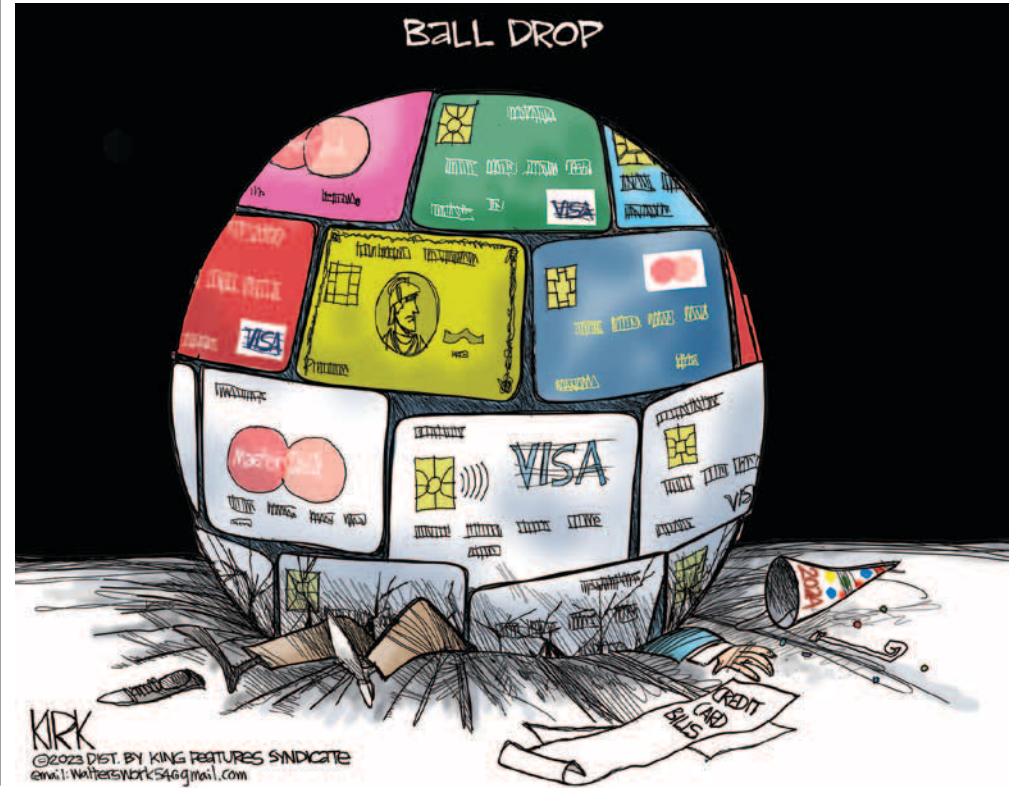
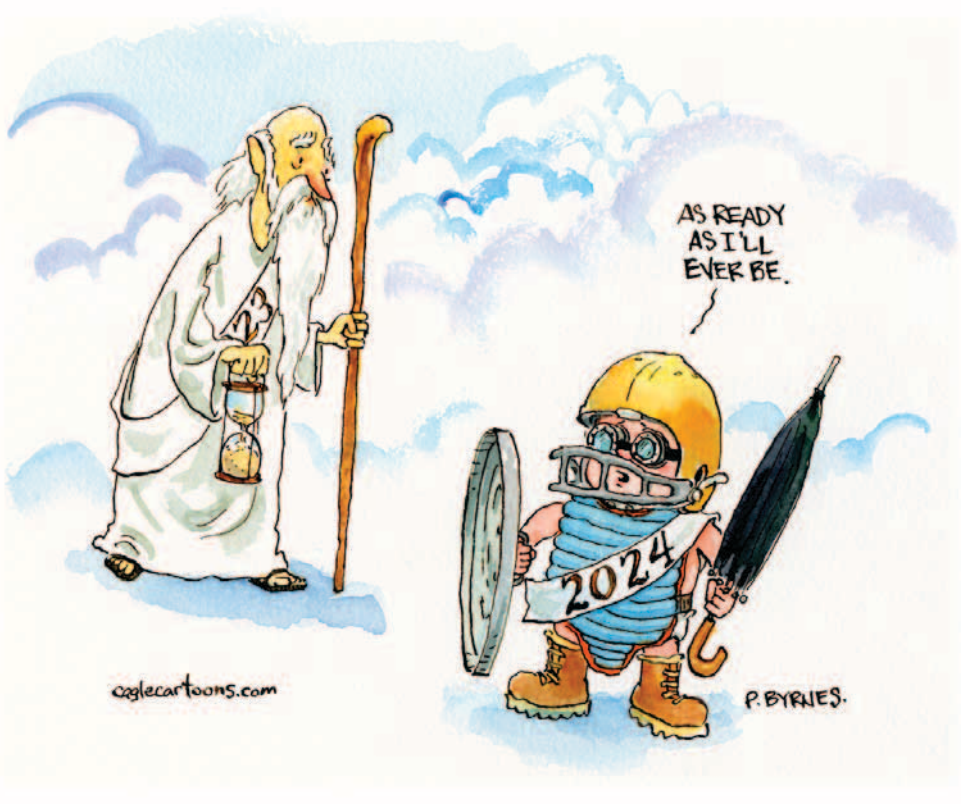
WHEN YOU HAVE PROBLEMS AND YOU WILL HAVE PROBLEMS YOU WILL HAVE US TO COUNT ON
MEDICARE SUPPLEMENTS - MEDICARE ADVANTAGE PLANS - PRESCRIPTION DRUG PLANS.

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

New Years 2024 - a look through cartoonists' eyes...



Other Opinions

The food crisis in Gaza is unconscionable

Pointing out that since Hamas-led fighters attacked Israel on Oct 7, high-ranking Israeli officials, including Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir and Energy Minister Israel Katz, have all made public statements admitting that Israel is deliberately depriving civilians in Gaza of food, water and fuel, as reflected in the operations of Israeli forces, Human Rights Watch last week accused the Israeli government of committing a war crime.

The United Nations is warning that the quantity of food reaching Palestinians in Gaza is just 10 percent of what is needed to feed the territory's inhabitants amid the Israeli military's near nonstop bombardment of the Palestinian enclave and its ground operations, which are worsening the humanitarian situation there with each passing day.

In a report published on Thursday, Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, a partnership of aid organizations, including UN agencies and NGOs, said that the proportion of households in Gaza that are in hunger crisis, or suffering from high levels of acute food insecurity, is the largest ever recorded globally, and it warned that the entire 2.3 million population of Gaza faces the risk of famine.

On Friday, the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution urging steps to allow "safe, unhindered, and expanded humanitarian access" to Gaza and to realize the "conditions for a sustainable cessation" of the fighting.

Although it fell short of calling for an immediate cease-fire, given it is the first resolution on Gaza to be passed by the UN Security Council, it should be taken as a crucial step to get urgently needed humanitarian aid into the territory.

With the humanitarian situation in Gaza becoming increasingly dire, and the Israeli military action indefensible, even the United States, Tel Aviv's staunchest supporter, has adjusted its attitude, albeit slightly. While still refusing to call for an immediate cease-fire, US officials have said they want and expect Israel to shift its military operations in Gaza to a lower-intensity phase. They have urged Israel to ensure that its military operations are precise and targeted so as to reduce civilian casualties.

Yet, this has not been enough to stop the Israeli military's onslaught on Gaza. On Sunday, one Israeli airstrike on the al-Maghazi refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip killed at least 70 Palestinians. There are now fears that the conflict is spilling over to other parts in the Middle East, with Yemeni Houthi militia intensifying their attacks on "Israel-linked" ships in the Red Sea. In response, the US is organizing an international coalition in the waters to try and protect shipping, which only adds more complexity to the crisis.

Friday's resolution called on the warring parties to "allow, facilitate and enable the immediate, safe and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance" to civilians in Gaza and to "create the conditions for a sustainable cessation of hostilities."

To avert the looming catastrophe in Gaza and prevent the conflict from escalating further concerted efforts are needed by all parties to ensure the UNSC resolution is now implemented.

THE CHINA DAILY
Distributed by The Associated Press

The 10 best things President Biden did in 2023

I once again offer my annual lists of the 10 best and 10 worst things President Biden did this year. In the spirit of the season, we'll start with the best things:

10. He killed a top Islamic State leader in Syria. In April, U.S. forces launched a strike that took out Khalid Aydd al-Jabouri, an Islamic State leader involved in planning attacks in Europe.
9. He further strengthened restrictions on China's access to advanced technology. Last year, the administration blocked U.S. companies from selling chips or semiconductor equipment to China. This year, the president further tightened the tech noose, banning Americans from investing in Chinese companies developing advanced semiconductors and quantum computers.
8. He hosted the first trilateral summit with South Korea, Japan and the United States. The Camp David meeting of the three allies was a watershed moment for security in East Asia. As one George W. Bush administration official put it: "We could barely get South Korean and Japanese leaders to meet with us in the same room." Biden continued to strengthen U.S. alliances to counter China in other ways, as well, conducting joint military drills with Japan and Australia in Chinese-claimed areas of the South China Sea; launching the second pillar of his historic agreement with Britain and Australia (known as AUKUS) to jointly develop advanced military capabilities to counter Beijing; holding his third leader-level summit of the Indo-Pacific Quad (Japan, Australia, India and the United States); and conducting a state visit to Hanoi to strengthen our partnership with Vietnam.
7. He launched the "Replicator Initiative" to better compete with China. It can take a decade or more to put a new weapons system in the hands of warfighters. This project aims to fast-track weapons development and production so the Defense Department can rapidly field thousands of inexpensive, disposable unmanned systems (such as "swarm drones") with the goal of delivering new capabilities to U.S. forces in the Indo-Pacific region in 18 to 24 months to help counter China's military buildup.
6. He provided military aid to Taiwan under a program reserved for sovereign states. The \$80 million arms sale was unprecedented — the first ever approved for Taiwan using the Foreign Military Financing program that allows partner nations to purchase U.S. defense articles, services and training through grants or loans — a move that angered Beijing.
5. He called Xi Jinping a dictator ... twice. In June, Biden called the Chinese leader a "dictator," drawing a stinging rebuke from China. In November, following a summit in San Francisco, Biden repeated the charge, calling Xi "a dictator ... who runs a country that is a communist country that's based on a form of government totally different than ours" while U.S. officials visibly cringed. Good for him.
4. He signed a GOP bill overturning D.C.'s dis-

trous changes to its crime code. At a time when carjackings, burglaries and homicides are out of control in the nation's capital, the D.C. Council decided to reduce punishments for such crimes. Despite his support for home rule, Biden signed a GOP-led resolution to block the disastrous D.C. law from taking effect.

3. He reached a debt ceiling deal with House Republicans that reduced spending. In his first two years in office, Biden unleashed an unprecedented \$4.8 trillion miasma of new spending. After first refusing to negotiate with the new GOP House majority, he relented and signed a debt limit deal that reduced discretionary spending, added welfare work requirements, pared back his IRS expansion and ended the pandemic pause on student loan repayments.

2. He continued to stand with Ukraine. Despite the slow-rolling of weapons, Biden has provided Ukraine with \$68 billion in military assistance so far — without which Russia would have conquered the country. This aid is not only decimating the Russian military threat to NATO; it is also creating jobs and revitalizing manufacturing communities across the United States and restoring U.S. capacity to produce weapons for our own national defense. And, as one senior U.S. official told me, "Biden is responsible for killing more Russians than Ronald Reagan."

1. He stood with Israel after the Oct. 7 terrorist attack. Biden has strongly backed Israel in its battle with Hamas despite pressure from allies and his political base (a Gallup poll in March found that a 49 percent plurality of Democrats side with Palestinians, while just 38 percent support Israel). Biden could face a backlash from Arab American voters he needs to win in states such as Michigan; Harvard-Harris polling in October pointed out a risk with younger voters, a majority of whom say Hamas attacks are "justified." In December, its polling found a majority of younger voters saying that "Israel [should] be ended and given to Hamas and the Palestinians." Biden is supporting Israel anyway. That takes courage.

One near-achievement gets an honorable mention: Biden brought us tantalizingly close to a Saudi-Israeli peace deal, only to see it disrupted by Hamas's attack. But that assault by Iran's terrorist proxy will only serve to increase Arab resolve to make peace with Israel as a military bulwark against Iran once conditions in the region permit.

And one achievement should be on this list but is not: We reached the end of the year without a deal on fundamental changes to border security policy in exchange for new military aid to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan. Hopefully, one will be reached immediately in the new year.

In my next column, I will review the 10 worst things Biden has done this year.

Follow Marc A. Thiessen @marcthiessen on X



Marc Thiessen

Today in History

By The Associated Press
Today is Friday, Dec. 29, the 363rd day of 2022. There are two days left in the year.
Today's Highlight in History: On Dec. 29, 1845, Texas was admitted as the 28th state.
On this date:
In 1170, Thomas Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was slain in Canterbury Cathedral by knights loyal to King Henry II.
In 1812, the American frigate USS Constitution severely damaged the British frigate HMS Java off Brazil

during the War of 1812.
In 1851, the first Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in the United States was founded in Boston.
In 1890, the Wounded Knee massacre took place in South Dakota as an estimated 300 Sioux Indians were killed by U.S. troops.
In 1940, during World War II, Germany dropped incendiary bombs on London, setting off what came to be known as "The Second Great Fire of London."
In 1972, Eastern Air Lines Flight 401, a Lockheed L-1011 Tristar, crashed into the Florida Everglades near Miami International Airport, killing 101 of the 176 people aboard.
In 1978, during the Gator Bowl, Ohio State coach Woody Hayes punched Clemson player Charlie Bauman, who'd intercepted an Ohio State pass. (Hayes was fired the next day.)
In 1989, dissident and playwright Vaclav Havel assumed the presidency of Czechoslovakia.
In 1992, the United States and Russia announced agreement on a nuclear arms reduction treaty.

THE NEWS-BANNER
(USPS 059-200)
Evening News est. 1892 • Evening Banner est. 1899 • Consolidated 1929
Telephone Number 260-824-0224
George B. Witwer, Chairman of the Board
Doug Brown, President, Publisher
Dianne Witwer, Secretary/Treasurer
Holly Gaskill, Editor
Fax Number 260-824-0700
Periodicals Postage Paid at Bluffton, IN. Published every day except Sundays and Principal Holidays at 125 N. Johnson Street, Bluffton, IN. 46714. Post Office Box 436.

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

Mom declines daughter's sleepover request

Dear Annie: My 16-year-old daughter is relentless in begging me to have a sleepover with her boyfriend. She insists they are not sexually active and that she simply wants to hang out with him, watch movies and sleep next to him. For some reason, nothing I say to explain why my answer is no seems to make any sense to her.

Annie, can you offer any suggestions to shut this down? I hate to say "Because I said so," but I'm at a loss. — Exhausted Parent

Dear Exhausted: Tell your daughter she is more than welcome to invite her boyfriend over to hang out and watch movies, but that's all. Having a sleepover with a boy at her age, even one sans sex, is not appropriate, and so long as she is living under your roof, she must abide by your rules.

At the end of the day, the exact reason — and there are many — doesn't really matter. If you're uncomfortable with it, the answer is no. She may not agree with you or be happy about it, but she has to respect that boundary. And remember, she will thank you later.

Dear Annie: Before approaching HR or their supervisor concerning their dishonest, underperforming co-worker as you advised, I recommend that "Honest Worker" update their resume and research open positions at other companies in case things go badly. HR departments are consumed by management directives such as hiring qualified employees, benefit and salary administration, managing intern programs, and communication of policy changes; they are unlikely to devote resources to discipline the difficult co-worker. If they do, it will likely make her MORE difficult to work with.

Similarly, "Honest Worker's" supervisor is likely well aware of the co-

worker's actions and has chosen not to address it. Pointing out this failure could end badly for "Honest Worker." Furthermore, anonymity is never a certainty in an office, and difficult co-worker may learn of "Honest Worker's" conversations with HR and/or their supervisor and inflict the wrath that "Honest Worker" wants to avoid.

A better approach is to continue to work hard, develop working relationships with colleagues, and seek a promotion or lateral transfer in a different department. In the meantime, pray for the difficult co-worker's healthy early retirement. — Been There

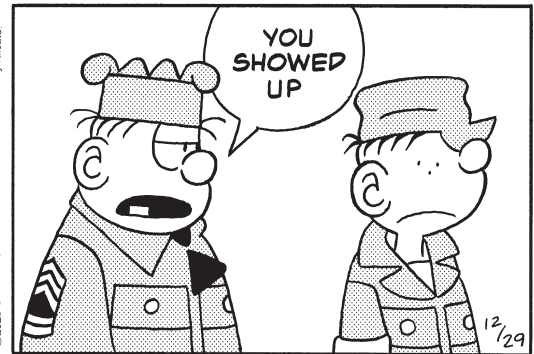
Dear Been There: Thank you for offering your perspective — and I'm sorry that you had to learn the hard way! I agree that, based on the letter from "Honest Worker," it is quite possible the problem will not be remedied by a conversation with HR or a supervisor. It's always smart to hope for the best and prepare for the worst, so your suggestion of researching a plan B before "Honest Worker" embarks on their next attempt for office harmony, is eminently sensible. Thank you again.

"How Can I Forgive My Cheating Partner?" is out now! Annie Lane's second anthology — featuring favorite columns on marriage, infidelity, communication and reconciliation — is available as a paperback and e-book. Visit http://www.creatorspublishing.com for more information. Send questions for Annie Lane to dearannie@creators.com. © 2023 CREATORS.COM

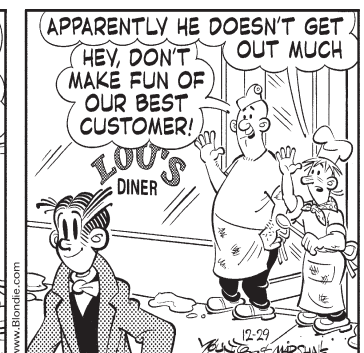
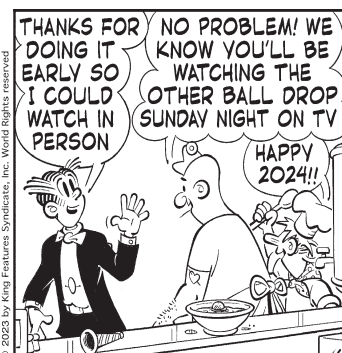
Dear Annie by Annie Lane



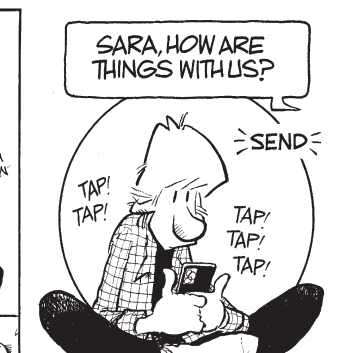
BETLE BAILEY



BLONDIE



ZITS



CRANKSHAFT



My Answer

By Dr. Billy Graham



The Bible teaches that purity of conduct includes truthfulness

Q: Is it true Christians should not associate with people who live differently from us? It seems that would be pretty haughty. At the same time, it doesn't seem right to pat ourselves on the back for living a different kind of life, thinking that we are better than others, does it? — C.S.

A: No one likes an arrogant, prideful person. This is certainly not the mark of a Christian. The Bible says that God opposes the proud but favors the humble (see James 4:6). God wants us to be pure in body, pure in mind — and He wants us to be pure in conduct.

Under this rule of good conduct also come our associations. Paul says that evil companionships corrupt good morals (see

1 Corinthians 15:33). This condemns all business, social, fraternal, and religious associations in which unchristian principles and practices govern. We are to be separated from the world's system of evil and bear witness to the light of Christ.

Christians who are involved in associations that are evil and corrupt are told to be separated from such things (see 2 Corinthians 6:17). God promises that if we do this, He will receive us into His most intimate fellowship.

The Bible teaches that purity of conduct includes truthfulness. God's Word teaches that we should be truthful in our representations of ourselves. With what scorn Christ denounced the hypocrisy and Phari-

sees! In the Sermon on the Mount, He rebuked all hypocritical giving, praying, and fasting. We should also be truthful in speaking of our past achievements in our particular vocation. God does not ask us to understate the facts — that might even be untruthfulness — but neither does He want us to overrate our achievements or our gifts, either in thought or in speech.

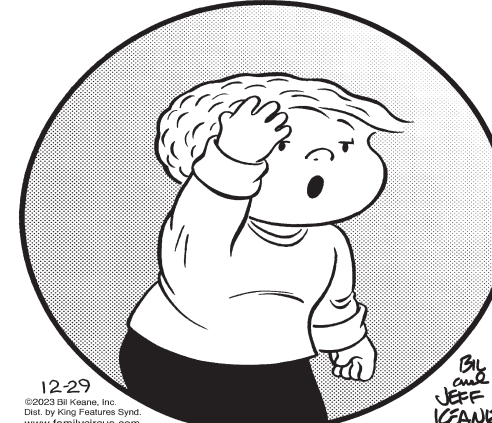
The Bible is the constant fountain for faith, conduct, and inspiration from which we drink daily.

(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.

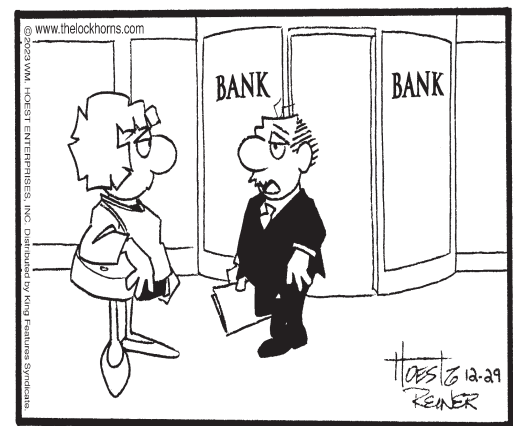
THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane



"I didn't eat my breakfast and now I have a head-egg."

The LOCKHORNS



"I CAN GET THE LOAN, BUT I'LL NEED TO LEAVE AN ARTICLE OF CLOTHING WITH MY SCENT FOR THE HOUNDS."

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

- ACROSS 1 German auto, 4 Roman 202, 8 Turner or Fey, 12 Bill's partner, 13 Expel, 14 Baltic feeder, 15 Great Barrier Reef locale, 17 Libretto, 18 Music genre for BTS, 19 Defeats, 20 River of Rome, 22 Counterfeit, 24 Big fuses, 25 Bar mixer, 29 Author Tolstoy, 30 Limerick feature, 31 Pep, 32 Church fundraiser, 34 Big rig, 35 Wee, 36 Edgy, 37 African language, 40 Retained, 41 Six-sided state, 42 Radio ID, 46 Donated, 47 Biblical king, 48 Bygone bird, 49 Swizzle, 50 Doctrines, 51 Montreal summer, 5 Point sneaky, 6 British verb ending, 7 "Give rest!", 8 Tribal emblems, 9 Mid-month date, 10 Adjoining, 11 Newspaper section, 16 Tarzan's clique, 19 Innocent one, 20 Body sources, 21 Notion powder, 28 During of thinness, 30 Alpha-betic sequence, 33 Choice word, 34 Tries the coffee, 36 Oil sources, 37 Elmer's bane, 38 Rat — denial, 39 "Avatar" race, 40 Model Heidi, 42 CBS forensic drama, 43 Small batteries, 44 Inherited, 45 Scot's denial

Solution time: 25 mins.

Crossword grid with letters and numbers for clues.

Grid for yesterday's crossword answer.

TV schedule table with columns for time slots (12:29, 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 AM, 12:30) and rows for various channels (WINM, CBS, Antenna, ABC, NBC, MNT, CW, PBS, FOX, etc.) listing programs and their descriptions.

Knights fall to No. 3 Panthers, beat Valpo in tournament

By RYAN WALKER
Game 1

NOBLESVILLE — Norwell faced its biggest challenge yet in No. 3 Snider, and it got a gut punch.

The Knights (11-4), in the midst of their grueling schedule, took a 65-50 defeat to the defending 4A regional champion Panthers (14-1) in the first game of the Noblesville Holiday Tournament Thursday afternoon.

Norwell was beaten by its own game — running the floor and getting transition buckets — by Snider and was also out-rebounded by a wide 36-20 margin.

The Knights committed 16 of them and fed into the Panther's 52 percent from inside the arc, with a portion of them uncontested.

Norwell head coach Eric Thornton said after the game that he thought it was the best team they'd faced all season, even with four other schools faced in the IBCA top 10.

"I don't know how many layups they got off of turnovers, but that became too much to overcome," Thornton said. "We were going to have a tough time rebounding them. We were going to have a tough time doing what they do with those live ball turnovers. But the mistakes that (Snider) capitalized on, they do that to a lot of teams. That's the best team we've played so far. I don't know that we will see that in the 3A tournament when it comes to that."

On the scoring end, the Panthers were led by Purdue commit Jordyn Poole, who dropped 22 points on 10-23 shooting and a handful of assists. But the real threat in the game was 6'2 senior forward Tia Phinezy, heading to the SEC for Missouri in volleyball, who added 14 rebounds for the Panthers and swatted four blocks.

Like Phinezy, Snider denied Norwell's opportunities to crawl back into the game. In the final five minutes of the first quarter, Norwell went on a 12-6 run, only to have Snider jump back into gear to begin the second with a 11-0 run. Norwell closed the second quarter with a 6-1 run, but was met by Poole scoring five points right away in the third.

Every point scored by Norwell in the third quarter had a response by Snider, continuing to keep the Knights off balance.

"There were stretches there where (Snider's) pressure really got to us, and we would adjust, and then they'd bring it again," Thornton said. "You just can't let up mentally, fundamentally. You've got to be really, really good at what you do."

Despite the loss and how it happened, Thornton emphasized the reason why he scheduled this tournament: to build for the 3A state one by the end of the season. Norwell's return of every player from last season's sectional title has weathered one of the toughest schedules in the state with an 11-4 record.

"I also want to give credit to our kids for hanging in there. We're really pushing them right now," Thornton said. "It's tough to go through, but there's a purpose, and we're trying to remind ourselves, especially the girls, of the overall big picture here of how this can help us during tournament time. Again, we will not see this level of a team in the 3A tournament. It doesn't guarantee us anything, but it really does stretch us, and that's what we're trying to use it for."

sports@news-banner.com

SNIDER 65, NORWELL 50
At Noblesville High School
NORWELL (11-4): Kennedy Fuelling 8-12 3-4 22, Makenzie Fuess 5-12 0-0 12, Vanessa Rosswurm 3-12 1-2 7, Dekota Hubble 2-6 0-1 4, Lilly Norris 1-2 0-0 3, Annabelle Johnson 1-6 0-0 2, Haley Green 0-1 0-0 0, Addie Norris 0-3 0-0 0. **TOTALS:** 14-46 4-7 50
SNIDER (14-1): Jordyn Poole 10-23 1-2 22, Ciara Sims 5-12 1-2 12, Kyra Parker 3-6 1-1 9, Tia Phinezy 4-6 0-0 8, Johnea Donahue 2-7 3-3 7, ZY'Ann Phinezy 2-2 1-1 5, Sariah Sandlin 1-3 0-0 2, Samantha Baughman 0-0 0-0 0, Gabriella Barnes 0-0 0-0 0. **TOTALS:** 27-59 7-9 65
Snider 17 17 18 13 — 65
Norwell 13 12 13 12 — 50
Three-point FG: Norwell: 6-17 (Fuelling 3-6, Fuess 2-2, L. Norris 1-3, A. Norris 0-3, Johnson 0-2, Rosswurm 0-2), Snider: 4-15 (Parker 2-4, Poole 1-5, Sims 1-5). Rebounds: Norwell: 20 (Johnson 5, Hubble 4, Fuess 4, Rosswurm 3, Fuelling 3, Green 2, L. Norris 2, A. Norris 1), Snider: 36 (T. Phinezy 13, Sims 7, Z. Phinezy 3, Poole 3, Sandlin 3, Parker 2). Turnovers: Norwell: 16, Snider: 15. Fouls: Norwell: 8, Snider: 13. Fouled Out: None. Technicals: None.

By RYAN WALKER
Game 2

NOBLESVILLE — Norwell needed every bit of the final three minutes and 34 seconds to split at the Noblesville Holiday

Raiders & Tigers combine for 1-3 at Union City Tournament

Bluffton and Southern Wells' boys finished day one of the Union City Holiday Tournament Thursday.

The Tigers were defeated by Eastern 58-43 in the first game and won 56-16 over Randolph Southern in the second. They'll play for the 3rd/4th place game Friday night at 6 p.m. against Eastern again. Stats were not sent at the time of print.

High School Calendar

FRIDAY, DEC 29
BOYS BASKETBALL: (Union City Holiday Tournament) Southern Wells vs. Randolph Southern, 4:30 p.m.; Bluffton vs. Eastern, 6 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: Bellmont 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.

tournament Thursday night.

A 17-4 run in that timespan launched the Knights (12-4) to a 62-55 win over the Valparaiso Vikings (10-5).

It all started with the Vikings taking a 6-point lead at the 4:19 mark when Becca Gerdt nearly converted on an and-one opportunity. Norwell's toughness, which head coach Eric Thornton has referenced as his team's biggest need this season, fought back and got it the win against another 4A opponent.

Makenzie Fuess started the three-point parade late in the fourth with just 3:30 remaining. Vanessa Rosswurm then tallied the first of two in between Dekota Hubble's and one that switched the lead back over to the blue and gold. The run was capped off by a 5-point swing by Kennedy Fuelling, nailing her ninth three-ball in the game and sealing the deal.

The key for Thornton's group was to not only get their top scorers going, but to distribute the wealth to the rest of the team in the comeback. That's where Rosswurm and Hubble came in down the stretch hitting big shots.

"I love the way our kids responded with three minutes to go down five," Thornton said after the game. "(Valpraio's) triangle and face guarding Mackenzie and Kennedy and Vanessa comes up, hits and couple threes. We really needed that. We needed her to step up. Dekota gets the put-back basket and opportunities for other kids to make plays when they're going to do that. So proud of our kids for pulling that one out."

Fuelling still did what she does best, scoring a game-high 32 points on the game and even led the team with eight rebounds. Fuess tallied 15 points and added five steals.

But Rosswurm's six points in the final three minutes got her into double-figures with 10 points, while also showing productivity by passing the ball for five assists and six rebounds. Hubble's and-one was her only shot attempt of the night to add to her seven rebounds.

Norwell's late surge wasn't the only time it had to come out of a slump.

In fact, the one during the first half was far worse. The Knights got up to a 9-2 lead early, but couldn't find the bottom of the net for the next seven and a half minutes. Valparaiso jolted to a 20-9 advantage before Fuelling stopped the drought with a bucket.

Even with that much of a deficit, Norwell got hot. Fuess and Fuelling traded threes right in a row, followed by two more by Fuelling before the end of the half. Fuess picked off a Vikings pass with a few seconds left on the clock and turned it into a scoop and score.

Those were two examples of the team fighting through adversity. Just hours beforehand, the team had its largest loss in total points of the season in a 15-point gut punch by No. 3 Snider. The group bounced back and made the head coach very happy.

"A lot of toughness there," Thornton said. "You know, you can choose to respond in different ways and I love the response our kids had. You watch the other team go on a run against you and we're sitting at nine points forever and that's tough. And our kids, we needed something good to happen."

RV Noblesville ended up winning the tournament with a 57-51 win over No. 3 Snider.

Norwell's next game will be at Carroll starting at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan 2.

sports@news-banner.com

NORWELL 62, VALPARAISO 55
At Noblesville High School
NORWELL (12-4): Kennedy Fuelling 10-25 3-5 32, Makenzie Fuess 4-10 4-4 15, Vanessa Rosswurm 3-12 2-3 10, Dekota Hubble 1-1 1-3 3, Annabelle Johnson 1-4 0-0 2, Haley Green 0-1 0-0 0, Lilly Norris 0-1 0-0 0, Addie Norris 0-3 0-0 0. **TOTALS:** 19-57 10-17 62
VALPARAISO (10-5): Cadynce Clark 6-9 0-0 15, Lillian Barnes 5-18 5-6 15, Becca Gerdt 5-13 3-3 13, Raegan O'Halek 1-3 2-2 4, Brianna Fincannon 1-4 0-0 3, Delliah Kincaid 1-2 0-0 3, Kenzie Wassermann 1-2 0-0 2, Cady Olman 0-2 0-0 0, Ava Seefeldt 0-0 0-0 0. **TOTALS:** 20-52 10-11 55
Norwell 9 18 13 22 — 62
Valparaiso 15 9 17 14 — 55
Three-point FG: Norwell: 14-38 (Fuelling 9-20, Fuess 3-6, Rosswurm 2-6, Johnson 0-2, A. Norris 0-3, L. Norris 0-1), Valparaiso: 5-15 (Clark 3-6, Fincannon 1-2, Kincaid 1-2, Barnes 0-4, Gerdt 0-1). Rebounds: Norwell: 31 (Fuelling 8, Hubble 7, Rosswurm 6, Fuess 4, Green 1, L. Norris 1, Johnson 1), Valparaiso: 34 (Barnes 16, Gerdt 6, Clark 3, O'Halek 3, Fincannon 2, Olman 1, Wasserman 1, Kincaid 1). Turnovers: Norwell: 10, Valparaiso: 14. Fouls: Norwell: 10, Valparaiso: 17. Fouled Out: None. Technicals: None.



Makenzie Fuess finds her route to the basket cut off by Snider's leading scorer, Jordyn Poole, Thursday at the Noblesville Holiday Tournament. Points in the paint were hard to come by against the Panthers who dominated the Knights 65-50. (Photos by Glen Werling)



Vanessa Rosswurm launches a three-point shot under the watchful eye of one of the referees in the fourth quarter Thursday against Valparaiso at the Noblesville Holiday Tournament. After being cold most of the game, Rosswurm caught fire in the fourth, scoring eight of her 10 points total for the game.

RACING NEWS

HOF drag racer Paula Murphy, 1st woman licensed to drive a Funny Car, dies at 95

NEW YORK (AP) — Paula Murphy, a Hall of Fame racer and the first woman licensed to drive a Funny Car, died Thursday. She was 95.

The National Hot Rod Association announced Murphy's death on Friday. It did not provide any details.

Murphy was a pioneer for women in racing. She had set a women's land-speed record of 161 mph at the Bonneville Salt Flats for Andy Granatelli in 1963. It was Granatelli who sponsored a new Funny Car drag racing entry for Murphy, who became known as "Miss STP."

"I was a real oddity, and I think a lot of strip operators thought it was pretty good to sell tickets," Murphy said, according to the NHRA website.

"I didn't have problems getting booking dates. I was very well accepted not only by the tracks but by my fellow racers. Back then, there was a lot of camaraderie between the teams helping one another out. We were a big family."

Murphy drove at Talladega Superspeedway in 1971 in the STP Dodge of Freddie Lorenzen, going 171.499 mph. She powered a dragster to a 258-mph run at the Winter-nationals in 1973. She suffered a broken neck in a crash in early 1974 at Sears Point Raceway when her car wouldn't shut down and flipped over and over after landing.

She returned to drag racing in 1976 and toured the country before retiring.

Murphy was inducted into the International Drag Racing Hall of Fame in 1992 and the Motorsports Hall of Fame of America in 2017.

"I got really, really lucky," she said, according to the NHRA. "I don't think many people have gotten the opportunity to do some of the things that I did."



Paula Murphy

INNOVATIVE CONCEPTS AUDIO VIDEO SECURITY NETWORKING

UTV

Marine

Motorcycle Sound Systems

Jockford Fosgate

(260) 724-2276
1421 Manchester St., Decatur
1/2 block west of U.S. 27 North
www.icav.us

PRECISION SERVICE
Family, Farm and Fleet Vehicle Repair
FLEET ACCOUNTS AVAILABLE
0520 S. Decker Dr.
Bluffton
"The Quality Service You Deserve!"
260-824-9149 **FREE** Estimates

Bluffton Tire Inc.
1308 S. Main St.
Bluffton

10% OFF Discontinued Closeout Tires
1-260-824-0418

It's OK to Shop and Compare...
Then come to Hiday.
It'll be like watching the sun come out after the rain.

HIDAY AUTOMOTIVE GROUP
CHRYSLER-DODGE-JEEP-RAM CHEVROLET
1791 N. Main St., Bluffton 1743 N. Main St., Bluffton
260-824-1931 • 888-824-0901 260-824-0900 • 800-824-0901
www.hidaymotors.com

Service with a Smile!

Barry Scott Service Manager
Mark Foreman Service Consultant
Marion Wells Service Consultant

Hiday Motors
1743 N. Main St., Bluffton • 824-0900

News-Banner Scoreboard

BASKETBALL High School

Thursday Boys' Scores
E. Noble 56, Churubusco 44
Ft. Wayne Dwegner 58, Angola 44
Lawrence North 68, Franklin Central 51

Plainfield 75, Southport 53
Tri 58, Wes-Del 33
Yorktown 74, Anderson 72, OT
Batesville Tournament
Championship
Indpls Roncalli 56, Columbus North 46

First Round
Batesville 62, Columbus North 54
Indpls Roncalli 66, Pendleton Hts. 56
Belfry (Ky.) Tournament
First Round
Avon 81, Menifee Co., Ky. 48
Clay City Tournament
Pool A
N. Vermillion 57, Owen Valley 54
Tri-West 63, Owen Valley 28
Tri-West 70, N. Vermillion 38
Pool B
Clay City 67, N. Central (Farmersburg) 44
Clay City 73, Riverton Parke 21
Clinton Central Tournament
First Round
Carroll (Flora) 66, Fountain Central 46
N. Putnam 62, Carroll (Flora) 39
Noblesville HomeSchool 47, Fountain Central 39

Tipton 76, Clinton Prairie 46
Delta Tournament
Championship
Delta 52, Northeastern 43
Fifth Place
Columbia City 49, Tippecanoe Valley 35
Seventh Place
Ft. Wayne South 75, Winchester 51
Third Place
Muncie Central 56, Ft. Wayne Concordia 49

Edinburgh Tournament
Championship
Hauser 62, Jac-Cen-Del 53
Fifth Place
Borden 62, Union Co. 25
Seventh Place
S. Decatur 79, Victory 25
Third Place
Austin 76, Edinburgh 48
Fishers Tournament
Consolation
Bloomington North 70, Evansville Bosse 64
Lawrence Central 70, Jeffersonville 64

First Round
Chesterton 57, Lawrence Central 54
Fishers 94, Bloomington North 48
Portage 69, Evansville Bosse 66
S. Bend Riley 60, Jeffersonville 58
Hebron Tournament
Championship
Hebron 60, South Bend Career Academy 54
Third Place

Tri-County 75, Portage Christian 28
Henryville Tournament
Championship
Springs Valley 65, Henryville 60
First Round
Henryville 66, Brown Co. 54
Springs Valley 77, Southwestern (Shelby) 46
Third Place
Brown Co. 75, Southwestern (Shelby) 72

Highland Tournament
Championship
Lafayette Jeff 51, Morgan Twp. 46
Fifth Place
Kankakee Valley 68, Calumet 40
Seventh Place
Andean 68, Whiting 23
Third Place
Griffith 39, Highland 29
Homestead Tournament
Championship
Hamilton Southeastern 57, Munster 56, 2OT
Fifth Place
Mishawaka Marian 49, Carroll (Ft. Wayne) 44
Pool A
Hamilton Southeastern 48, Homestead 38
Valparaiso 46, Mishawaka Marian 39
Pool B
Munster 66, S. Bend St. Joseph's 50
Zionsville 53, Carroll (Ft. Wayne) 44
Seventh Place
S. Bend St. Joseph's 68, Homestead 62, OT
Third Place
Valparaiso 59, Zionsville 56
Huntington North Tournament
Pool A
East Chicago Central 62, Huntington North 56
East Chicago Central 79, S. Bend Adams 69
Huntington North 61, S. Bend Adams 59

Pool B
Ft. Wayne Snider 61, Merrillville 59
Indpls Tech 61, Merrillville 58
Indpls Tech 62, Ft. Wayne Snider 61, OT
Kouts Tournament
First Round
Frontier 64, Kouts 61
N. Judson 37, S. Bend Trinity 21
Third Place
Kouts 52, S. Bend Trinity 23
LaPorte Tournament
Consolation
Ft. Wayne Luers 76, Hammond Morton 57
First Round
Hanover Central 53, Hammond Morton 50
Northridge 54, Ft. Wayne Luers 52
Semifinal
Northridge 54, Hanover Central 38
Lebanon Tournament
First Round
Evansville North 93, University 72
Gary 21st Century 68, Faith Christian 32

Lebanon 57, Indpls Perry Meridian 44
Mooresville 42, Indpls Metro 36
Miami County Invitational
Championship
Maconaquah 88, Peru 83
Third Place
Caston 47, N. Miami 26
Mitchell Tournament
Championship
Mitchell 47, Franklin Co. 42
Fifth Place
Salem 59, New Washington 36
Third Place
Shoals 48, White River Valley 34
North Central Classic
Carmel 60, Evansville Harrison 46
Lake Central 61, Indpls Pike 45
N. Central (Farmersburg) 52, Lou. Trinity, Ky. 50
Rich Twp. (Ill.) Tournament
Hammond Noll 58, Crete-Monee, Ill. 44
Richmond Tournament
Consolation
Bellmont 51, Indpls Soccina 46, OT
N. Decatur 63, Centerville 46
Seton Catholic 81, Indpls Shortridge 71, 2OT
First Round
Bloomington South 57, Belmont 42
E. Central 58, Phalen 48
Ft. Wayne North 52, Indpls Shortridge 36
Greensburg 54, Indpls Soccina 52, OT
Heritage Christian 55, Seton Catholic 53
Indpls Tindley 68, Centerville 65
NorthWood 59, N. Decatur 47
Richmond 76, Indianapolis Trailblazers Homeschool 49
Quarterfinal
Greensburg 59, Bloomington South 50
Heritage Christian 61, Ft. Wayne North 55
Indpls Tindley 59, NorthWood 56
Richmond 51, E. Central 28
River Forest Tournament
Championship
Hobart 45, River Forest 42
First Round
Hobart 60, Wheeler 20
River Forest 69, Lake Station 37
Third Place
Lake Station 46, Wheeler 40
Silver Creek Tournament
First Round
Providence 40, Charlestown 35
Silver Creek 50, Clarksville 39
Tabernacle Christian Tournament
Crothersville 57, Connersville 56
Legacy Elite 64, Crothersville 45
Union City Tournament
Pool A
Elwood 55, Southern Wells 50
Union City 47, Elwood 41
Union City 64, Southern Wells 39
Pool B
Bluffton 56, Randolph Southern 16
Eastern (Greentown) 54, Randolph Southern 39
Eastern (Greentown) 58, Bluffton 43



Raiders fall to Rebels

Southern Wells senior Karlee Warner (right) attempts to drive to the basket while being closely guarded by Randolph Southern's Alyssa Allen in the first half of Thursday night's game at the Raiderdome. The Raiders fell 49-37. (Photo by Chad Kline)

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

SUDOKU

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

King Classic Sudoku

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

Difficulty: ★★★★★

12/29

©2023 King Features Syndicate, Inc.

Services

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

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 Roper dryer, excellent condition, \$75 each, 260-224-2685.

Public Notices

PUBLIC NOTICE 12/27/2023
Liberty Township
Trustee's Office
Jack Chase Gentis - Trustee
Email: libertytownship90@gmail.com
Office Address: 2365 S 300 W, Liberty Center, IN 46766
Phone: 260-694-6300
Liberty Township Advisory Board meeting will take place on Tuesday, January 2, 2024, at 7:00 pm at the Liberty Center Fire Department located at 2600 S 300 W, Liberty Center, IN 46766. Meeting agenda: election of officers, approval of assistance requirements, nepotism policy signatures, future meeting date(s) to be scheduled, and other township matters if needed.
Dated this 27th day of December, 2023
Liberty Township Trustee of Wells County, IN
Jack Chase Gentis,
Liberty Township Trustee
nb 12/29
hspaxlp

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.

Lottery Numbers

Thursday's Drawings HOOSIER LOTTERY
Cash 5 — 07-15-30-38-44

Cash4Life — 05-07-10-32-58, Cash Ball: 03

Quick Draw MIDDAY — 03-07-12-16-17-19-23-25-33-39-40-41-44-47-60-64-68-69-70-76, BE: 12

Daily Three-MIDDAY — 07-08-09, SB: 06

Daily Three-EVENING — 00-04-01, SB: 07

Daily Four-MIDDAY — 03-00-05-07, SB: 06

Daily Four-EVENING — 09-06-02-04, SB: 07

Quick Draw EVENING — 03-04-09-23-26-28-32-34-37-41-49-52-55-57-61-66-68-69-75-79, BE: 68

Hoosier Lotto — Estimated jackpot (for Saturday): \$2 million

MEGA MILLIONS
Estimated jackpot (for Friday): \$92 million

POWERBALL
Estimated jackpot (for Saturday): \$760 million

BLUFFTON REDEVELOPMENT DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION NOTICE OF MEETING

5:30 P.M., JANUARY 02, 2024
The Bluffton Redevelopment Development Commission will meet at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, January 2, 2024 in the Bluffton City Council Chambers, City Hall, 128 East Market Street, Bluffton, Indiana.
nb 12/29
hspaxlp

SUDOKU ANSWER

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

EMPLOYMENT

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.

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: jturbull@dedricktool.com
260 824-3334

VEHICLES

Auto/Trucks

2010 CHEVROLET MALIBU White 4 door 4 cyl black interior \$2,500.00 OBO 260-273-3393 mmoon1423@gmail.com

HELOISE HINT: Maintain your battery. Check it (or have an auto mechanic inspect it) to make sure the top of the battery is clean. Dirt could be a conductor that drains your battery's power. Be sure the electrical system is charging correctly. Email HELOISE@Heloise.com.

SERVICES

Services

SERIOUSLY INJURED IN AN AUTO ACCIDENT? Let us fight for you! Our network has recovered millions for clients! Call today for a FREE consultation! 844-517-6414 (I)

Swiss Village, Inc.

Berne, IN

Now Seeking: Baylor LPN/RN

The Baylor LPN/RN at Swiss Village, Inc. will be a weekend-only LPN/RN position working from 6pm-6am on Friday and Saturday OR Saturday and Sunday. This position will work 24 hours/week and be paid for 36 hours/week. Candidates must be willing to work 48/52 weekends per year. Baylor LPNs/RNs will be considered Full-Time status and are eligible for benefits including health, dental, vision, and life insurance, Paid Time Off (PTO), and 403(b) retirement plan participation. **\$5,000 Sign On Bonus!!**

Apply online at www.swissvillage.org or send Resume to:
Taylor Lehman, VP of Human Resources
Swiss Village | 1350 W. Main St. | Berne, IN 46711
or email: careers@swissvillage.org
EOE

Public Sale Calendar

DECEMBER 31-JANUARY 7 - Estate of Mary Lynn Lautzenheiser, seller. Personal property online 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. Sale manager, Rod Fetters. *The Steffen Group Inc.*, 260-824-3006, www.steffengrp.com.

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 16 - 10 a.m. EST - Carmel Wellness and secured creditors, owner. Liquidation of Carmel Wellness featuring decompression table w/tension machine, body and therapy tables, hydraulic tables, washer and dryer, folding tables, chairs, desks, office supplies, and much more! Auction pick up, Jan. 17, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. *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. foot 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.

Maine bars Trump from ballot; Supreme Court weighs states' authority

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI and DAVID SHARP
Associated Press
 PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — Maine's Democratic secretary of state on Thursday removed former President Donald Trump from the state's presidential primary ballot under the Constitution's insurrection clause, becoming the first election official to take action unilaterally as the U.S. Supreme Court is poised to decide whether Trump remains eligible to return to the White House.

The decision by Secretary of State Shenna Bellows follows a ruling earlier this month by the Colorado Supreme Court that booted Trump from the ballot there under Section 3 of the 14th Amendment. That decision has been stayed until the U.S. Supreme Court decides whether Trump is barred by the Civil War-era provision, which prohibits those who "engaged in insurrection" from holding office.

The Trump campaign said it would appeal Bellows' decision to Maine's state courts, and Bellows suspended her ruling until that court system rules on the case. In the end, it is likely that the nation's highest court will have the final say on whether Trump appears on the ballot in Maine and in the other states.

Bellows found that Trump could no longer run for his prior job because his role in the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol violated Section 3, which bans from office those who "engaged in insurrection." Bellows made the ruling after some state residents, including a bipartisan group of former lawmakers, challenged Trump's position on the ballot.

"I do not reach this conclusion lightly," Bellows wrote in her 34-page decision. "I am mindful that no Secretary of State has ever deprived a presidential candidate of ballot access based on Section 3 of the Fourteenth Amendment. I am also mindful, however, that no presidential candidate has ever before engaged in insurrection."

The Trump campaign immediately slammed the

ruling. "We are witnessing, in real-time, the attempted theft of an election and the disenfranchisement of the American voter," campaign spokesman Steven Cheung said in a statement.

Legal experts said that Thursday's ruling demonstrates the need for the nation's highest court, which has never ruled on Section 3, to clarify what states can do.

"It is clear that these decisions are going to keep popping up, and inconsistent decisions reached (like the many states keeping Trump on the ballot over challenges) until there is final and decisive guidance from the U.S. Supreme Court," Rick Hasen, a law professor at the University of California-Los Angeles, wrote in response to the Maine decision. "It seems a certainty that SCOTUS will have to address the merits sooner or later."

While Maine has just four electoral votes, it's one of two states to split them. Trump won one of Maine's electors in 2020, so having him off the ballot there,

should he emerge as the Republican general election candidate, could have outsized implications in a race that is expected to be narrowly decided.

That's in contrast to Colorado, which Trump lost by 13 percentage points in 2020 and where he wasn't expected to compete in November if he wins the Republican presidential nomination.

In her decision, Bellows acknowledged that the U.S. Supreme Court will probably have the final word but said it was important she did her official duty.

That won her praise from the former state lawmakers who filed one of the petitions forcing her to consider the case.

"Secretary Bellows showed great courage in her ruling, and we look forward to helping her defend her judicious and correct decision in court. No elected official is above the law or our constitution, and today's ruling reaffirms this most important of American principles," Republican Kimberly Rosen, independent

Thomas Saviello and Democrat Ethan Strimling said in a statement.

But other Republicans in the state were outraged.

"This is a sham decision that mimics Third World dictatorships," Maine's House Republican leader, Billy Bob Faulkingham, said in a statement. "It will not stand legal scrutiny. People have a right to choose their leaders devoid of mindless decisions by partisan hacks."

The Trump campaign on Tuesday requested that Bellows disqualify herself from the case because she'd previously tweeted that Jan. 6 was an "insurrection" and bemoaned that Trump was

acquitted in his impeachment trial in the U.S. Senate after the capitol attack. She refused to step aside.

"My decision was based exclusively on the record presented to me at the hearing and was in no way influenced by my political affiliation or personal views about the events of Jan. 6, 2021," Bellows told the Associated Press Thursday night.

The high court needs to formally accept the case first, but legal experts consider that a certainty. The Section 3 cases seem tailor-made for the Supreme Court, addressing an area of U.S. governance where there's scant judicial guidance.

Gypsy Rose Blanchard out of prison years after persuading boyfriend to kill her abusive mother

By HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH
Associated Press
 Gypsy Rose Blanchard, the Missouri woman who persuaded an online boyfriend to kill her mother after she had forced her to pretend for years that she was suffering from leukemia, muscular dystrophy and other serious illnesses, was released Thursday from prison on parole.

Blanchard was released early in the day from the Chillicothe Correctional Center, said Karen Pojmann, a spokesperson for the Missouri Department of Corrections. Blanchard was granted parole after serving 85% of her original sentence, Pojmann said.

Blanchard's case sparked national tabloid interest after reports emerged that her mother, Claudine "Dee Dee" Blanchard, who was slain in 2015, had essentially kept her daughter prisoner, forcing her to use a wheelchair and feeding tube.

It turned out that Gypsy Blanchard, now 32, was perfectly healthy, not developmentally delayed as her friends had always believed. Her mother had Munchausen syndrome by proxy, a psychological disorder in which parents or caregivers seek sympathy through the exaggerated or made-up illnesses of their children, said her trial attorney, Michael Stanfield.

"People were constantly telling Dee Dee what a wonderful mother she was, and Dee Dee was getting all of this attention," he said.

Through the ruse, the mother and daughter met country star Miranda Lambert and received charitable donations, a trip to Disney World and even a home near Springfield from Habitat for Humanity.

Stanfield said Gypsy Blanchard's mother was able to dupe doctors by telling them her daughter's medical records had been lost in Hurricane Katrina. If they asked too many questions, she just found a new physician, shaving the girl's head to back up her story. Among the unnecessary procedures Gypsy Blanchard underwent was the removal of her salivary glands. Her mother convinced doctors it was necessary by using topical anesthetic to cause drooling.

Gypsy Blanchard, who had little schooling or contact with anyone but her mother, also was misled, especially when she was younger, Stanfield said.

"The doctors seem to confirm everything that you're being told. The outside world is telling you that your mother is a wonderful, loving, caring person. What other idea can you have?" Stanfield said.

But then the abuse became more physical, Stanfield said. Gypsy testified that her mother beat her and chained her to a bed. Slowly, Gypsy also was beginning to understand that she wasn't as sick as her mom said.

"I wanted to be free of her hold on me," Gypsy testified at the 2018 trial of her former boyfriend, Nicholas Godejohn of Big Bend, Wisconsin, who is serving a life sentence in the killing. She went on to add: "I talked him into it."

When she took the stand at his trial, prosecutors already had cut her a deal because

of the abuse she had endured. In exchange for pleading guilty in 2016 to second-degree murder, she was sentenced to 10 years in prison. The first-degree murder charge she initially faced would have meant a life term.

"Nick was so in love with her and so obsessed with her that he would do anything," Godejohn's trial attorney Dewayne Perry argued in court, saying his client has autism and was manipulated.

Prosecutors, however, argued that he was motivated by sex and a desire to be with Gypsy Blanchard, whom he met on a Christian dating website.

According to the probable cause statement, Gypsy Blanchard supplied the knife and hid in a bathroom while Godejohn repeatedly stabbed her mother. The two ultimately made their way by bus to Wisconsin, where they were arrested.

"Things are not always as they appear," said Greene County Sheriff Jim Arnott as the strange revelations began to emerge.

Even Gypsy's age was a lie. Her mother had said she was younger to make it easier to perpetuate the fraud, and got away with it because Gypsy was so small: just 4 feet, 11 inches tall.

Law enforcement was initially so confused that the original court documents listed three different ages for her, with the youngest being 19. She was 23.

Greene County Prosecutor Dan Patterson described it as "one of the most extraordinary and unusual cases we have seen."

Stanfield recalled that the first time he met Gypsy, she got out of breath walking the 75 yards (69 meters) from the elevator to the room where he talked to her. He described her as malnourished and physically frail.

"I can honestly say I've rarely had a client who looks exceedingly better after doing a fairly long prison sentence," Stanfield said. "Prison is generally not a place where you become happy and healthy. And I say that because, to me, that's kind of the evidence to the rest of the world as to just how bad what Gypsy was going through really was."

Gypsy Blanchard later said it wasn't until her arrest that she realized how healthy she was. But it took time. Eventually, she got married while behind bars to Ryan Scott Anderson, now 37, of Saint Charles, Louisiana.

The bizarre case was the subject of the 2017 HBO documentary "Mommy Dead and Dearest," the 2019 Hulu miniseries "The Act" and an upcoming Lifetime docuseries "The Prison Confession of Gypsy Rose Blanchard." Daytime television psychologist "Dr. Phil" McGraw interviewed her from prison. The novel "Darling Rose Gold" draws upon the story for its premise and Blanchard's own account, "Released: Conversations on the Eve of Freedom" is set for publication next month.

Amid the media storm, Pojmann, of the corrections department, said no in-person coverage of her release was allowed "in the interest of protecting safety, security and privacy."

U.S. sanctions money network tied to the Yemen Houthi rebels blamed for shipping vessel attacks

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. on Thursday imposed sanctions on a group of money exchange services from Yemen and Turkey alleged to help provide funding to Iranian-backed Houthi rebels who have been launching attacks on commercial shipping vessels in the southern Red Sea.

Included in the sanctions are the head of a financial intermediary in Sana'a, Yemen, along with three exchange houses in Yemen and Turkey. U.S. Treasury alleges that the

people and firms helped transfer millions of dollars to the Houthis at the direction of sanctioned Iranian financial facilitator Sa'id al-Jamal.

The sanctions block access to U.S. property and bank accounts and prevent the targeted people and companies from doing business with Americans.

Thursday's action is the latest round of financial penalties meant to punish the Houthis.

December GOODS & SERVICES DIRECTORY

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

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

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.

SWEARINGEN ELDER LAW

- Medicaid Planning
- Durable Power of Attorney
- Estate Planning & Deeds
- Special Needs Trusts
- Long Term Care Planning
- In-Home Healthcare Planning
- Wills, Living Wills, & Advance Healthcare Directives

(260) 888-9256
 FREE INITIAL CONSULTATION!

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

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?

10x10 \$45
 10x20 \$65

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!

Rx 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