

The News - Banner

www.News-Banner.com

THURSDAY, JANUARY 4, 2024 BLUFFTON, INDIANA • Wells County's Hometown Connection \$1.00

Bluffton moves toward digital communication

By JONATHAN SNYDER
Bluffton's government is taking a turn towards digital processes with new software currently in development. The new software aims to allow better governmental communication with its citizens, enable citizens to report issues directly to the proper organizations via online forms and improve overall efficiency within Bluffton's government.

Over the past year, Bluffton Common Council member Scott Mentzer discussed how Bluffton could improve the online payment process for utilities and other transactions. Eventually, these conversations led Mentzer to take a broader view of Bluffton's intercommunication with its constituents.

"I wanted to take a step back from that and have sort of a more core holistic question, which is, let's not just focus on how people do transactions at the utility office," said Mentzer. "Let's ask ourselves, 'How does the public interact with the city in all respects, and how can we make all of those interactions as efficient and as effective as possible?'"

CivicPlus, a web development company in Kansas, is developing the new software. They serve nearly 70 municipalities in Indiana and were selected after deliberation by Mentzer, City Engineer Kelly White, and Information Systems Director Karen Morris. Mentzer then presented the software to the Common Council, who approved CivicPlus' bid to develop it.

Along with online utilities, the software will allow developers and citizens to create and manage permit applications, payments, inspections and contract credentials. It will also include a citizens request tool, where people can directly contact Bluffton committees and boards about issues and (Continued on Page 2)

Wells County Trails in final fundraising push

By HOLLY GASKILL
Eight days remain for Wells County Trails to hit their fundraising goal for a paddlesports launch site in Vera Cruz. As of print, nearly \$40,000 of their group's \$50,000 goal has been raised. The launch site will be located on the northwest side of the Ind. 301 bridge in Vera Cruz. The space falls between existing launch sites in Linn Grove and at the White Bridge in Bluffton, creating two separate 3-hour pathways for various paddlesports. Wells County Trails has received a \$50,000 matching grant from the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority, contingent on the group's ability to fundraise matching grants for the project. The project is also eligible for \$5,000

matching funds from AARP Indiana. The fundraising campaign will close at 11 p.m. on Jan. 11. The construction project requires several components, as outlined by the group's fundraising campaign. First, the group will prepare the site for construction according to permits. A concrete ramp on the bank will allow users to safely enter and exit the water, improving access where the bank is steep and muddy. A driveway will connect the ramp to a grass parking area, following an existing ATV path with enough space for vehicles to

pass and turn around. Wells County Trails, the Wells County Foundation, the town of Vera Cruz, and the Wells County Commissioners have partnered together on the project. Donations can be made through the group's fundraising website, patronicity.com/VCPaddlesport

Launch, or dropped off at Wells County Trails, 211 Water St. in Bluffton. All donations are tax-deductible. Questions or inquiries can be directed to Area Plan Commission Executive Director Mike Lautzenheiser, 260-820-1671. holly@news-banner.com



First Bank of Berne made a \$2,500 donation to Wells County Trails on Wednesday. Pictured are Kent Liechty, Kaitlyn Roby, Thom Miller, Blake Gerber, Mike Lautzenheiser, Myndi Love, Brandy Fiechter, Erica Bennett and Tammy Slater. (Photo provided)

The top education topics state lawmakers will face this year

By CASEY SMITH
Indiana Capital Chronicle
Although Indiana lawmakers maintain the 2024 legislative session will be quicker, quieter and "noncontroversial," there's no shortage of critical — even touchy — education-related topics expected to be prioritized in the coming months.

The General Assembly's next reconvening comes amid what some state leaders have called a statewide literacy "crisis." The latest Indiana data indicates that one in five third-graders currently lacks foundational reading skills.

Policymakers said they're also increasingly concerned about high rates of absenteeism in Hoosier schools. Nearly 20 percent of Hoosier students were chronically absent from school last year — meaning that they missed 18 days or more — according to the Indiana State Board of Education.

GOP leadership said those issues are top priorities in 2024. A review — and possible tweaks — to last year's work-based learning legislation are also expected, in addition to new bills targeting anti-semitism on college campuses and cell phone use in K-12 classrooms.

Democrats, on the other hand, said they want to focus policy on early education — like fully funding pre-K and lowering the compulsory age for starting school to five. The state's largest teachers union also wants lawmakers to reopen the state budget to send more dollars to public schools in the second year of the biennium. Republican legislative leaders seem reluctant to do so, however.

Other key agenda items for the Indiana State Teachers Association include better collective bargaining, increased pay for support staff, more say over curriculum, and new social and emotional learning support for students.

Republican House Speaker Todd Huston emphasized that the short session will primarily deal with "implementation" and "fine-tuning" laws already in effect. "It's get in and get out," Huston said of the session while speaking at a legislative conference in December.

Republican Sen. Jeff Raatz, of Richmond, who chairs the Senate Education Committee, additionally said he's hoping to keep the (Continued on Page 2)

Census to count several Midwestern cities again

By MIKE SCHNEIDER
Associated Press
Four years after the last census, almost a dozen small communities in the Midwest are going to be counted again in hopes of getting a new grocery store or more state funding to build roads, fire stations and parks. Eleven small cities in Illinois and Iowa are the only municipalities so far to have signed agreements with the U.S. Census Bureau for a second count of their residents in 2024 and 2025, in a repeat of what happened during the 2020 census. The first year in which the special censuses can be conducted is 2024. With one exception, city officials don't think the numbers from the original count were inaccurate.

It's just that their populations have grown so fast in three years that officials believe they are leaving state funding for roads and other items on the table by not adding the extra growth to their population totals. Some also believe that new results from a second count will open up their community to new businesses by showing they have crossed a population threshold. "We anticipate a significant increase in population from the special census, particularly given that we have had a record building-permit year," said Marketa Oliver, city administrator for Bondurant, Iowa, a city of more than 8,700 residents in mid-2022, the last year figures are available, which is an 18 percent increase

over the count in 2020. Officials in Norwalk, Iowa, hope the second count shows the city has surpassed 15,000 people, since that is the threshold typically used as a rule of thumb in commercial real estate for when a community can support a business like a supermarket. "Once a city hits 15,000, the market opens up tremendously," said Luke Nelson, Norwalk's city manager. Unlike the 2020 census, the second counts won't be used for redrawing political districts or determining how many congressional seats each state gets. Instead, they will be used to determine how much the communities will get in state funding that often is calculated by population size.

Communities losing population in the past three years have nothing to worry about — their declining numbers won't catch up with them until after the 2030 census. Local, state and tribal governments across the U.S. have until May 2027 to ask for a special census from the Census Bureau. While the tab for the 2020 head count was picked up by the federal government, the local municipalities have to foot the bill for their special censuses. The cost isn't cheap, ranging from just over \$370,000 to almost \$500,000 for the communities. Some communities have already forged ahead with their own do-it-yourself recounts, unwilling to pay the price tag for (Continued on Page 2)

Johnson demands hard-line policies at border visit

By VALERIE GONZALEZ and STEPHEN GROVES
Associated Press
EAGLE PASS, Texas (AP) — U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson led about 60 fellow Republicans in Congress on a visit Wednesday to the Mexican border to demand hard-line immigration policies in exchange for backing President Joe Biden's emergency wartime funding request for Ukraine. He expressed serious doubts about whether he would support a bipartisan compromise. The trip to Eagle Pass, Texas, came as the Senate engages in delicate negotiations in hopes of striking a deal on border policies that could unlock Senate GOP support for Biden's \$110 billion package

for Ukraine, Israel and other U.S. security priorities. But Johnson, R-La., told The Associated Press during the border tour that he was holding firmly to the policies of a bill passed by House Republicans in May without a single Democratic vote. The bill, H.R. 2, would revive many of the policies pursued by former President Donald Trump, build more of the border wall and impose new restrictions on asylum seekers. Democrats called the legislation "cruel" and "anti-immigrant," and Biden promised a veto. "If it looks like H.R. 2, we'll talk about it," Johnson said of any border legislation that emerges from the Senate. With the number of illegal

crossings into the United States topping 10,000 on several days last month, Eagle Pass has been at the center of Republican Gov. Greg Abbott's Operation Lone Star, his nearly \$10 billion initiative that has tested the federal government's authority over immigration and elevated the political fight over the issue. The GOP House members touted their event as the largest congressional border trip ever. They traveled in two large buses beneath an international bridge in Eagle Pass where just two weeks ago illegal crossings prompted a large federal response that included closing railroad traffic and creating a large field for processing migrants. By Wednesday, the field

sat empty with only stakes in the ground and orange fencing. At a news conference, Johnson suggested he could use a looming government funding deadline as further leverage. "If President Biden wants a supplemental spending bill focused on national security, it better begin with defending America's national security," he said. Johnson added: "We want to get the border closed and secured first." Biden has expressed willingness to make policy compromises as the historic number of migrants crossing the border is an increasing challenge for his 2024 reelection campaign. Homeland Security (Continued on Page 3)

Inside
Local/Area
Obituaries 3
Police Notebook . . . 3

Opinion
Angelkeep 4

Also...
Sports 6-7
Classifieds 9
Diversions 8

Outside

Cold and sunny today, snow coming Friday night

Today	Friday	Saturday
High 33	High 37	High 38
Low 19	Low 27	Low 29

More Weather on Page 2

Online

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

Place Your Classified Ads 24/7

Vol. 95 No. 53
THURSDAY
January 4, 2024

RACING NEWS

Stay on track with the latest news from the

- Nascar Circuit
- Formula 1
- Indy Car

Every **Thursday & Friday** in the News-Banner

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

8 04879 07558 5

Digital communication

(Continued from Page 1)
violations. Citizens can then receive electronic updates about the process of resolving the problem.

“Right now, if you have an issue in the city ... you don’t really have ... just a one-stop shop where you’re saying, ‘Hey, I have this problem,’” said White. “The citizen request tool is trying to come up with a process so our citizens can get problems or issues directly to the city without having to call like 50 different numbers to get the right person.”

“A lot of the things that we do anymore these days, we either do on our computer or on our phone. We’re doing it digitally, remotely, not in person,” said Mentzer.

The new software will also allow easier access to different items on the Geographic Information System map. The current site allows viewers to see zoning and

floodplain data, but the new system will let developers see water mains and sewer lines. The software will also aid the city in managing new subdivisions, plats, site plans and other projects relating to planning and zoning.

Another of Bluffton’s goals for the new software includes more straightforward navigation by redesigning the city’s website. White acknowledges the challenges of navigating the current website, and Mentzer would like to see citizens able to access the information or organization they want to see in less than five clicks.

“Our website is really clunky,” White said. “It’s really hard to get around. It’s not very user-friendly, and so the whole basis (of the upgrade) is making us a more user-friendly ... business really.”

After demonstrating

the software, Mentzer and White reviewed CivicPlus with other cities around Indiana, including Elkhart, Greenville and Lafayette.

“A lot of them have noticed, especially since COVID, that there’s this need to interact better with our citizens or customers of how are we getting information in and out,” said White.

2024 will see the implementation and maintenance of the software funded by the American Rescue Plan Act, which needs to be spent in the next couple of years. There will be a yearly maintenance cost to keep the software running, but Mentzer believes the added government efficiency will offset that.

“The expectation is that we should certainly pick that up through the efficiency of work inside the city,” said Mentzer. “But more importantly, the expectation

is because this will help in our relationship with developers, that this is going to attract more development to the city. And that new development will easily pay for any ongoing costs that the software is going to give us.

Mentzer projects the website redesign will take about four to six months to complete, and the software itself will be implemented in six to nine months. The communication between the city and the public and the added efficiency of the software are reasons why Mentzer sees this project as beneficial for all parties involved.

“I would just say that this is one of those projects where I think everybody sees a benefit,” said Mentzer. “Residents benefit, businesses see a benefit, staff sees a benefit.”

jonathan@news-banner.com

Education topics

(Continued from Page 1)
session “noncontroversial and short,” but noted “there are certainly some big issues out there” still needing addressed.

Here’s a look at five education issues lawmakers said they plan to tackle during the non-budget year.

Improving third-grade literacy

Scrambling to improve literacy rates among Hoosier students, state lawmakers said they are adamant to toughen Indiana’s policy that requires most kids who are deficient in reading to repeat the third grade.

Huston and Senate President Pro Tempore Rodric Bray each said their caucuses will focus on addressing literacy in the 2024 legislative session — specifically by addressing Indiana’s third grade retention law. The Republican leaders both maintain that the current state law isn’t being implemented effectively.

Currently, Indiana third-graders who fail the statewide reading exam can be held back, although there are numerous exceptions, and deciding how to implement the state policy is ultimately left up to schools.

Bray said “narrowing some of those exceptions” will be a primary focus.

The proposal has so far been met with skepticism from Hoosier teachers, school officials and education experts who maintain that a more stringent statewide retention law could further inflate classroom sizes and have negative social and emotional effects for students. Critics additionally caution that holding back more kids will cost the state hundreds of millions dollars more in education expenses.

“There was a little bit of controversy there on both sides of the fence,” Raatz said about third grade retention. “But it’s (the General Assembly’s) responsibility to do the very best job we can to make sure that students can read as they go off into their careers.”

Indiana Secretary of Education Katie Jenner also said that too many Indiana third-graders who lack foundational reading skills are advancing to the fourth grade. She said she wants Hoosier lawmakers to toughen the state’s third grade retention policies — while keeping some exemptions in place.

Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb said he is additionally working on a similar proposal, but hasn’t provided specific details.

Tackling chronic absenteeism

Lawmakers have also guaranteed to spend time identifying solutions to the state’s high rates of chronic absenteeism.

According to the Indiana Department of Education, roughly 221,000 Hoosier students were considered chronically absent during the 2022-23 academic year.

More than 400,000 students missed at least 10 days of school — which, per Indiana statute — made them “habitually absent.”

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

Educators around the state say the reasons for absences vary, but family challenges some students face at home, along with hard-to-break tendencies to keep kids home when even mildly unwell — a habit borne out of the pan-

dem — are key factors. Schools are already getting creative to try to combat the growing problem.

Jenner, along with Republican state legislative leaders, have said that high rates of absenteeism are likely contributing to the state’s dismal literacy rates.

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

But agreeing on new policies could prove more challenging. Some ideas emphasize increased relationship-building between schools and parents, and directing more resources at schools to help hire additional support staff, for example. Other possible solutions are more punitive, however, and could see local courts get more involved in compelling students to go to school.

Bray said that “truancy,” specifically, is on the General Assembly’s radar. He expects bills will be filed to address attendance issues but did not provide specifics.

Raatz agreed, saying “there will be a bill dealing with truancy issues.”

Revisiting career-readiness

After the passage of House Enrolled Act 1002 in the 2023 session, GOP lawmakers said they’re looking to make “tweaks” and “improvements” to the massive, somewhat controversial bill that put in motion statewide career-centered education and training programs.

At its core, the legislation seeks to expand work-based learning in Indiana high schools, such as apprenticeships and internships.

Much of that includes the implementation of new high school diploma requirements that are more “flexible and relevant to students, employers, and communities,” as well as improving access to high-quality work-based learning opportunities and increasing the number of post-secondary credentials earned by students before they graduate from high school.

Democrats and other critics of the bill maintained that Indiana already had robust career and technical education programs. They argued that lawmakers should instead focus on boosting resources to those programs, rather than creating a new system that lacks clear enough guidelines or accountability measures — especially given that private businesses are expected to play a major role in new career-training initiatives.

Skeptics also remain concerned about loose parameters in the bill that would allow students to use money from state scholarship programs on job training, instead of traditional college coursework.

“We’re glad to hear that the majority is prepared to make some changes to what I call the vocational education bill,” said Rep. Ed DeLaney, D-Indianapolis. “It was not ready ... there were a lot of problems with it, and it needs to be adjusted, and we need to put some things (in the bill) on the backburner.”

Raatz held, however, that Indiana’s degree and credentialing systems are “operating under a century of the same behavior.”

“We have to ask ourselves ... Are we prepared for tomorrow?” the senator asked. “Some of what we hear is, ‘Well, we’ll keep doing what we’re doing ... but if we don’t change, Indiana will not have a workforce.’”

Huston said he’s “excited” about the reaction to new work-based learning

opportunities — particularly among Hoosier students, parents and families “who have recognized this is a key component to making a relevant education system for our students in the state.”

“But we need employers to step up and open more spots (for internships and apprenticeships),” he continued. “We began last year — I think this is another thing we have to tweak and implement a little better this year. We have to look at how we can provide more flexibility for schools and families and for companies. I don’t think there’s anything more crucial than creating an education system that delivers output that kids and families want, but also that meets our workforce needs.”

Bray added that “we don’t want schools deciding” kids’ career paths, and that legislation moving forward should empower those choices to be made by parents and students.

Targeting cell phones?

Without providing many details, Raatz also said to expect a bill “that’s a little bit more controversial” to restrict cell phone usage in K-12 classrooms.

He told the IndyStar the legislation is still in the works, but could mirror policies already in effect at some schools, including requirements for students to keep cell phones in lockers during class times.

Florida last year passed a ban on cellphone use during class time and some schools are putting even stricter restrictions on students, The New York Times reported.

Cracking down on antisemitism

In an opening address on Organization Day at the Statehouse, Huston highlighted a bill from the 2023 session that sought to codify antisemitism as discrimination on the basis of religion in the section of Indiana law about equal opportunity in schools. The bill, authored by Rep. Chris Jeter, R-Fishers, passed out of the House but did not advance from the Senate.

Huston has since said repeatedly — as the war between Israel and Hamas continues to unfold — that one of his caucus’ priorities is passing legislation to define antisemitism, including it in state code as religious discrimination and requiring schools to provide education “free of religious discrimination.”

“It was a good bill last year,” it’s even more appropriate this year,” Huston said in November. “You don’t have to turn on the news or read the news not to see the situation happening far too often across our country to the Jewish students. We just happened to be a little bit ahead of it last year.”

Raatz promised legislation, though he said lawmakers “have to be careful when putting together that bill — and certainly, we will be.”

But Senate Minority Leader Greg Taylor said the legislature should “protect all students on all campuses from any act of hatred,” not just one group of people.

DeLaney added that “it’s very hard to define antisemitism in today’s environment.”

“It used to be easy. People who were openly critical of Jews — they used words that I haven’t heard in years. That kind of flagrant antisemitism was out there. But now, it’s gotten very, very politicized,” DeLaney said. “I think if we’re trying to define things, we’ve got to find a definition that’s universally acceptable. I think that’s going to be very hard.”

Weather

Thursday, January 4, 2024

(24-hour observations at 8:14 p.m. Wednesday)
High: 32; Low: 27; Precipitation: Trace of drizzle
Wabash River Level (at the Main Street bridge): 1.21 feet at 9:45 p.m. Wednesday

Wells County forecast

Today: Mostly sunny, with a high near 33. North wind 5 to 10 mph.

Tonight: Mostly clear, with a low around 19. Northeast wind around 5 mph becoming south after midnight.

Friday: Partly sunny, with a high near 37. South wind around 5 mph.

Friday Night: A 30 percent chance of snow showers after 1 a.m. Cloudy, with a low around 27. Southeast wind 5 to 10 mph.

Saturday: A 40 percent chance of snow showers, mainly before 1 p.m. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 38.

Saturday Night: A 30 percent chance of snow showers, mainly after 1 a.m. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 29.

Sunday: A 30 percent chance of snow showers before 1 p.m. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 38.

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

Monday: Partly sunny, with a high near 40.

Monday Night: Rain and snow likely. Cloudy, with a low around 30. Chance of precipitation is 60 percent.

Tuesday: Rain, possibly mixed with snow. High near 42. Breezy. Chance of precipitation is 80 percent.

Tuesday Night: Rain and snow likely. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 28. Breezy.

Wednesday: A chance of snow. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 33. Breezy.

Census

(Continued from Page 1)
a bureau-organized special census. Others have challenged their numbers with the Census Bureau and gotten small wins.

The cities in Iowa paying for a Census Bureau-run second count — Altoona, Bondurant, Grimes, Johnston, Norwalk, Pleasant Hill and Waukee — are fast-growing suburbs of Des Moines. The reason special censuses are so popular in Iowa is because the state uses the once-a-decade head count as the official population when it comes to funding based on population size, said Gary Krob, coordinator for the State Data Center at the State Library of Iowa.

Other states between censuses use annual population estimates for calculating how much funding local governments should get each year.

“That means the 2020 census population is currently the official count for every city and county in Iowa,” Krob said. “The only way to adjust your population count between now and 2030 is to conduct a special census with the Census Bureau and then have this new count certified by the Iowa Secretary of State.”

The geography of the Illinois cities and their reasons for seeking a second count — McDonough, Pingree Grove, Urbana and Warrenville — are a little more scattershot than in Iowa.

Officials in Warrenville, a suburb of Chicago with more than 13,500 residents in 2020, believe they can

get an extra \$1.2 million annually in federal and state funding, based on the calculation that they have added almost 1,000 new residents from several new housing developments.

The Village of Pingree Grove outside Chicago has experienced rapid growth, doubling from more than 4,500 residents in 2010 to more than 10,300 residents in 2020. Village officials believe there will be 12,300 residents in 2024, so the special census is needed to bring in an increased share of state revenues, “versus waiting another six years for the 2030 Census,” said Laura Ortega, the village clerk.

University of Illinois students make up about half the population of the college town of Urbana and city officials maintain the 2020 census missed a lot of them.

During the 2020 census, places with large numbers of students emptied out as campuses shut down in-person classes because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Urbana’s expected modest population gain for the 2020 census ended up being a 7 percent decrease from the 2010 head count, with the largest decreases in student neighborhoods near campus, Mayor Diane Marlin said in an email.


The uncounted students are costing the city at least \$500,000 to \$750,000 annually in missing state and federal funding, the mayor said. The 2024 count in Urbana will be limited to neighborhoods that saw the biggest decreases.

WAC

LANDSCAPE LIGHTING


LANDSCAPE

SPOTLIGHTS & FLOOD LIGHTS



WALKWAY

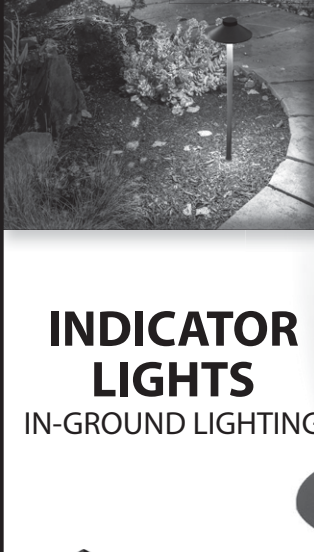
AREA LIGHTING




INDICATOR

LIGHTS

IN-GROUND LIGHTING





AUDIO VIDEO SECURITY NETWORKING

1421 Manchester St., Decatur, IN

½ block west of U.S. 27 North

260-724-2276 • www.icav.us

THINKING OF SELLING YOUR LAND?

THE FINEST ASSETS IN THE WORLD, INCLUDING FARM LAND, ARE SOLD AT AUCTION!



CALL ISAAC STOLLER

AUCTIONEER • REAL ESTATE BROKER

260.413.3515

STEFFEN GROUP



Perfect Pet

Food, Accessories, Training, and Grooming

HOURS: Mon.-Fri. 9-6 • Sat. 9-5 • Sun. 11-2

Emily Striker & Amanda Clark Owners

Curb Side Service Available

Call in Your Order for Convenience

618 N. Main St., Bluffton (beside Taco Bell) • 260-846-0276

www.PerfectPetBluffton.com

OBITUARIES

Don W. Minnich, 64

Don W. Minnich, 64, of Warren, died Sunday evening, Dec. 31, 2023, at the Cleveland Clinic in Cleveland, Ohio.
Don was born April 3, 1959, to the late Frank W. and M. Kathron (Hudson) Minnich. He married Susan Griffith on Feb. 19, 1982.
Survivors include his wife of 41 years, Susan Minnich, Warren; daughter, Jessica (Matt) Zavattaro, Warren; son, Nathan (Amy) Minnich, Warren; three grandchildren; and twin brother, Dan Minnich, Poneto.
Per Don's wishes, no services will be held. Inurnment will be at Jones Cemetery in rural Wells County.
Arrangements have been entrusted to Glancy-H. Brown & Son Funeral Home in Warren, Indiana.

Debra J. West, 68

Debra J. West, 68 of Bluffton, died Wednesday morning, December 3, 2023, at Stillwater Hospice Home in Fort Wayne.
Funeral arrangements are pending at this time with the Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home in Bluffton.

Indiana GOP files brief against Rust in primary challenge

By WHITNEY DOWNARD
Indiana Capital Chronicle

The Indiana Republican State Committee filed an amicus brief last week supporting a law that limits who can run under major party banners in Indiana.

U.S. Senate candidate John Rust is challenging the statute because it prevents him from filing as a Republican against party favorite Jim Banks, a U.S. Representative.

The 2021 law bars primary ballot access unless a candidate's two most recent primary votes match the party they wish to represent — a measure that Marion County Superior Judge Patrick J. Dietrick ruled was unconstitutional in December.

The ruling and injunction was a win for Rust, who wouldn't qualify for the ballot because of the two-primary rule. Banks and Rust are seeking to succeed U.S. Sen. Mike Braun, also a Republican, who is pursuing the governor's office in the 2024 cycle.

But the Indiana GOP — filing in support of defendants Secretary of State Diego Morales, the Indiana Election Commission and Jackson County Republican Party Chair Amanda Lowery — said the law poses a "modest test" that "weeds out candidates who are not actually affiliated with the party."

"Political parties have a constitutional right to determine their own membership and limit the candidates appearing on their primary ballots based on that membership; the State has an interest in safeguarding that right. The Committee has a substantial interest in enforcing and upholding a law that protects its right to freedom of expressive association and promotes election integrity," the party's filing said.

A spokesman for the Indiana Democratic Party had no comment at this time.

Indiana GOP arguments

The Indiana Republican Party made its preference for Banks clear when it took the unprecedented step to endorse him, something unheard of in recent modern history.

Despite Banks' widespread name recognition, campaign war chest and the support from both former President Donald Trump and current seat holder Braun, he also continues to attack underdog Rust.

The state party filing said Rust could run "while describing himself as a Republican or associating himself with the Republican ideology ... (but) does not have the constitution right to run for Senate as the Republican Party's nominee..."

Republican and Democrat nominees for the U.S. Senate are selected via a state-funded primary in Indiana, rather than through a convention.

Both parties use the convention process in Indiana to nominate candidates for state-level positions, including: Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, Treasurer of State and State Auditor. That political process used to include other offices, such as U.S. senators.

Minor political parties in Indiana, including the Libertarian Party, may utilize conventions more than the state's major parties. Libertarians traditionally have nominated their candidates for governor and senator at convention.

Republicans argued the injunction on the 2021 primary law "will have the effect of returning party politics to the old ways," meaning the convention process, for other political nominations.

The filing said that "chaos and unchecked gamesmanship" would ensue because "those loyal to one political party (could seek) to appear on another party's primary ballot to confuse or mislead voters." Several of Indiana's prominent politicians have switched parties, including leading Democratic nominee for governor Jennifer McCormick and Braun himself.

Other details

The filing rebuffs several arguments from Dietrick, who said the law appeared to benefit political parties over the state and Hoosiers.

"The distinction between wholly internal aspects of party administration on one hand and participation in state run and state financed elections on the other is at the heart of this case. Therefore, it is the State's asserted interests, not the interests of the Indiana Republican Party," the ruling said. "There is no compelling or even rational government interest being served here."

According to the party, Dietrick's ruling and injunction "consistently conflates the right to run for office with a distinct, but non-existent, right to appear on the Republican primary ballot."

Rust, the filing noted, could run as a write-in candidate or under a third party but not as a Republican under the 2021 law — "a minor restriction that does not trigger strict scrutiny."

Republicans acknowledge that the law isn't "an infallible proxy for party affiliation" but go on to say that no law can determine "the inner-thoughts and beliefs of a candidate."

"But our entire system relies on the presumption that voters generally vote consistent with their beliefs. It is rational that a candidate's most recent voting history likely reflects her beliefs, values and party affiliation," the filing said.

Ossian Rotary to host Rotary District Governor Ed van Wijk

At its regular weekly meeting Thursday, Jan. 4, Ossian Rotary will host Rotary District 6540 Governor Ed van Wijk, who will discuss annual initiatives in northern Indiana Rotary clubs and answer questions from guests.

In addition to being Rotary district governor, van Wijk is also the pastor of Knightstown United Methodist Church. He preaches, teaches, manages, and is the spiritual leader of the congregation. Prior to that, he served several other United Methodist churches in northern Indiana.

In a prior career, van Wijk was a computer consultant and worked primarily on the implementation and operation of human resource management systems.

A native of the Netherlands who emigrated to the USA in 1991, van Wijk holds the Master of Divinity degree from Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston Illinois, the Bachelor of Science in Systems Analysis and Design from Purdue University and the Radio Officer degree from the Radio Holland Radio Officer School in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

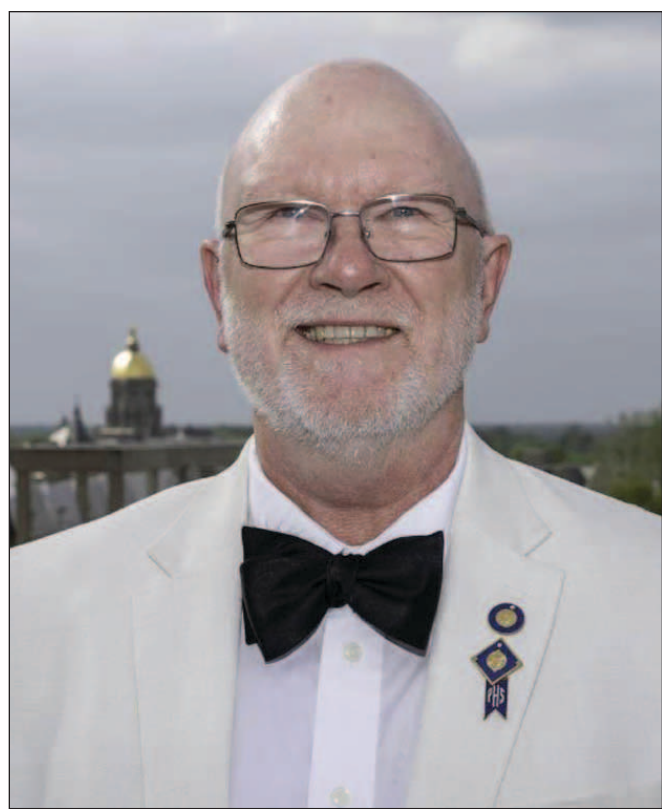
Van Wijk joined Rotary in 2007 and has been club president as well as district trainer. He is a graduate of the Rotary Leadership Institute, a Paul Harris Society member, a major donor, a benefactor, and a member of the bequest society.

In order to stay in shape, van Wijk runs, and has completed 12 half-marathons. Van Wijk loves to sing and play the guitar. He enjoys travel and hanging out with Rotary friends and is the father of three grown children.

Next week's speaker is Abby Watkins, adult protective services investigator.

Please note that Ossian Rotary will cancel when North-ern Wells Community Schools has a delay or cancellation due to weather.

Ossian Rotary is a small part of a larger organization,



Ossian Rotary will host the Rotary District 6540 Governor Ed van Wijk at its Thursday meeting. (Photo provided)

Rotary International, which was founded almost 120 years ago in Chicago. Ossian Rotary is a group of people with a desire to meet new people, network, get involved and make a difference in Ossian and the surrounding community. Each week we have a different speaker, usually business experts, political and civic leaders, and entrepreneurs, who help us stay informed on topics that are relevant to our community. Anyone is welcome to attend. Please contact Jeremy Penrod, Ossian Rotary President, at Jeremy.Penrod@edward-jones.com.

Police Notebook

INCIDENTS

City:

Tuesday, 4:06 p.m., Caller reported man possibly passed out at wheel. Subject advised he worked late shift and early morning shift and fell asleep in his truck. No signs of intoxication.

Tuesday, 4:24 p.m., Pizza Hut. Driver cited for operating with expired plates.

Tuesday, 7:24 p.m., Walmart. Report of an issue with parked car.

Wednesday, 12:15 a.m., 800 block of Eastmoor Drive. Caller reported someone possibly attempted to gain entry through back door of residence. Unable to locate anyone, extra patrol requested.

Wednesday, 1:29 a.m., North Main and East Monroe streets. Report of a vehicle crossing the center line.

Unable to locate.

Wednesday, 8:58 a.m., 200 block of Capri Court. Caller reported someone threw eggs on his vehicle in parking lot.

Wednesday, 10:23 a.m., Indiana Physical Therapy. Report of a car in building, no injuries. Building commissioner contacted as a pillar is missing.

Wednesday, 10:30 a.m., Pak A Sak North. Driver cited for expired plates.

Wednesday, 11 a.m., Walmart. Caller requested to speak to officer regarding suspicious activity.

County:
Tuesday, 4:16 p.m., Imel Motor Sales. Caller requested officer to sign lost plate affidavit.

Tuesday, 4:37 p.m., Wells County Jail. Warrant served on Stephanie Jarrett.

Tuesday, 5:48 p.m., East 300 North and 100 East, Bluffton. Caller reported he found tools at intersection.

Tuesday, 6:52 p.m., 10816 South 600 West, Montpelier. Caller requested officer check property after truck pulled into driveway multiple times. No evidence of tampering, added to house watch list.

Wednesday, 3:16 a.m., Ind. 1 and East 400 North, South of Bluffton. Officer checked on vehicle on side of road. Driver advised they were getting number for fire-wood.

Wednesday, 7:42 a.m., 6800 South Meridian Road, Poneto. Welfare check requested for subject with excess mail and lights off. Subject was fine.

Wednesday, 8:00 a.m.,

East Rose Road, Bluffton. Report of two vehicles parked in wooded area, officer advised subjects to move along.

Wednesday, 8:11 a.m., 1000 South and Ind. 3, Warren. Car versus deer.

Ossian:
Tuesday, 3:14 p.m., 100 East and 800 North, Ossian. Driver cited for speeding 62 in a 45 mph zone.

Tuesday, 3:29 p.m., Ind. 1 and East 500 North, Ossian. Officer assisted driver with antifreeze leak.

ARRESTS
Joshua Craig Causey, 33, Portland, domestic battery, a Class A misdemeanor. No bond set.

Jamarcus Tywan Cooper, 39, Fort Wayne, dealing cocaine or narcotic drug, a Level 4 felony. Bond set at \$20,000.

Hard-line policies

(Continued from Page 1)

Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas and White House staff have been involved in the Senate negotiations.

"We've got to do something," Biden told reporters Tuesday night. He said Congress should approve his national security proposal because it also includes money for managing the influx of migrants. "They ought to give me the money I need to protect the border," he said.

Administration officials have criticized Johnson's trip as a political ploy that will do little to solve the problem. White House spokesperson Andrew Bates said Republicans were compromising national security by threatening to shut down the government and delaying approval of funding for additional border security.

"When they're at the border, they're going to see the magnitude of the problem and why we have said now for about three decades, their broken immigration system is in desperate need of legislative reform," Mayorkas told CNN on Wednesday. "So we are focused on the solutions, and we hope that they will return to Washington and focus on the solutions as well."

House Republicans also contend that Mayorkas' management of the border has amounted to a dereliction of his duties and they are moving ahead with rare impeachment proceedings against a Cabinet member,

with a first committee hearing on the matter scheduled for next week. Mayorkas told MSNBC he would cooperate with an inquiry.

During parts of December, border crossings in Eagle Pass, as well as other locations, swamped the resources of Customs and Border Protection officials. Authorities closed cargo rail crossings in Eagle Pass and El Paso for five days and shut down border crossings in the Arizona city of Lukeville.

Authorities say the numbers of migrants eased over the December holidays as part of a seasonal pattern. The border crossings are reopening, and arrests for illegal crossings from Mexico fell to about 2,500 on Monday, from more than 10,000 on several days in December, officials said.

"We need to fix the border. There's virtually unanimous agreement among Democrats and Republicans about that," Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said at the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday. He added: "Everyone's going to have to give something to get this done."

Republicans are pressuring Biden and Democrats to accept strict border measures, and they see the high number of migrants arriving at the border as a political weakness for the president.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell told reporters in Kentucky on Tuesday that in a conversation with 81-year-old Biden,

he made the case: "You can't do anything about how old you are, you can't do anything about inflation, but this is something that's measurable that you could claim credit for."

McConnell also said he was approaching the talks with "optimism that somehow we will get this all together and we're giving it our best shot."

Sen. James Lankford, the Oklahoma Republican negotiating the Senate agreement, called H.R. 2 "a great bill," but said it was not realistic to expect the president or Senate Democrats to support the measures.

Senate negotiators have focused on tougher asylum protocols for migrants arriving at the U.S.-Mexico border, bolstering border enforcement with more personnel and high-tech systems, and enforcement measures that would kick in if

the number of daily crossings passed a certain threshold.

Sens. Krysten Sinema, I-Ariz, Chris Murphy, D-Conn., and Lankford met Wednesday afternoon and said they were trying to agree on legislative text they could present to their colleagues. Sinema said the group was "closing in" on an agreement, but technical work remained before Congress returns to Washington next week.

James L. Klosterman Jr.
 Calling: 4 - 7 p.m.,
 Friday, January 5.
 Funeral: 7 p.m.
 Friday, January 5 at
 the funeral home.
Goodwin-Cole & Harnish
 MEMORIAL CHAPEL
 A Tradition of Caring
 Locally Owned and Operated Since 1922
 St. Rd. 124 East, Bluffton
 824-3852

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

STEFFEN GROUP
REAL ESTATE & AUCTIONS

**LOCAL EXPERIENCE
REAL RESULTS**

NICK HUFFMAN
REAL ESTATE BROKER & AUCTIONEER
260.827.8255

FORT WAYNE
Box Drop
 Mattress & Furniture
 260-227-2145

We treat our customers the way we want to be treated!

Family Owned & Operated!

Amy & Tracy Houtz
260-227-2145

7824 Bluffton Rd.
Fort Wayne, IN

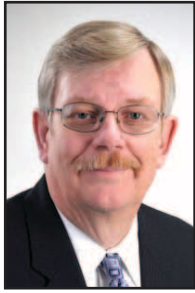
By Appointment:
Tues - Wed - Thurs

Showroom Open:
Fri & Sat 11am - 4pm

Post-holiday post office woes

“The whole (postal) journey took 10 days. The Pony Express and its horses could have done it in eight days given its standard of 75 miles per day.”

Since Christmas is always a busy time of year for our mail system, I spent some time reflecting on the changes that the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) has undergone during my lifetime. Forever stamps has to be the best idea the Post Office has implemented, although one wonders why it took so long to figure that one out. USPS also deserves credit for its Informed “Deliver” software which not only tells you what will be delivered today but also any packages working their way to your home.



Mark Franke

Hoosier Opinions

The customer service personnel are for the most part friendly and courteous. For example my housing subdivision has been blessed with the same mailman for over 20 years. He knows us by name and by sight, at least us retirees who frequently greet him at the gang of mailboxes on our street. His attitude toward customer service is tops; he frequently will bring our mail to the front door if there is a package that won't fit into our standard size mailboxes. And I mean all our mail for that day, not just the oversized package. He harks back to an earlier, simpler, friendlier time.

But not all the way back to my childhood when stamps were three cents each and there were two deliveries per day. We aren't going back to the 1950s (sadly enough) but we can look at the increase in stamp prices to get an insight into what is happening to our postal service.

According to the Consumer Price Index, general inflation has exceeded 1,000 percent during my lifetime. That means things today cost more than eleven times what the same things cost in 1951. That's a serious economic problem for a lot of reasons but let's narrow down our analysis to just the Post Office, which consistently blames inflation for its rate increases.

If the price of a first-class stamp would be priced in 2023 dollars to equal its three-cent cost in 1951, it would be 35 cents. The next increase will take it to 68 cents, nearly double what can be attributed to general inflation. And it's not just letter stamps. I changed my preferred shipper to UPS from the USPS with a California retailer because the UPS costs were only about one-half of those charged by the Post Office after recent rate increases. Being the most expensive option in a competitive market doesn't usually turn out well. Between the other package delivery companies and the replacement of personal letters by email messaging, the Post Office is in a very competitive situation indeed.

Inflation can't be blamed for it all. Maybe it is the high wage costs involved in maneuvering my Christmas stamp order around the state of Michigan. That was not a non-sequitur. Consider this case study:

I ordered stamps directly from the USPS website on December 16. On December 19 the order was received at a Kansas City distribution center and I was told to expect delivery on Dec. 21. Good enough, but they didn't arrive.

When they still had not shown by Christmas, I used the USPS tracking tool to figure out what had happened. I learned that they had been shipped to Traverse City, Michigan, and arrived there on Dec. 24. Why Traverse City? I can't comprehend how that can exist on any delivery line between Kansas City and Fort Wayne.

It gets better. On Dec. 26, after allowing for the federal holiday, the stamps were sent on to Grand Rapids, Michigan. They arrived there the next day and then made the trip to Indianapolis. They were gradually triangulating on my Fort Wayne home. Was Toledo next?

No. Indianapolis immediately sent them back to Grand Rapids, making the round trip within one calendar day. Perhaps it was for insufficient postage on the shipping envelope?

Eventually I was alerted of a Dec. 30 delivery but the stamps actually arrived the day before. It took Fort Wayne only eleven minutes from arrival to loading on my mail carrier's truck.

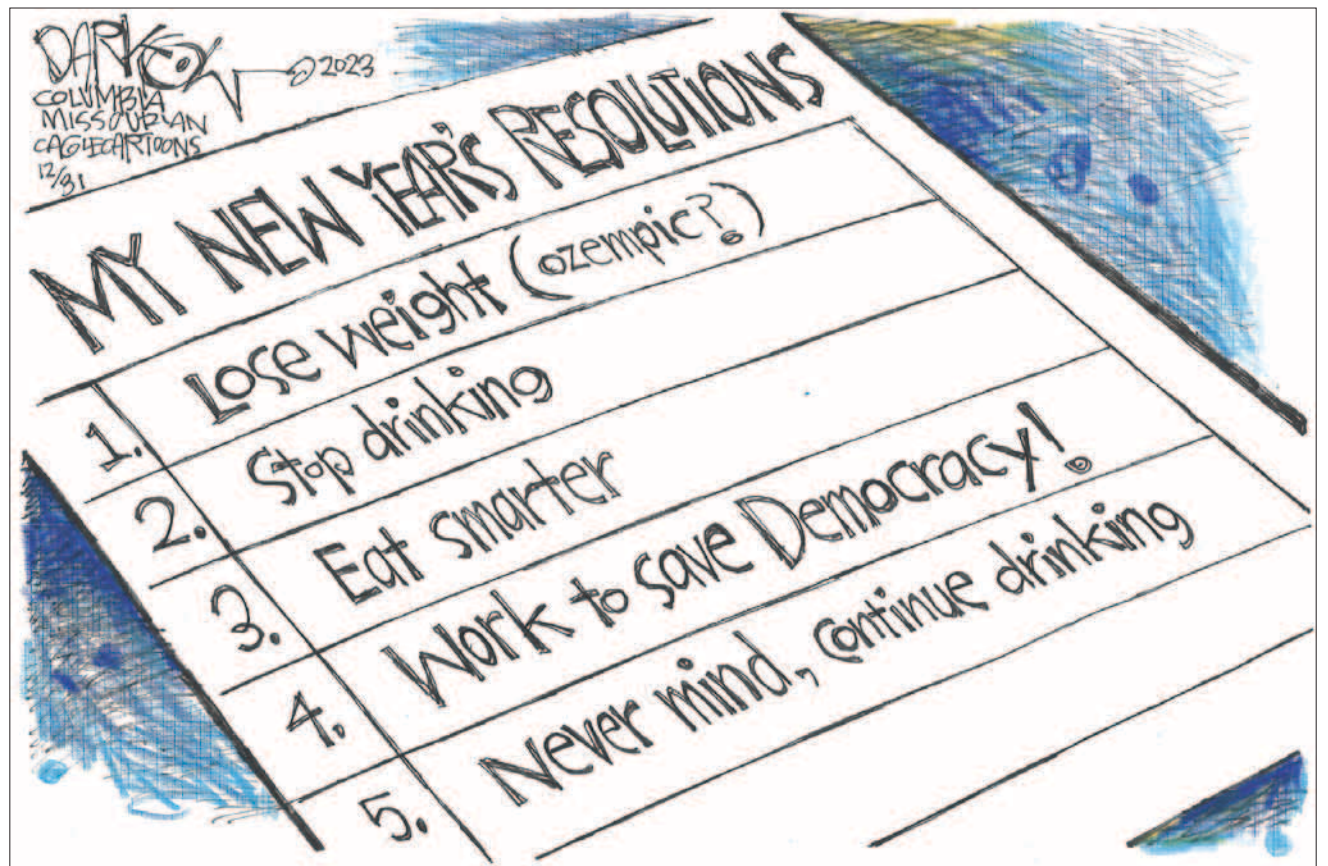
The whole journey took 10 days. The Pony Express and its horses could have done it in eight days given its standard of 75 miles per day.

I should state that this is unusual. Past experience has seen delivery in two or three days and I should allow for the Christmas delivery load. But why send them to Traverse City, and why did Indianapolis send them back to Grand Rapids? Perhaps there is an explanation other than Murphy's Law. If so, I would love to hear it if only to satisfy my curiosity.

But I will put the best construction on this and be thankful for the Forever stamp policy. At least my wife can use these stamps next Christmas.

Or maybe I should have asked for my stamps to be shipped through UPS. Mark Franke, M.B.A., an adjunct scholar of the Indiana Policy Review and its book reviewer, is formerly an associate vice-chancellor at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne.

Mark Franke, an adjunct scholar of the Indiana Policy Review, is formerly an associate vice-chancellor at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne.



A Constitution-flouting 'authoritarian' is already in the White House

Overcaffeinated Cassandras continue to forecast an “authoritarian” and anti-constitutional Donald Trump dictatorship. They are mistaken about the near future because, among other reasons, they misread the recent past. Also, they are oblivious to, or at least reticent about, the behavior of Trump's successor: Joe Biden is, like Trump, an authoritarian recidivist mostly stymied by courts.

When Trump wielded presidential power, he could not even build his border wall. But next time, the fevered forecasters warn, the entire federal apparatus, which mostly loathes him, will suddenly be submissive. Such alarmism, which evidently gives some people pleasurable frissons, distracts attention from the similarity of Trump's and Biden's disdain for legality.

Instances of Trump's anti-constitutional behavior have been amply reported and deplored. Biden's, less so — although they (e.g., the eviction moratorium, the vaccine mandate, the cancellation of student debt), and judicial reprimands of them, have been frequent. Now, consider the lack of attention to his contempt for the Federal Vacancies Reform Act, and the Senate majority's supine complicity.

The president has plenary power to nominate principal officers of the federal government without seeking prior advice from the Senate. The Senate has plenary power to confirm — or reject — nominees, and it can somewhat condition the president's power by stipulating certain qualifications for particular offices.

Biden nominated Ann Carlson last March to be administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Two months later, when it was clear that the Senate would not confirm her, Biden withdrew the nomination. But less than five weeks after that, he named Carlson acting administrator. His impertinence would perhaps be limited, by the Vacancies Act, to 210 days, which would expire Dec. 26. Furthermore, the Supreme Court has held that the act prohibits “any person who has been nominated to fill any vacant office from performing that office's duties in an acting capacity.”

Biden, whose indifference to these legalities is Trumpian, is also unimpressed by several other provisions of the act that redundantly disqualify Carlson. In a masterpiece of understatement, Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Tex.) says, “It would be odd indeed for the law to prohibit someone to serve as acting while nomination is pending but to allow them to serve as acting after their nomination was pulled.”

In September, Cruz proposed an amendment to an appropriations bill that would have defunded Carlson by prohibiting anyone who was nominated and failed to get Senate approval for a position from being paid

to act in that position. The Senate rejected the amendment 49-47, with only one Democrat (West Virginia's Joe Manchin III, of course) supporting it.

In Federalist 51, James Madison predicted that liberty would be protected because the separation of powers would give “to those who administer each department the necessary constitutional means and personal motives to resist encroachment of the others.” Unfortunately, Madison's expectation that one branch's ambition would “counteract” the other presumed that, for example, the Senate's pride would make it jealous of its prerogatives in providing advice and consent — or withholding consent — concerning people nominated by presidents to executive branch positions.

The Constitution's Madisonian architecture — the federal government's constitutional equilibrium — has been jeopardized by political tribalism. By party loyalty that breeds subservience to the president, and disloyalty to the Senate as an institution.

Such behavior is not new. Presidents acting as though their preferences supersede provisions of law predates Biden's and Trump's constitutional vandalism. For example, in 1997 President Bill Clinton said, “I have done my best to work with the United States Senate in an entirely constitutional way. But ...” But. Because the Senate would not confirm his nominee to head the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, Clinton made — entirely unconstitutionally — Bill Lann Lee “acting” assistant attorney general in perpetuity. The Senate acquiesced in this erasure of a power central to the system of checks and balances.

Justice Joseph Story, who served on the Supreme Court from 1812 to 1845, said that “no serious abuse of the power can take place without the co-operation of two co-ordinate branches, of the government.” Today, a Democratic executive and a Democratic-controlled Senate have cooperated in abusing power while historically warning against future authoritarian illegalities.

Perhaps because of the ruckus that Cruz raised calling attention to Carlson, and in spite of Senate Democrats defeating his proposal to defund her, she surrendered her office on Dec. 26. Contentment about this small victory for constitutional propriety should, however, be tempered by chagrin that such propriety, and legality (reread the Supreme Court's words in paragraph five, above), have become contested concepts.

georgewill@washpost.com



George Will

Angelkeep 'rap sheet' for 2023 past

Angelkeep received an Easter, Autumn, several Christmas, and a couple New Year's Letters. We like the reads. A “catch up” time. Most are “Norman Rockwell family-sweet.” Few announce losses. Angelkeep's 2023 can be recalled as both + and - .

A year-long diet resulted in zero + or - .

Angelkeep lost three doe friends, hit by a train. That news hit the News-Banner front page. Nature took charge, in a scriptural-like “earth to earth, dust to dust” sort of way.

Discover Ouabache. Google it. Enough said, it speaks volumes.

Covid-23 struck Angelkeep human inhabitants. Angelkeep quarantined three times the requirement to make sure Gwen and I didn't pass horrible nasties to others. It brought back memories of friends lost in pandemic years. Did the Covid vac and two boosters save us? At peak, Angelkeep's strongest at any moment, became caregiver for the other. Duty passed back and forth rapidly. A cough extended into the second month. Friends prayed us through recovery.

The year of 2023 became Angelkeep's first “full year of cell.” Gwen mastered cell-spoken audio books thanks to Wells County Public Library's fine staff. I required a year of training in texting. Cell calls yet as often get turned off as being correctly answered. Thus, Angelkeep “loves & keeps” a landline. Four new remotes are landline ready. A texted Christmas photo success could mean more cell advancement for 2024.

An MRI sent Gwen fast-tracked through a steroid injection-PT-surgery-PT year. I declared her the “Spinal Fusion Poster Girl of 2023.” The

Angelkeep Journals

trek that could be a book continues. Prayer's positives percolated. Surgery went perfect, though expanded. Angelkeep offers high praise for surgeon Dr. Brandon Huggins. Gwen and I keep noticing our doctors appear to be so young, perhaps due to our aging infirmities. Dr. Huggins had history with Angelkeep. He once took a dive from the pier into a scum-covered Angelpond upon a dare from his sister and friends who were paddle boating across the pond.

So an old neighbor-friend helped in a major way. Due to his work a wheelchair, walker, shower stool, and numerous canes collect Angelkeep dust from non-use. Praise God. Gwen and I prayed the Lord would guide Dr. Huggins' hands. We know He did. More recovery lies ahead. Doc said, “a year.” We're half-way there. The end remains unknown. But before 2023 concluded Gwen and I met a friend and dined out. It was the first time in over five years that we could do that together. Praise God. The home return and next day were extra painful, but milestones are not mastered in a single day. 2024 hope abounds.

Early in 2023 came an epiphany. E. B. Williamson deserves a printed hardcover. Long ago I, as a local history nerd, began squeezing historical chapters between writing Angelkeep Journals' columns. Numerous books ended home-printed in two copies, gifted to two local libraries. Wil-



Alan Daugherty

liamson became too great a story to treat in that manner. A true published illustrated hardcover would take a miracle. Miracles do happen on Angelkeep Street. Some miracles require assistance and inspiration.

Ed Schwartz of Loving Shepherd Ministries and Oak Creek Media Publishing stepped in with his A-game.

Thus, 2023 became a whirlwind of Williamson amid all the other happenings. Williamson started in 2021 and continues in 2024. Angelkeep would much appreciate some of this column's readers to join the Revelation Celebration of Williamson's Bluffton History at the Wells County Public Library at 6:30 p.m. on January 16. E. B. deserves a standing-room only crowd. He deserves a standing ovation. It's long overdue. He is Bluffton's greatest ever human asset. Also a “best kept secret” for some reason.

If you'd like a preview, “Edward Bruce Williamson – Bluffton History” remains available for purchase at News-Banner, First Bank of Berne, and Harvest of Health, that last pick-up point the actual former home of the Williamsons.

Who did Gwen and I meet for a Richards' dinner? Tammy and her daughter Sarah, or E. B. Williamson's great-granddaughter and great-great-granddaughter. The restaurant chain was started by Don Strong. Strong once lived in the home of E. B.

I completed September's shortest ever “Rock Steady Boxing Bluffton Walk” with pride toward the organization, but with a painful wimpy, gimpy, limping-hip finale.

That's a rap (sheet) for 2023.

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

The News-Banner

(USPS 059-200)

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

News-Banner Publications, Inc.

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

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

Holly Gaskill, Editor
Mark Miller, Opinion Page Editor

Gloria spends a memorable Christmas Eve in the barn

“Mom, may we sleep in the barn on Christmas Eve?”

Christmas Eve was the warmest day so far in December. I weighed the extra work and loss of sleep with the memories that would be made.

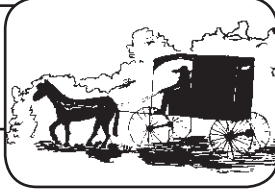
“Let’s do it!” I told the children. Excitement reigned. Everyone grabbed their own sleeping bag and headed for the barn.

Together we headed for the barn, which hosts Austin’s rabbit with babies, sometimes the horses, sheep, or whatever animal needs shelter- not to mention the issue of keeping mice at bay. The aroma of hay filled the barn as we spread a thick layer over the barn floor. “Fun! Thank you, Mom!” little Joshua sweetly stated. I knew in my heart it was worth it. Hosanna and Joshua fetched a manger for Joshua to sleep in while the three other boys fetched a bail of straw. I headed for the house and fetched a loaf of bread and a pot of chili soup I had heated. Chuckling yet sympathetically, I thought of those olden days; surely Mary did not grab styrofoam bowls and plastic spoons to lighten her load. Oh my, are we too spoiled?

By the time I returned to the barn, the boys were trying to figure out exactly where they would sleep. Austin was busy stuffing hay in the top sec-

The Amish Cook

by Gloria Yoder



tion of our large V-shaped hay trough and was convinced he was safe sleeping up in there. (This heavy-duty trough also serves as a divider between the horses and the front part of the barn) “We’ll give it some time and see if he doesn’t back out,” I told myself. Joshua was getting situated in the manger, and Jesse had claimed a spot on top of a large square bale. Elijah chose to sleep in a feed barrel which we placed on its side. The girls found comfy spots beside me on the bed of hay.

Supper was next. I beamed at the circle of children all around me. This would be so much what Daniel would have enjoyed-together celebrating simple things. When I lost the twisty tie for the bread bag, Austin suggested I use a piece of straw, which worked perfectly.

“The ducks are going to be our sound machine!” Jesse declared (he prefers sleeping with some sort of sound in the background). I smiled; the loudly quacking ducks were not so amused over the ado and would undoubtedly need to be taken out for the night.

The horses contentedly munched on Austin’s fresh batch of hay, seemingly impressed with extra company.

Austin was sizing up the situation, “I’m throwing more hay on the floor of their stall so they won’t bite me when they eat from their trough,” he declared.

By 6:30, the children were nestled in their spots, and I told them stories of when I was a little girl and how I’d play in the hay and make tunnels with my brothers. I heard a slight rustle outside the door. Thinking it would be Grandpas (who planned to pop in some time) I gave the overhead garage door one big push to open it and welcome them in.

I gasped. How could it be true? A group of neighbors and friends stood there. They burst in Christmas carols. I hopped back into the dimly lit barn onto my blanket next to ‘Baby Jesus’. The children, equally surprised, wore the same expressions of disbelief.

About at that moment, shepherds rounded the corner. We burst into laughter. Never had

we seen Grandpa and Grandma like this before!! Their ancient style of dress with long robes (blankets were tied around their head) took the cake, we loved every bit of it. Leaning on his staff Grandpa asked one of the other men, “Have you seen the angels?”

“No.”
Moving on he asked another, “Have YOU seen the angels?”

“Yes! But not with my eyes.”

That was about it. The angelic hosts could be felt all around.

Soon they were all gone and we were left marveling over it all.

Okay, I’ll need to be moving on and summon the children, now romping in the hay, and get them settled down for the night.

We’ll see what the night holds- I don’t know, I’ll tell you about it once I know myself!

A FEW DAYS LATER: Now chuckling, I fondly think back over that memorable night together and am thankful we have comfy beds in the house. I learned several things that night, such as rabbits’ high pitch squeals and nighttime racing or how Tissa, the pony, outsmarted us in pulling on the rope with her teeth to undo the gate that was meant to keep her out. And yes, Austin slept all night in his trough. When the lights

were out, Joshua told me, “I want to be closer to you so I can hug you.” Hosanna was thrilled to take on the roll of Baby Jesus as Joshua snuggled up close to Mama. The stomach flu added its own flair before the night was over. The next morning we had extra things to be thankful for-so many things I usually don’t think to thank God for!

One of the carolers shared this snack recipe with me. They sell large quantities of this snack at their country store, especially this time of the year. Enjoy!

Corny Snack mix

- 1 1/2 cups popped corn
 - 8 oz corn puffs
 - 8 oz corn chips
 - 12 oz white chocolate
1. Mix together first three ingredients.
 2. Melt white chocolate (if desired add a bit of coconut oil, making it a bit thinner and easier to coat snacks).
 3. Mix with salty snack mixture.
 4. Spread onto a cookie sheet to air dry.
 5. When dried to the touch place in air tight container.
- Delicious sweet and salty snack!

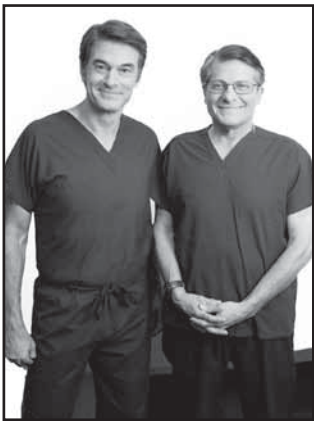
Preserving post-menopausal muscle

Also: America’s stress epidemic

Question: I feel like my muscle tone is melting away, even though I used to be in pretty good shape. I used to run and swim. I’m 58 and going through menopause. Help! — Greta W., Evanston, Illinois

Answer: You’re describing a common complaint. According to Harvard Medical School, adults who don’t do regular strength training can expect to lose 4 to 6 pounds of muscle every decade starting around age 35. And you are losing both fast-twitch fibers that give you bursts of power and speed and slow-twitch fibers that fuel endurance. Muscle loss can be especially noticeable after age 60, when it can add up to around 3 percent of your remaining muscle mass annually. This sets up the risk for increasingly sedentary behavior and the chance of injury from a fall — something that happens to 33 percent of folks age 65 and older every year. Loss of muscle mass seems to impact older women more severely than older men, according to researchers at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis.

But risky muscle loss and accompanying health risks are far from inevitable. A lab study published in the American Journal of Physiology-Cell Physiology (using mice that experience menopause!) reveals that HIIT (high-intensity interval training) may stop or slow post-menopausal muscle loss. Researchers found that the animal’s absolute force and peak muscle power were reduced by just over 30 percent when they were sedentary compared to the muscle force and power in mice performing “mouse HIIT.” Plus, the researchers



Mehmet Oz, M.D. and Mike Roizen, M.D.

say that for human females, the combination of HIIT and other forms of exercise — using stretchy bands or weight machines at the gym and walking 10,000 steps a day, for example — may prove the most effective formula to prevent muscle loss. Combine that with a supply of healthy dietary protein (salmon, skinless poultry and plant-based sources) eaten every four hours during your hours of eating, and you can protect yourself from excessive post-menopausal muscle loss.

Question: I cannot shake the feeling of worry — about my kid’s future, climate, the economy, war, politics, you name it. These are legit worries, so what can I do to feel better? — Greg T., Santa Fe, New Mexico

Answer: You are expressing the kind of worries that are at the heart of a survey of 3,000 people ages 18 and older from the American Psychological Association (APA) called “Stress in America 2023: A Nation Recovering from Collective Trauma.” The APA says that the trauma of the pandemic has left many Americans vulnerable

to more chronic health conditions and heightened anxiety about a wide array of personal and circumstantial factors.

The survey reports that folks ages 35 to 44 saw a 10 percent increase in chronic health conditions between 2019 and 2023, and in 2023, 45 percent of those surveyed said that they were contending with psychological distress compared with 31 percent in 2019. Even more startling: 48 percent people with children under the age of 18 say that, most days, their stress is completely overwhelming, compared to 26 percent of folks without younger kids.

We acknowledge that you cannot do a lot about a lot of stressors — money, work, war, climate — at least in the short term. But it’s important that you understand that you can do something about how you respond to stress.

To tamp down your stress response, you want to cultivate a posse by reaching out to friends and building and strengthening relationships daily, as well as finding and following something you are passionate about that gives you a sense of purpose. Other ways to modify your stress response include physical activity, meditation, quality sleep, and an anti-inflammatory diet that includes fatty fish (salmon burgers), poultry, fruits, vegetables, 100 percent whole grains, and healthy fats such as olive oil. There are also supplements that may help improve sleep quality with a low risk of side effects, such as melatonin, 5-HTP, and L-theanine. For dozens of proven ways to integrate these stress-busters into your daily life, visit LongevityPlaybook.com.

Boys & Girls Club Making a Difference sponsors



Among the groups sponsoring the coming Wells Community Boys & Girls Club Banquet on Jan. 22 will be the staff of The Hideaway in Bluffton represented by Kylie Baumgartner and Jon Baumgartner, center. Accepting the news were Vicki Bell, at left, and Gene Bell, at right, representing the Boys & Girls Club. (Photos provided)



Also assisting with the sponsorship of the Wells Community Boys & Girls Club will be Les Gerber Insurance, represented by Seth Fiechter, Peg Aschliman, Clint Fiechter and Pery Gerber, center of photo. At the left is Gene Bell, Resource Director for the club, while at the right is Vicki Bell the Club Director.

Fort Wayne History Center presents George R Mather Sunday Lecture Series on Electric Works

On Sunday, Jan. 7, the History Center will present the next installment of the 2023-2024 George R. Mather Sunday Lecture Series. “Electric Works: A Powerful Story” will be presented by Carol Young Lindquist. During this lecture, audience members will learn of the history of the site, the complex

and contentious efforts required to launch Electric Works, and its importance to the community. Current and historic images reveal a legacy of innovation that has become a hallmark of Fort Wayne. The lecture begins at 2 p.m. Admission is free to the public.

Online Directory

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

WELLS COUNTY 4-H GROWS HERE extension.purdue.edu/wells	JC'S GARAGE DOOR SALES & SERVICE jcsgaragedoor.com	Daniel's JEWELERS daniels-jewelers.net	ABOVE & BEYOND Vehicle Reconditioning abovebeyondrecon.com
Goodwin's Cafe & Harvest MEMORIAL CHAPEL A Tradition of Caring thegmfamily.com	3 RIVERS 3riversfcu.org	Myers FUNERAL HOMES myersfuneralhomes.com	KELLY'S COLLISION CENTER, INC. Owners: Dustin Kelly 820 W. Washington Street, Bluffton kellysautocollision.com
FISHER'S GARAGE DOORS fishersgaragedoors.com	RiverStone DENTAL riverstonedental.net	Bluffton Tire blufftontire.com	MOSER & SON Heating & Air Conditioning 219 E. Perry St. Bluffton moserandsonheatingandair.com
INNOVATIVE CONCEPTS AUDIO VIDEO SECURITY NETWORKING icav.us	HIDAY AUTOMOTIVE GROUP hidaymotors.com	Edward Jones EdwardJones.com	State Farm Erin Daugherty 260.827.0527 www.MyBlufftonAgent.com myblufftonsfagent.com
Lengerich MEATS lengerichmeats.com	Jerry Flack & Associates jerryflackinsuranceandinvestments.com	LaFontaine Center A RHF Community lafontainecenter.org	HOME COURT HOME CARE homecourthomecare.com
Still Waters FAMILY DENTISTRY stillwatersfamilydentistry.com	Bi-County Services of Adams & Wells County bi-countyservices.com	Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home thomarich.com	NBDigital nb-digital.com

Have a Website? Tell the World!

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

A Talk with Tego

Bear

Danny

Dodger

Tego

Tego's Tips: Dodger, Danny and Bear are brothers of a litter of nine. There are six males and three females. The Golden Retriever mixes were born Nov. 3, 2023. They are all very sweet, playful and working on housebreaking.

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

Thank you for supporting local journalism The News-Banner

Knights' hot start propels them to win over Tigers

By RYAN WALKER

Norwell jumped on Bluffton early with four straight pins to eventually win 45-25 Wednesday night at The Castle.

The Knights got 24 points rather quickly thanks to Cody Cox at 165, Eli Behning at 175, Zach Wilson at 190 and Ethan Michael (by fall), and held on to that 24-0 lead all night, winning by 20 over the Tigers.

Norwell needed every bit of it with the injuries they've sustained to multiple weights, including handing over 113 by forfeit (120 was missing for Norwell, but was a double forfeit). But Norwell emphasized taking six points instead of three or four.

"We talked about that in the locker room before we came out about being able to start the dual with those big wins," Norwell head coach John Johnson said after the match. "Starting with six on the board, that puts a lot of energy for the team, and then it helps you at the end when it gets close at the end when you can get six versus three."

Bluffton's top guys — Levi Johns (126), Johnny Cruz (285) and Brody Lewis (157) — took care of their business with big wins, but the others didn't fare as well.

"The rest of the team, we can be in that match if we don't get pinned," Bluffton head coach Ben Sprunger said. "The difference between winning and losing a match like tonight is if you lose as an individual, you can't get pinned. That just proved that (Norwell's) tougher than us when we get pinned and they don't."

Norwell picked up 18 more points by fall with Wyatt Lukins (144), Luke Dreiband (150) and Chace Behing (138). Conner Lothamer (132) won 8-0 and was the only non-fall

victory.

For Bluffton, Will Frettinger won his match at 106 over Eli Thomas, two wrestlers who are under their weight by at least 10 pounds. Both had quite the match with many twists and turns, but Frettinger came out on top 10-3.

Sprunger was elated for his lightweight, mentioning that he comes in at about 80 pounds and is a filler to avoid giving up six in a forfeit. But tonight, he provided the Tigers with points on the scoreboard.

"It was great for Willy to get a win," Sprunger said. "Not too often he gets to wrestle someone his weight when you're weighing at 80 and you're wrestling at 106, it's a big deal to get a win. Sometimes (he's) just trying not to get pinned for the team, but when he can get a pin for us or help our team score, it's always a big deal."

Johnson was also thrilled for his banged-up bunch to get a win, saying "anytime we can get a win, it's a lot better."

There have been some season-ending injuries in lower weight classes where the Knights lose points. But another reason for the excitement is that it's the school just nine miles away and shares a county.

Johnson and Sprunger gave their props to one another after the match, both echoing respect for their programs. Some of the wrestlers know one another and have mutual respect like their coaches. Even in this rivalry, it can be sweet.

"I think it's a Wells County rival, but the other thing we talked about is I love Ben (Sprunger), I love the program they've built," Johnson said. "A lot of these kids are super close to each other. We had Levi (Johns) come to camp with us this

summer, so there's a lot of friendships also that make it cool as well. But, it's still a rivalry, so it's always a good win."

"It's a match we always want. You always want to be the best in the county. It's just not going to happen this year. (John Johnson's) got a good program. They do a good job here at Norwell."

Bluffton will be at the IHSWCA Team State at Rochester High School, facing Cowan at around 9 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 6.

Norwell will travel to New Haven for the Bill Krabel Invitational at 9 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 6.

sports@news-banner.com

Individual Winners

- Will Frettinger (B) wins by decision 8-0 over Eli Thomas at 106.
- Double forfeit at 113.
- Bluffton wins by forfeit at 120.
- Levi Johns (B) wins by major decision 9-0 over Jason Prough at 126.
- Conner Lothamer (N) wins by decision 8-2 over Parker Nash at 132.
- Chace Behning (N) wins by pin over Kaden Simpson at 138.
- Wyatt Lukins (N) wins by fall over Brockton Osborne at 144.
- Luke Dreiband (N) wins by fall over Bryce Patrick at 150.
- Brody Lewis (B) wins by fall over Aden McJury at 157.
- Cody Cox (N) wins by fall over Chris Kramer at 165.
- Eli Behning (N) wins by fall over Christian Castanada at 175.
- Zach Wilson (N) wins by fall over Tavin Fress at 190.
- Ethan Michael (N) wins by fall over Lukas Gehrett at 215.
- Johnny Cruz (B) wins by fall over Carson Powell at 285.



Norwell's Cody Cox (top) gets his half over Bluffton's Chris Kramer Wednesday night at The Castle. Cox would pin Kramer in the midst of four straight pins for the Knights, holding on to a 45-25 win over the Tigers. (Photos by Ryan Walker)



Bluffton's Will Frettinger (behind) pulls down Norwell's Eli Thomas in the 103-pound weight class to help him secure a 10-3 victory in the lightweight bout.

High School Calendar

THURSDAY, JAN 4

SWIMMING & DIVING (CO-ED): Norwell at East Noble, 6 p.m.; Bluffton at South Adams, 5:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, JAN 5

GIRLS BASKETBALL: Bluffton at Jay County, 7:30 p.m.; South Adams at Southern Wells, 7:30 p.m.; Norwell at Leo, 7:30 p.m.

SWIMMING & DIVING (CO-ED): Norwell, Bluffton at Jay County Dive Invite, 6 p.m.

SATURDAY, JAN 6

BOYS BASKETBALL: Leo at Norwell, 7:45 p.m.; Woodlan at Bluffton, 7:30 p.m.; Southern Wells at Heritage, 7:30 p.m.

WRESTLING: Norwell at Bill Kerbel Invitational (New Haven High School), 9 a.m.; Bluffton at IHSWCA Team State (Manchester High School), 6 p.m.

SWIMMING & DIVING (CO-ED): Norwell, Bluffton at Jay County Invite, 9 a.m.

WRESTLING: Southern Wells at Hunting-

ton North Invite, 9 a.m.

MONDAY, JAN 8

No events scheduled.

TUESDAY, JAN 9

BOYS BASKETBALL: Norwell at Wayne, 7:30 p.m.; (ACAC Tournament Round 1) Bluffton at Southern Wells, 7:30 p.m.

GIRLS BASKETBALL: (ACAC Tournament Round 1) Bluffton at Southern Wells, 6 p.m.

SWIMMING & DIVING (CO-ED): DeKalb at Norwell, 5:30 p.m.; Marion at Bluffton, 5:30 p.m.

WRESTLING: Oak Hill at Norwell, 6:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, JAN 10

GIRLS BASKETBALL: Bishop Dwenger at Norwell, 7:45 p.m.

WRESTLING: Bluffton at Manchester, 6 p.m.

THURSDAY, JAN 11

SWIMMING & DIVING (CO-ED): Bluffton at Manchester, 5:30 p.m.

Joe Flacco, other Browns' players to sit finale against Bengals to rest

By TOM WITHERS

AP Sports Writer

BEREA, Ohio (AP) — Joe Flacco is ending the season where he started it — off to the side.

Flacco won't start Cleveland's regular-season finale at Cincinnati — along with some other regulars — so they'll be rested for the playoffs, and the Browns will go with Jeff Driskel, their franchise-record fifth starting quarterback this season.

Coach Kevin Stefanski said the Browns (11-5) have "earned the opportunity" to sit players after clinching a wild-card berth last week with a win over the New York Jets and the No. 5 seed in the AFC.

With little to play for against the Bengals (8-8) in a mostly meaningless game on Sunday, Stefanski intends to give most of the team's best players a day off.

A bigger game lies ahead.

"We've earned the ability to do this, the flexibility to do something like this," Stefanski said. "We're going to utilize it. We're going to take advantage of it. But the guys understand that it's important that we handle this week this week. We'll worry about next week next week."

Stefanski wasn't specific about which players he'll rest (don't expect to see Myles Garrett, Amari Cooper, Joel Bitonio or Denzel Ward), but he did reveal that Flacco, who has played beyond expectations in going 4-1 as a starter while throwing for 1,616 yards and 13 touchdowns since being signed by the Browns on Nov. 20, will sit.

Before Stefanski spoke, Flacco said his preference was to play.

"As players, you always want to get out there and strap 'em up," he said. "In my experiences, coaches don't usually leave that up to the players. They make the decision and they run with it."

So in this Year of the Backup Quarter-

back, the team that has epitomized that the most will roll out its fifth starter in Driskel, who was signed to Cleveland's active roster off Arizona's practice squad last week.

The Browns are the eighth team since 1950 to win with four quarterbacks in one season. Only one team, the 1987 New England Patriots, has won with five QBs — and Cleveland can match them with a victory this week.

It's been a QB juggling act for months for the Browns, both before and after Deshaun Watson went out with a season-ending shoulder injury. P.J. Walker and rookie Dorian Thompson-Robinson also made starts before Cleveland signed the 38-year-old Flacco.

Beyond playing well, Flacco joked that he's become something of a father figure to some of his new teammates.

"This the 16th year that I've been in this league," he said. "I always say it, if I messed up in high school, I could be these kids' dads."

Flacco was the fourth quarterback to play for Cleveland, which needed to add another QB late in the season when Thompson-Robinson sustained a hip injury against Houston on Dec. 24.

Enter Driskel. QB5.

Stefanski said Walker will back up Driskel, who has made 11 career starts for Cincinnati (5), Detroit (3), Denver (1) and Houston (2). The 30-year-old Driskel has passed for 2,228 yards with 14 TDs and eight interceptions in 23 games.

It's possible Driskel could be Flacco's backup in the playoffs, but Stefanski isn't ready to look that far ahead.

"I'm not going to name backups for the playoffs," he said. "But definitely want to now give Jeff an opportunity to get out there and see what he can do."

(Continued on Page 7)

Tiger girls improve to 13-3 with win over the Warriors

Bluffton took down North Miami on the road 55-46 in girls' basketball on Wednesday night.

The Tigers are now 13-3 on the season with just five games left to play.

Leading the Tigers on the scoresheet was Isabella Stout with 16 points. Maryn Schreiber tallied 14, followed by Tressa Renner (10), Marly Drayer and Haley Gibson (5), Sophie Eisenhut (3) and Madysen Sonnigsen (1).

The junior varsity team lost 23-22. Leading the way with five points

each were Savanna Hughett and Shak Eskridge, followed by Addison Yates, Madelyn Funk, Isla Gibson and Piper Morgan with three each.

Bluffton will travel to Jay County to greatly improve its chance at the ACAC regular season title in a battle between unbeaten conference teams. With a win, the Tigers would control their own destiny to win the title with one conference game left against Heritage. Games in the upcoming ACAC do not count toward conference records.

Bluffton-Harrison splits with Bruins in middle school hoops

The Bluffton-Harrison boys' middle school basketball teams split with Blackford on the basketball court.

The seventh grade team earned a 46-13 win and improved to a perfect 12-0 record. Vince Lambert scored 16 points to lead the Tigers, followed by Chase Kistler (13), Maddox White (8), and Cooper Bustos, Croy Stout, Kamdyn Shuman and Wyatt Holmes (1).

The eighth grade team lost 43-34. Gavin Grieser scored 14 points to lead the way, followed by Cooper Jenkins (7), Reid Abbett (6), Gibby Grieser (4), Parker Barnes (2) and Dawson Lee (1).

Both teams will finish their seasons against Woodlan at home Thursday night. With a win for the seventh graders, the team will clinch the ACAC regular season championship.

Pacers top Bucks for 5th straight

By MICHAEL MAROT

AP Sports Writer

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Tyrese Haliburton had 31 points and 12 assists and the Indiana Pacers pulled away with a 47-point third quarter, beating Milwaukee 142-130 on Wednesday night for their fifth straight victory and second over the Bucks in three days.

Benedict Mathurin added 16 points for the Pacers. Indiana ended Milwaukee's 15-game home winning streak Monday and is 4-1 against the Bucks this season.

Giannis Antetokounmpo had 26 points, 11 rebounds and eight assists for Milwaukee, falling just short of his fourth triple-double of the season. Damian Lillard added 23 points and five assists, and Khris Middleton overcame a sprained right wrist and a sore right knee to finish with 19 points and seven assists.

The Central Division foes have gotten awfully familiar, playing five times in 54

days — including the In-Season Tournament semifinal in Las Vegas. Four games have produced combined scoring totals of at least 247 points, and the series also became emotional and chippy.

A dispute over a missing game ball led to a bizarre postgame scene in December when Antetokounmpo sprinted toward the Indiana locker room. Bucks forward Bobby Portis was ejected from one game and in Las Vegas, Haliburton drew the ire of some for imitating Lillard by pointing toward his wrist after making a late 3-pointer as the Bucks were about to be eliminated.

Milwaukee emerged from a back-and-forth first half with a 68-66 lead, but the Pacers opened the second half on a 21-6 run, extended the lead to 113-97 after three quarters and the Bucks couldn't get closer than 10 the rest of the game.

UP NEXT

Pacers: Host Atlanta on Friday night.

News-Banner Scoreboard

BASKETBALL

High School

Wednesday Boys' Scores

Carmi-White County, Ill. 60, Ev. Day 43
Castile 60, Booneville 40
Corydon 57, Rock Creek Academy 48
Indpls Cathedral 76, Hammond Noll 58
Indpls Park Tudor 66, Lawrence Central 64
Merrillville 60, S. Bend Adams 43
Purdue Polytechnic 77, IMSA 33
Madison County Tournament
Consolation
Anderson Prep Academy 71, Alexandria 64, OT
Pendleton Hts. 63, Elwood 26
Semifinal
Anderson 58, Lapel 29
Liberty Christian 66, Frankton 58
Randolph County Tournament
First Round
Monroe Central 87, Union (Modoc) 25
Ripley County Tournament
First Round
Batesville 56, Jac-Cen-Del 38
S. Ripley 63, Milan 39

Wednesday Girls' Scores

Angola 51, E. Noble 48
Bellmont 64, S. Adams 32
Bluffton 55, N. Miami 46
Chesterton 64, Westville 24
Eastbrook 44, Huntington North 31
Eastern Hancock 72, Blue River Valley 24
Evansville Mater Dei 61, Evansville Harrison 56
Evansville Memorial 53, Evansville Central 51
Evansville North 60, Evansville Bosse 1
Guerin Catholic 52, Indpls Park Tudor 27
Homestead 48, Indpls Ben Davis 25
Indpls Riverside 28, Providence Cristo Rey 9
Jennings Co. 58, Bedford N. Lawrence 41
Lawrence North 63, Valparaiso 61
Madison-Grant 47, Tipton 31
Manchester 53, Churubusco 23
Northridge 67, Tippecanoe Valley 42
Northview 62, Edgewood 39
Plymouth 44, Rochester 39
Princeton 53, Vincennes 48
Purdue Polytechnic 84, IMSA 25
Shelbyville 61, Southport 20
Southwood 56, Marion 18
Speedway 54, Edinburg 25
Tri-Central 40, Peru 38
Triton 64, Oregon-Davis 30
Zionsville 57, Lafayette Harrison 25
Riverton Tournament
First Round
Lawrenceburg 61, Rising Sun 51
Switzerland Co. 64, S. Dearborn 35
White River Valley Tournament
First Round
White River Valley 51, Shoals 37

College

Men's Basketball Scores

Wednesday, Jan. 3
EAST
American 75, Lehigh 66
Bucknell 70, Holy Cross 58
Colgate 78, Loyola (Md.) 55
Fordham 119, George Washington 113, 3OT

George Mason 77, La Salle 62
Lafayette 52, Army 47
Navy 62, Boston U. 60
Rhode Island 78, Saint Joseph's 74
Seton Hall 61, Providence 57
UMass 80, Duquesne 61
Yale 86, Howard 78, OT

SOUTH
Dayton 72, Davidson 59
ETSU 80, Mercer 69
Florida St. 82, Georgia Tech 71
High Point 85, Radford 71
Louisiana Tech 96, Dallas Christian 55

Marshall 68, Louisiana-Monroe 57
Miami 95, Clemson 30
Middle Tennessee 84, Reinhardt 47
NC Central 112, Truett 70
Presbyterian 68, Charleston Southern 61
Samford 89, Chattanooga 74
UNC-Asheville 95, SC-Upstate 67
UNC-Greensboro 79, Furman 68
Virginia 77, Louisville 53
W. Carolina 80, The Citadel 71
Winthrop 68, Longwood 60, OT
Wofford 87, VMI 85, OT

Women's Basketball Scores

Wednesday, Jan. 3
EAST
American 68, Lehigh 65
Boston U. 62, Navy 51
Colgate 73, Loyola (Md.) 65
Fordham 65, St. Bonaventure 57
Holy Cross 69, Bucknell 54
Kent St. 73, Buffalo 64
Lafayette 68, Army 42
Md.-Eastern Shore 99, Lancaster Bible 37
Providence 72, DePaul 65
Saint Joseph's 67, George Washington 47
St. John's 57, Marquette 56
Villanova 50, Seton Hall 45
West Virginia 68, Cincinnati 53

Wednesday, Jan. 3

SOUTH
Charleston Southern 61, Presbyterian 57
Charlotte 66, South Florida 61, OT
Chattanooga 65, NC Central 59
Coastal Carolina 88, Southern Miss. 71

Midwest

Morgan St. 68, CCSU 65
Oklahoma St. 68, UCF 61
Radford 65, High Point 61
Richmond 72, VCU 65
SC-Upstate 71, UNC-Asheville 44
UAB 65, Memphis 63
Winthrop 58, Longwood 53

Midwest

Ball St. 78, W. Michigan 56
Bowling Green 65, Cent. Michigan 64
E. Michigan 67, N. Illinois 49
Georgetown 60, Butler 55
Iowa St. 69, Kansas 61
Kansas St. 72, Houston 38

Loyola Chicago 74, Saint Louis 72
Maryland 72, Minnesota 64
Ohio 67, Akron 58
St. Thomas (MN) 70, Sacramento St. 52
Toledo 70, Miami (Ohio) 52
UConn 94, Creighton 50
UMKC 75, Portland St. 56
Youngstown St. 70, Oakland 63

SOUTHWEST

Baylor 71, TCU 50
Oral Roberts 81, N. Colorado 80, OT
Rice 76, Wichita St. 64
Texas 74, Texas Tech 47
Texas A&M-CC 73, Houston Christian 49

FAR WEST

Idaho 60, Denver 51
Montana St. 65, N. Dakota St. 45
Nevada 58, Boise St. 57
S. Dakota St. 110, N. Arizona 102, 2OT
Wyoming 54, Utah St. 48

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

W	L	Pct	GB	
Boston	26	7	.788	—
Philadelphia	23	10	.697	3
New York	18	15	.545	8
Brooklyn	15	20	.429	12
Toronto	14	20	.412	12½

Southwest Division

W	L	Pct	GB	
Miami	19	14	.576	—
Orlando	19	14	.576	—
Atlanta	14	19	.424	5
Charlotte	8	24	.250	10½
Washington	6	27	.182	13

Central Division

W	L	Pct	GB	
Milwaukee	24	10	.706	—
Indiana	19	14	.576	4½
Cleveland	19	15	.559	5
Chicago	15	20	.429	9
Detroit	3	30	.091	20½

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

W	L	Pct	GB	
New Orleans	21	14	.600	—
Dallas	19	15	.559	1½
Houston	17	15	.531	2½
Memphis	11	23	.324	9½
San Antonio	5	28	.152	15

Northwest Division

W	L	Pct	GB	
Minnesota	24	9	.727	—
Oklahoma City	23	10	.697	1
Denver	24	11	.686	1
Utah	15	19	.441	9½
Portland	9	23	.281	14½

Pacific Division

W	L	Pct	GB	
L.A. Clippers	20	12	.625	—
Sacramento	19	13	.594	1
Phoenix	18	15	.545	2½
L.A. Lakers	17	17	.500	4
Golden State	16	17	.485	4½

Tuesday's Games

Philadelphia 110, Chicago 97
New Orleans 112, Brooklyn 85
Oklahoma City 127, Boston 123
Memphis 106, San Antonio 98
Charlotte 111, Sacramento 104
Golden State 121, Orlando 115

Wednesday's Games

Cleveland 140, Washington 101
Indiana 142, Milwaukee 130

Atlanta 141, Oklahoma City 138
New Orleans 117, Minnesota 106
Houston 112, Brooklyn 101
Toronto 116, Memphis 111
Chicago at New York, 8:30 p.m.
Portland at Dallas, 8:30 p.m.
Detroit at Utah, 9 p.m.
L.A. Clippers at Phoenix, 9 p.m.
Miami at L.A. Lakers, 10 p.m.
Orlando at Sacramento, 10 p.m.

Thursday's Games

Milwaukee at San Antonio, 7:30 p.m.
Denver at Golden State, 10 p.m.
Friday's Games
Atlanta at Indiana, 7 p.m.
Utah at Boston, 7 p.m.
New York at Philadelphia, 7:30 p.m.
Oklahoma City at Brooklyn, 7:30 p.m.
Washington at Cleveland, 7:30 p.m.
Charlotte at Chicago, 8 p.m.
L.A. Clippers at New Orleans, 8 p.m.

Minnesota at Houston, 8 p.m.

Portland at Dallas, 8:30 p.m.
Miami at Phoenix, 9 p.m.
Orlando at Denver, 9 p.m.
Detroit at Golden State, 10 p.m.
Memphis at L.A. Lakers, 10 p.m.
Toronto at Sacramento, 10 p.m.

Saturday's Games

Boston at Indiana, 7 p.m.
New York at Washington, 7 p.m.
Utah at Philadelphia, 7:30 p.m.
Milwaukee at Houston, 8 p.m.

FOOTBALL

NFL

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-Miami	11	5	0	688	482
Buffalo	10	6	0	625	430
e-N.Y. Jets	6	10	0	375	251
e-New England	4	12	0	250	233

South

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Houston	9	7	0	563	354
Indianapolis	9	7	0	563	377
Jacksonville	9	7	0	563	357
e-Tennessee	5	11	0	313	277

North

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
*-Baltimore	13	3	0	813	473
x-Cleveland	11	5	0	688	382
Pittsburgh	9	7	0	688	337
e-Cincinnati	8	8	0	500	335

West

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-Kansas City	10	6	0	625	358
e-Denver	8	8	0	500	343
e-Las Vegas	7	9	0	438	305
e-Chargers	5	11	0	313	334

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-Dallas	11	5	0	688	471
x-Philadelphia	11	5	0	688	423
e-N.Y. Giants	5	11	0	313	239
e-Washington	4	12	0	250	319

South

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New Orleans	8	8	0	500	354
Tampa Bay	8	8	0	500	339
Atlanta	7	9	0	438	304
e-Carolina	2	14	0	125	236

North

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-Dallas	11	5	0	688	471
x-Philadelphia	11	5	0	688	423
e-N.Y. Giants	5	11	0	313	239
e-Washington	4	12	0	250	319

South

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New Orleans	8	8	0	500	354
Tampa Bay	8	8	0	500	339
Atlanta	7	9	0	438	304
e-Carolina	2	14	0	125	236

North

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-Dallas	11	5	0	688	471
x-Philadelphia	11	5	0	688	423
e-N.Y. Giants	5	11	0	313	239
e-Washington	4	12	0	250	319

West

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-Kansas City	10	6	0	625	358
e-Denver	8	8	0	500	343
e-Las Vegas	7	9	0	438	305
e-Chargers	5	11	0	313	334

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-Dallas	11	5	0	688	471
x-Philadelphia	11	5	0	688	423
e-N.Y. Giants	5	11	0	313	239
e-Washington	4	12	0	250	319

South

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New Orleans	8	8	0	500	354
Tampa Bay	8	8	0	500	339
Atlanta	7	9	0	438	304
e-Carolina	2	14	0	125	236

North

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-Dallas	11	5	0	688	471
x-Philadelphia	11	5	0	688	423
e-N.Y. Giants	5	11	0	313	239
e-Washington	4	12	0	250	319

South

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New Orleans	8	8	0	500	354
Tampa Bay	8	8	0	500	339
Atlanta	7	9	0	438	304
e-Carolina	2	14	0	125	236

North

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-Dallas	11	5	0	688	471
x-Philadelphia	11	5	0	688	423
e-N.Y. Giants	5	11	0	313	239
e-Washington	4	12	0	250	319

West

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-Kansas City	10	6	0	625	358
e-Denver	8	8	0	500	343
e-Las Vegas	7	9	0	438	305
e-Chargers	5	11	0	313	334

W L T Pct PF PA
y-Detroit 11 5 0 .688 431 375
Green Bay 8 8 0 .500 366 341
e-Chicago 7 9 0 .438 351 362
Minnesota 7 9 0 .438 324 332

West

W L T Pct PF PA
*-San Fran 12 4 0 .750 471 277
x-L.A. Rams 9 7 0 .563 383 357
Seattle 8 8 0 .500 343 382
e-Arizona 4

Valentines to our troops

Dear Annie. My former boyfriend has a wife in the Philippines. He used to sometimes say, "Oh, stay with me, and we can keep sleeping together even when she moves to this country." Why would someone say something like that? I have a difficult time figuring out what he really meant. — Perplexed Ex

Dear Perplexed: I have a harder time understanding why you stuck around long enough for him to say that more than once. Clearly, he has no respect for you or for his wife. But the most important word in your letter is "former." Thank goodness that he's no longer your boyfriend. Pity to that woman if she's still his wife.

Dear Annie: You indicated that it was too late to send cards to our sailors and troops for Christmas. How's about a little advance planning! Valentine's Day is only about four weeks away. How can readers send cards to troops in celebration of that holiday? — Steve, USAF (retired)

Dear Steve: This is a great idea. You can send valentines to deployed troops via Hugs for Soldiers. Please adhere to the following guidelines:

- Do not send cards larger than 8 1/2x11 inches.
- Do not use glitter or materials that easily break off.
- Keep your messages positive.
- Do not put individual valentines in sealed envelopes. Bundle cards and send in a single large envelope or box.

Mail them to Hugs for Soldiers, P.O. Box 2887, Duluth, GA, 30096. For more tips, including instructions for shipping your cards via FedEx or UPS, visit <https://www.hugsforsoldiers.org/valentine-cards>.

Dear Annie: This is in response to "Preferring Tradition." I never liked when couples asked wedding guests to give cash instead of gifts, either. But my daughter and her husband ended up doing this. Many friends and relatives opted to give them gifts instead of cash.

Well, my daughter and her now husband live in San Francisco, California, and the wedding was at home in the

Midwest. They came by plane. The gifts had to go by mail, so it fell on Mom and Dad to box and mail all the gifts. We started to ship some, but the cost became so high that we instead decided to load up an SUV, take time off work and make a trip West. It was a real pain, boxing up glass. Now I think cash would have been nicer. — John K.

Dear John K.: It was awfully generous of you and your wife to spend so much time and money on getting your daughter and son-in-law their presents. I hope that huge gift didn't go unappreciated.

Dear Annie: I have great empathy for "Thanks for Not Sharing," the person who wrote about the noise levels in airports and on buses and trains thanks to people who play music and videos on speakers instead of through headphones.

I travel in England to visit family and there I have the option to reserve a seat in the "quiet car" — which I love. No conversational cellphone use is allowed — only texts — and no noisy video games are allowed, either.

I wish we could have the same service here. It would be a relief for people who suffer from noise pollution. There are quiet areas in some airports, if you look for them. Many thanks for sharing. — Janet A. in Montreal

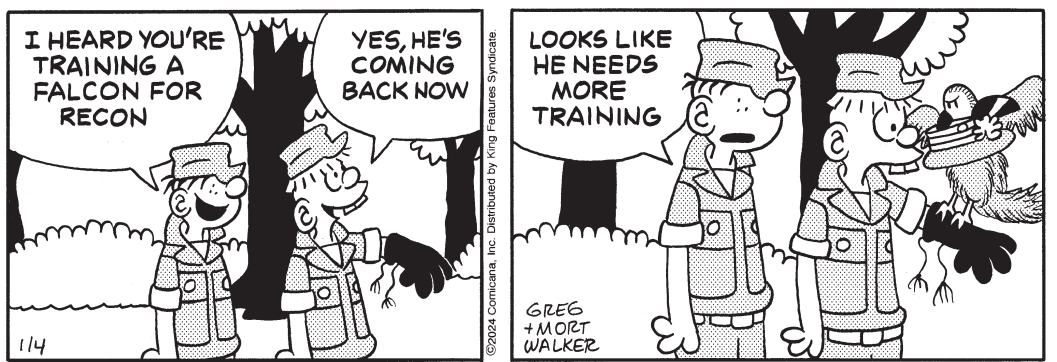
Dear Janet: Silence is golden — maybe even platinum, at this point. Quiet cars do exist on Amtrak trains here in the U.S., but only in the Northeast. Here's hoping they make their way through the rest of the country.

Send your questions for Annie Lane to dearannie@creators.com. © 2024 CREATORS.COM

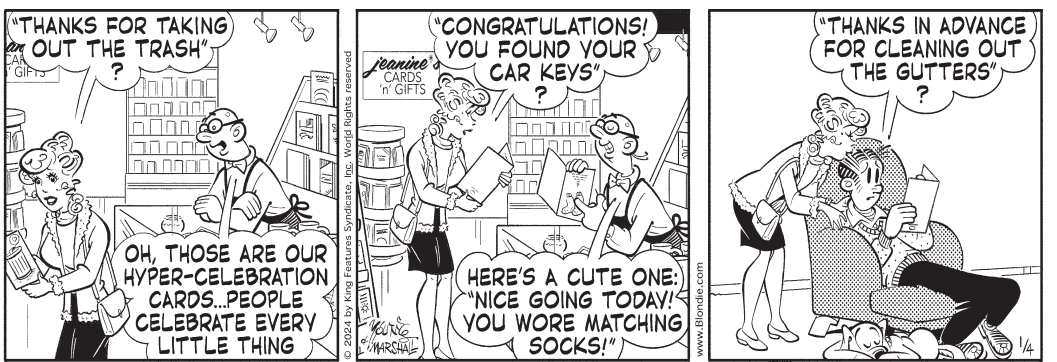
Dear Annie



BEETLE BAILEY



BLONDIE



ZITS

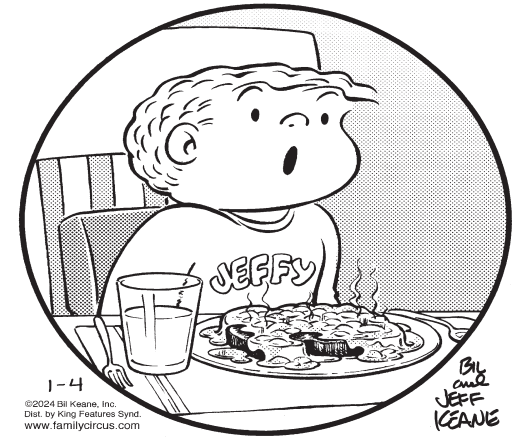


CRANKSHAFT

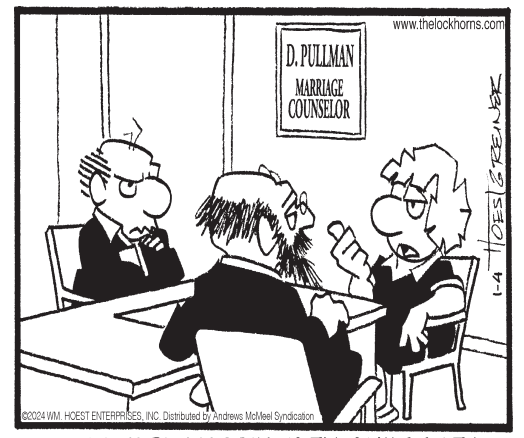


THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane



The LOCKHORNS



My Answer
By Dr. Billy Graham

Almost nothing is as complex as the human personality

Q: I constantly hear about how people should love one another but when I look at the world, the evidence is overwhelming — there is more hate than love. Even in my own life I find that I stay upset and angry and find it difficult to show love, especially to those who do wrong. I've asked the Lord to help me be more loving but it seems many times that I exhibit just the opposite and it discourages me. I'm sure God prefers that we exhibit love rather than hate. — L.H.

A: For those who belong to Jesus Christ, God's priority is that His love would become the hallmark of life — because it is the hallmark of Christ's life. How does

this become a reality? It doesn't happen by accident or by gritting our teeth and hoping that somehow we can make ourselves love others. It happens only as we grow closer to Christ and submit our lives to Him, allowing His Holy Spirit to cleanse and change us. The Bible says that "the fruit of the Spirit is love" (Galatians 5:22, NKJV).

This happens only gradually, one step at a time, and it starts by settling our relationship with God through receiving salvation offered by His Son, Jesus Christ. God then brings us to peace with Him, gives us peace in our hearts, and peace with others. When we receive Christ as per-

sonal Savior and Lord, the warfare between God and us is over. We also find that peace with others takes a lifetime to develop; we won't be complete until we reach Heaven.

Almost nothing is as complex as the human personality, and no simple formula will ever cover every relationship. But for all who ask, God will implant His love within and then help us live according to His will.

(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.

**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	44 Milk container	2 Night before	22 Roman 57
1 Barbie's companion	46 Cake in the	9 The big day	23 Veto
4 Smear shower	50 Dorm VIPs	3 Recently discovered	27 Wager
8 "Mamma Mia" group	51 Anti-oxidant berry	4 River formations	29 Conversation starter
12 "— had it!"	52 In mint condition	5 Yucatan year	30 Tropical tuber
13 Within (Pref.)	56 Houston base-baller, briefly	6 Japanese noodle	31 Algerian port
14 Weaving frame	57 Single blunder	7 Portends	33 Tautness
15 Group of fresh recruits	59 Sharp treasure	8 Fact book	35 Pouch
17 —pedi	60 Poet Khayyám	9 Toy dog's	38 — Paulo, Brazil
18 In shape	61 Method	10 Dub's	40 Eliot's Silas
19 Canceled	62 Swift jets	11 During	43 Cellist Casals
21 Campaign phrase	63 Family	12 Huge	45 "Awesome!"
24 Day light?	DOWN	16 Gloomy	46 Soak up the sun
25 "Law & Order: —"	1 Family	17 Guy	47 Part of a French play
26 Bro, maybe	Solution time: 24 mins.	18 Scarce	48 School dance
28 Handled	T M I R A G A H A T S	19 High	53 Comedian
32 Shade	E E K E V E R E L I E	20 Like	54 Mount
34 Ballet markings	N A E B A L L E R I N A	21 Some	55 Like humor
36 Scorch	S N A F U O R B	22 Dips	
37 Factions	C A T A L I N A L I M A	23 Ore	
39 Highland hat	O R E T E E M S L E D	24 Loan	
41 Celestial altar	L O A N S E M O L I N A	25 Ad lib	
42 Snooze	A D L I B R O P E	26 Tru	
	T R U R I V A L	27 Awk	
	A W K W A F I N A T C U	28 Lii	
	L I I O D I N N H L	29 Anat	
	A N A T S O L O E E L	30 Solo	

01/04	M	A	D1	D2	5 PM	5:30	6 PM	6:30	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM	11:30	12 AM	12:30
WINM (12)	11	26	63		3D Woman Julie & Friends	Movie					TCT Today	News-watch	Perry Stone	James Robison	Dr. Robert Jeffress	Jewish Jesus	Andrew Womack	Ask the Pastor	Rabbi Lapin	
CBS WANE (15)	2	15	15		News (N)	Inside Edition (N)	News at 6 (N)	CBS News (N)	Wheel of Fortune (N)	Jeopardy! (N)	Young Sheldon	Ghosts "The Tree"	Ghosts UK (N)	Ghosts UK Home (N)	SEAL Team	"Close to Home" (N)	Nightcast (N)	(35) Late Show-Colbert	(35) Comics Unleashed	
Antenna WANE-2 (152)	106	20			Chicago P.D. "Burden of Truth"	Chicago P.D. "Intimate Violence"	Chicago P.D. "Before the Fall"	Chicago P.D. "Lines"	Chicago P.D. "Buried Secrets"	Chicago P.D. "Silence of the Night"	Chicago P.D. "Fighting Ghosts"	Chicago P.D. "White Knuckle"								
ABC WPTA (21)	4	3	21		ABC21 News at 5 (N)	ABC21 (N)	ABC World News (N)	ABC21 (N)	Ent. Tonight (N)	Bachelor Gerry Turner and Theresa Nist walk down the aisle to begin their next chapter. (N)					To Be Announced	ABC21 (N)	(35) Jimmy Kimmel Live! (N)	(35) Nightline		
NBC WPTA-2 (212)	7	8	14		Family Feud	25 Words or Less	News (N)	NBC News (N)	Family Feud	Law & Order	Transplant				DateLine NBC	News (N)	(35) Tonight Show (N)	(35) Seth Meyers (N)		
MNT WPTA-3 (213)	10	9	56	34	The King of Queens	The King of Queens	Mod Fam "Fears"	News (N)	Last Man Standing	DateLine "Bad Blood"	Chicago P.D. "Stepping Stone"	Seinfeld "The Stall"	Seinfeld	Mom	Mom	Mom	The Goldbergs	The Goldbergs		
FOX WISE (33)	8	4	33	33	The Steve Wilkos Show	TMZ Live (N)	Dish Nation (N)	TMZ (N)	Crit of a Crit (N)	TBA	TBA	Children Ruin (N)	Dish Nation (N)	TMZ (N)	Family Guy	Family Guy	Burgers	Bob's Burgers		
PBS WFWA (38)	13	5	39	39	Fight the Power: How Under Siege?	PBS NewsHour (N)	BBC News America	Arts In Focus (N)	This Old House (N)	Old House (N)	Finding Your Roots "Born to Sing"	Masters "HOPPER: An American Love Story"	Amanpour and Company (N)	Amanpour and Company (N)	This Old House	Ask This Old House	Ask This Old House	Neighbor	Neighbor	
PBS WFPZ (48)	3				Fight the Power: How Under Siege?	Context	BBC News America	PBS NewsHour (N)	Now Entering	Amplified Cow	Vienna Blood "The Lost Child, Part 1"	Flesh and Blood on Masterpiece	Amanpour and Company (N)	Amanpour and Company (N)	This Old House	Ask This Old House	Neighbor	Neighbor		
FOX WFFT (55)	6	5	55	55	WFFT Fox News at 5 (N)	WFFT Fox News at 6 (N)	Big Bang	Big Bang	Hell's Kitchen (N)	To Be Announced	To Be Announced	Young Sheldon	Young Sheldon							

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   

SERVICES

Services

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

Services

LICENSED & INSURED

ANNOUNCE YOUR SERVICES in the Bluffton News-Banner. A 20-word, line classified for two months is \$97. Contact the office at (260) 824-0224, 125 N. Johnson St., or www.news-banner.com and click on classifieds.

Services

MARV'S CONSTRUCTION

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

DIAGNOSED WITH LUNG CANCER?

You may qualify for a substantial cash award - even with smoking history. NO obligation! We've recovered millions. Let us help! Call 24/7, 844-229-7933 (I)

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

Read & recycle this newspaper

SUDOKU

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

King Classic Sudoku

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

Difficulty: ★★★

1/4

Lottery Numbers

Wednesday's Drawings HOOSIER LOTTERY

Cash 5 — 06-15-30-32-36
Lotto Plus — 16-18-21-35-36-37
Cash4Life — 12-28-32-46-51, Cash Ball: 04
Quick Draw Midday — 04-07-10-11-14-16-17-20-24-25-26-30-40-46-50-58-59-74-75-77, BE: 58
Daily Three-Midday — 04-01-08, SB: 09
Daily Three-Evening — 07-07-09, SB: 04
Daily Four-Midday — 06-02-05-03, SB: 09
Daily Four-Evening — 05-00-05-03, SB: 04
Quick Draw Evening — 04-06-19-20-21-22-29-30-33-38-49-51-55-59-60-63-67-71-76-80, BE: 19
Hoosier Lotto — 07-16-19-27-36-45
MEGA MILLIONS
 Estimated jackpot (for Friday): \$140 million
POWERBALL
 30-31-38-48-68 Powerball: 08; Power Play: 10X

EMPLOYMENT

Help Wanted

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

Public Sale Calendar

BIDDING ENDS JANUARY 7 - Estate of Mary Lynn Lautzenheiser, seller. Personal property online only auction. John Deere mower, lawn & garden, furniture, Christmas, books, household. Open houses: Jan. 4 from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. and Jan. 6 from 10 a.m. to noon, 4917 E 100 N., Bluffton, IN. Isaac Stoller, sale manager, *The Steffen Group Inc.*, <http://www.steffengrp.com>, 260-824-3006.
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. feet building, 2 bay service area, 15'x16' office space, paved parking lot, .46 acre triangle lot located on N. Main Street, (Hwy. 27) Zoned: Commercial. Year built: 1950. Wabash Township, Section 29, Adams County, Indiana, South Adams School Corp. Auction preview Jan. 8, 4-5 p.m. or by appointment, 617 N. Main St., Geneva. *Krueckeberg Auction & Realty LLC*, 260-724-7402, Kjauction.com.
JANUARY 23 - 2-6 p.m. ET - Online - Farm: Susan Dunn Estate. Property Location: Three miles southeast

of Markle, IN and Wells Co., Rockcreek Twp. 207.3+/- total acres, high quality farmland, mostly tillable. Tracts 1 & 2: Located on both sides of 200 N between 200 W and 300 W. Tract 3: Located at intersection of 300 N and 500 W. Tract 1: 19.83+/- acres. Tract 2: 110+/- acres. Tract 3: 77.47+/- acres. *Halderman Real Estate & Farm Management*, 800-424-2324, halderman.com, Rick Johnloz, 260-827-8181.
JANUARY 30 - 10 a.m. EDT - Stetzel Farm LLC. Farm machinery retirement auction. Tractors, planters, harvest equipment, tillage, miscellaneous and farm related, trucks and trailers. Timed online. No reserve. Inspection Jan. 20 and Jan. 29 from noon to 4 p.m., 7204 S 200 E, Warren. Contact Mike Stetzel, 260-450-2370, with equipment questions or to set up an inspection appointment. *Merit Auctions*, www.meritauctions.com, 833-273-9300, auction manager: Zach Hiner, 260-437-2771.
JANUARY 30 - 2 p.m.-6 p.m. ET - Online - Farm: Mann Farm. Property Location: Three miles northwest of Craigville, IN; 1/4 mile south of US 224 along 500 E in Lancaster Township, Wells County. 36.75+/- total acres, 34.5+/- tillable, 2.25+/- non-tillable, high quality farmland, Wells Co. Soil Types: Pewamo silty clay loam, Bount Del-Rey silt loam; WAPI: 140.6 bu. corn, 43.8 bu. soybeans. Additional information, drone flight, photos available at halderman.com. *Halderman Real Estate & Farm Management*, 800-424-2324, Rick Johnloz: 260-827-8181, Neal Wolhuter: 260-336-2219.

Town of Ossian, Indiana Notice of Receipt of Bids Project: North Collection System Improvements
Summary: Along Davis Road between Metts St and SR 1, west across SR 1 to a planned subdivision, and south through existing easements and Town property to Maplewood Drive, Ossian, Indiana. The Project shall consist of the construction of a regional sanitary lift station with 1,800 linear foot 8-inch diameter force main, approximately 900 linear feet of 12-inch gravity interceptor installed by open cut, and approximately 150 linear feet of 12-inch gravity interceptor installed by trenchless technology below SR 1. The project shall include erosion control and surface restoration.
General Plans and Specifications: Complete digital project bidding documents are available at www.questcdn.com. Quest CDN will serve as the Issuing Office and maintain the plan holder list. Digital Bidding Documents may be downloaded for a non-refundable fee of \$22 by inputting Quest project number QuestCDN eBidDoc #8899180 on the website's projects search page. Please contact QuestCDN Customer Support at 952.233.1632 or info@questcdn.com for assistance in membership registration, downloading, and working with digital project information. No paper copies will be provided by the Owner.
Pre-Bid Meeting: Beginning at 10:00 a.m., on Tuesday, January 16, 2024, a pre-bid meeting will be held at the Ossian Town Hall, 507 N. Jefferson Street, Ossian, Indiana 46777. All prospective bidders are encouraged to attend.
Bids: All bids must be submitted to the Town of Ossian by 12:00 noon, Thursday, January 25, 2024, to be considered for the work. Bids submitted prior to 11:45 a.m. on January 25, 2024, shall be submitted at the Ossian Town Hall, 507 N. Jefferson Street, Ossian, IN 46777. Bids submitted after 11:45 a.m. on January 25, 2024, must be delivered to the Ossian Town Council meeting location at Collier's Comfort, 215 N. Jefferson St., Ossian, IN, between 11:45 a.m. and 12:00 noon. Bidders are responsible for the timely delivery of their bids. All bids shall be in sealed envelopes bearing the Project title, "Town of Ossian North Collection System Improvements" and include the name and address of the bidder. All bids shall include fully completed and executed Contractor's Bid for Public Work- Form 96 and E-Verify and Iran Investment Certification. Bids shall be accompanied by a bidder's bond or certified check equal to 5% of the bid amount. Bids arriving after the time set will be returned unopened and only complete bids with all required materials will be considered.
Review and Consideration: All bids timely received shall be publicly opened and read aloud at Collier's Comfort, 215 N. Jefferson St., Ossian, IN at 12:00 noon, January 25, 2024. The Town of Ossian, Indiana, reserves the right to reject all bids, waive defects and amend the Project's scope. It is anticipated that the Ossian Town Council will take bids received under advisement and that a determination may be made by February 12, 2024.
 By: Town Manager, Crystal Chapman
 Town of Ossian, Indiana
 nb 1/4, 1/11, 1/18 hspaxlp

SUDOKU ANSWER

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

Public Notices

TO THE OWNERS OF THE WITHIN DESCRIBED REAL ESTATE AND ALL INTERESTED PARTIES NOTICE OF SHERIFF'S SALE

By virtue of a certified copy of a decree to me directed from the Clerk of Superior Court of Wells County, Indiana, in Cause No. 90D01-2308-MF-000017 wherein Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. was Plaintiff, and Linda S. Parker, State of Indiana were Defendants, requiring me to make the sum as provided for in said Decree with interest and cost, I will expose at public sale to the highest bidder, on the 14th day of February, 2024, at the hour of 1:00 pm or as soon thereafter as is possible, at Courthouse

102 W. Market St., 1st Fl. Bluffton, IN 46714, the fee simple of the whole body of Real Estate in Wells County, Indiana.
 A part of Out Lot Number 5 in the Original Plat of the town of Ossian, Wells County, Indiana, bounded as follows: Commencing at the northeast corner of said Lot Number 5; thence west 50 feet; thence south 150 feet; thence east 50 feet; thence north 150 feet to the place of beginning. Also described as follows: Part of Out Lot Number 5 in the Original Plat of the town of Ossian, Wells County, Indiana, bounded and described as follows: Commencing at the northeast corner of said Lot Number 5; thence west 78 feet Recorded 50 feet; thence south 150 feet; thence east 78 feet Recorded 50 feet; thence north 150 feet to the place of beginning.

More commonly known as: 301 West Lavefer Street, Ossian, IN 46777
 State Parcel No.: 90-02-16-519-049.000-009
 Together with rents, issues, income, and profits thereof, said sale will be made without relief from valuation or appraisement laws.
 Plaintiff Attorney
ATTORNEY NO. 15-23-01022
 Cordilis Law, LLC
 8050 Cleveland Place
 Merrillville, IN 46410
 (219) 736-5579
 15-23-01022
 Sheriff of Wells County
JEFFERSON TOWNSHIP
 301 West Lavefer Street,
 Ossian, IN 46777
 Street Address
 SHERIFF FILE NO:
The Sheriff's Department
 does not warrant the accuracy of the street address published herein.
SERVICE DIRECTED TO:
 Linda S. Parker
 301 West Lavefer Street
 Ossian, IN 46777
Type of Service
 Sheriff
NOTICE
NOTE: This law firm is a debt collector.
 nb 1/4, 1/11, 1/18 hspaxlp

January GOODS & SERVICES DIRECTORY

YOUR LOCAL AGENTS, HERE FOR YOU.

INDIANA FARM BUREAU INSURANCE
BLUFFTON OFFICE: (260) 824-2234
 1307 Baker Place • Bluffton, IN
 Mike Lampton | Michael Towne | Jacob Duncan

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

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

Jerry Flack & Associates
 ASSISTING IN:
 • FREE Medicare Supplement Comparison
 • Life Planning
 • Safe Money Ideas
 • Dental - Vision - Hearing

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

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

COUNTRY PLACE Apartments
 408 Countryside Drive, Ossian
 • 1 & 2 Bedrooms
 • Laundry Facilities On-Site
 • All Ground-level
 • Private Entrances
 • Equipped Kitchen
260 622-6429
 Virtual Tours Offered
 TDD: 7-1-1
 OssianApartments.com

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

A-1 U-Store
 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

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

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

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**

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

As a resident of the Wells County community for decades, Attorney, Gerret J. Swearingen, has devoted his legal practice to assisting clients in preserving the family assets from the high cost of Nursing Home and In-Home Healthcare.
 As your guide through the "Medicaid Planning" process, Swearingen Elder Law will provide the right path to both protect your life savings and receive the quality of care we all deserve.
 -OSSIAN-
 1645 Hillcrest Dr., Suite 2A
 Ossian, IN 46777
 Attorney Gerret J. Swearingen
SWEARINGEN ELDER LAW
 • Medicaid Planning • In-Home Healthcare Planning
 • Durable Power of Attorney • Will, Living Wills, & Advance Healthcare Directives
 • Estate Planning & Deeds
 • Special Needs Trusts
 • Long Term Care Planning
(260) 888-9256
 FREE INITIAL CONSULTATION!

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

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

YOUR BUSINESS IN THE NEWS-BANNER Every Day!
 For as little as ...
\$187 PER ISSUE
 Plus The Ossian Journal Every Week!
 Call **824-0224 or 622-4108**
 Feb. deadline is **Tues., Jan. 23!**
 ... you can keep your name in the public eye!
 Increase your business with regular advertising!

Camelot Auto LLC
 Get Cash NOW
 260-307-1302

We Buy Junk Cars

Unsealed records offer details on sex abuse allegations against Epstein

NEW YORK (AP) — Amid great hype, a court began to release a new batch of previously secret court documents late Wednesday related to Jeffrey Epstein, the jet-setting financier who killed himself in 2019 while awaiting trial on sex-trafficking charges.

Social media has been rife in recent weeks with posts speculating the documents would include a list of rich and powerful men who were Epstein's "clients" or "co-conspirators."

There was no such list. The initial collection of around 40 documents made public largely contained material that had been released previously, or exhaustively had been covered in nearly two decades' worth of newspaper stories, TV documentaries, interviews and books about the Epstein scandal.

Still, the records — which included transcripts of interviews with some of Epstein's victims — contained reminders that Epstein surrounded himself with famous and powerful figures, including a few who have also been accused of misconduct.

There were mentions of Epstein's past friendship with Bill Clinton — who is not accused of any wrongdoing — and of Britain's Prince Andrew, who previously settled a lawsuit accusing

him of having sex with a 17-year-old girl who traveled with Epstein.

Epstein accuser Johanna Sjöberg testified in a newly released deposition that she once met Michael Jackson at Epstein's Palm Beach, Florida, home, but that nothing untoward happened with the late pop icon.

The documents being unsealed are related to a lawsuit filed in 2015 by one of Epstein's victims, Virginia Giuffre. She is one of the dozens of women who sued Epstein saying he had abused them at his homes in Florida, New York, the U.S. Virgin Islands and New Mexico. This particular suit was against Epstein's former girlfriend, Ghislaine Maxwell, who was convicted in 2021 of helping recruit Epstein's victims and is serving a 20-year prison term.

Epstein, a millionaire known for associating with celebrities, politicians, billionaires and academic stars, killed himself in jail in 2019 while awaiting trial on a sex-trafficking charge.

Giuffre's lawsuit against Maxwell was settled in 2017, but the court had kept some court documents blacked-out or sealed because of concerns about the privacy rights of Epstein's victims and other people whose names had come up during the legal battle.

Only around 40 of those docu-

ments were made public Wednesday. More will be released in coming days.

Among records released Wednesday were court memos in which lawyers for Giuffre complained that some of the women who had worked for Epstein were proving difficult to serve with subpoenas, as was Epstein himself.

Two women had invoked their Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination when questioned in other lawsuits about whether they had been involved in procuring young women for Epstein to abuse.

Maxwell, in her deposition, chaffed at being asked questions about whether she had ever arranged for Giuffre or other women to have sexual encounters with Prince Andrew, or purchased sex toys or revealing outfits, or seen young, topless women at Epstein's home.

One person who had been on Epstein's domestic staff said in a deposition that he felt uncomfortable with the number of young women showing up at the house, and felt threatened by Maxwell to stay quiet after he left his job.

Other documents included legal arguments over whether Giuffre should be allowed more time to depose potential witnesses, including Clinton. Giuffre never

alleged he was involved in illegal behavior, but her attorneys said the former president was a "key person who can provide information about his close relationship" with Maxwell and Epstein.

Maxwell's attorneys countered that Clinton testimony was not relevant and that Giuffre's attorneys didn't diligently try to subpoena him to testify.

The records included the depositions of several of Epstein's victims, many of whom have told their stories publicly previously.

Besides the mention of Michael Jackson, Sjöberg's May 2016 deposition also shed new light on an April 2001 trip to New York in which she said Prince Andrew touched her breast while they posed for a photo at Epstein's Manhattan town house.

In the testimony, some of which appeared as excerpts in previous court filings, Sjöberg said she and Giuffre had flown with Epstein to New York on his private jet. Maxwell and Prince Andrew met them there, she said.

At one point, she testified, Maxwell called her to an upstairs closet where they pulled out a puppet of Prince Andrew that had been made for a BBC program.

"It looked like him," Sjöberg said. "And she brought it down and presented it to him; and that

was a great joke, because apparently it was a production from a show on BBC."

"And they decided to take a picture with it, in which Virginia and Andrew sat on a couch. They put the puppet on Virginia's lap, and I sat on Andrew's lap, and they put the puppet's hand on Virginia's breast, and Andrew put his hand on my breast, and they took a photo."

On the way to New York, Sjöberg testified, Epstein's jet diverted to Atlantic City, New Jersey, and spent a few hours at one of Donald Trump's casinos, because of bad weather.

Upon hearing the change of plans, Sjöberg recalled Epstein saying, "Great, we'll call up Trump and we'll go to" the casino. Sjöberg wasn't asked if they'd met up with Trump that night. Later in her testimony, she said she was never asked to give Trump a massage.

Sjöberg also testified that though she never met Clinton, Epstein once remarked to her that "Clinton likes them young," a remark she took as a reference to young women or girls.

In her deposition, Giuffre said the summer she turned 17, she was lured away from a job as a spa attendant at Trump's Mar-a-Lago club to become a "masseur" for Epstein — a job that involved performing sexual acts.

It took decades, but San Francisco finally installs nets to stop suicides off Golden Gate Bridge

By **OLGAR RODRIGUEZ**
Associated Press
SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Kevin Hines regretted jumping off San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge the moment his hands released the rail and he plunged the equivalent of 25 stories into the Pacific Ocean, breaking his back.

Hines miraculously survived his suicide attempt at age 19 in September 2000 as he struggled with bipolar disorder, one of about 40 people who survived after jumping off the bridge.

Hines, his father, and a group of parents who lost their children to suicide at the bridge relentlessly advocated for a solution for two decades, meeting resistance from people who did not want to alter the iconic landmark with its sweeping views of the Pacific Ocean and San Francisco Bay.

On Wednesday, they finally got their wish when officials announced that crews have installed stainless-steel nets on both sides of the 1.7-mile bridge.

"Had the net been there, I would have been stopped by the police and gotten the help I needed immediately and never broken my back, never shattered three vertebrae, and never been on this path I was on," said Hines, now a suicide prevention advocate. "I'm so grateful that a small group of like-minded people never gave up on something so important."

Nearly 2,000 people have plunged to their deaths since the bridge opened in 1937.

City officials approved the project more than a decade ago, and in 2018 work began on the 20-foot-wide stainless steel mesh nets. But the efforts to complete them were repeatedly delayed until now.

The nets — placed 20

feet down from the bridge's deck — are not visible from cars crossing the bridge. But pedestrians standing by the rails can see them. They were built with marine-grade stainless steel that can withstand the harsh environment that includes salt water, fog and strong winds that often envelop the striking orange structure at the mouth of the San Francisco Bay.

"We have a continuous physical suicide barrier installed the full length of the 1.7-mile bridge on the east and the west side. The bridge is sealed up," said Dennis Mulligan, general manager of the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District.

The barriers are already working as intended, he added.

As the project neared completion in 2023, the number of people who jumped fell from an annual average of 30 to 14, with the deaths in the spots where crews had not finished installing the barriers yet, he said.

Some people still jumped into the net, and crews then helped them out of there. A handful of them jumped into the ocean from the net and died, he added.

The nets are meant to deter a person from jumping and curb the death rate of those who still do, though they will likely be badly injured.

"It's stainless-steel wire rope netting, so it's like jumping into a cheese grater," Mulligan said. "It's not soft. It's not rubber. It doesn't stretch."

"We want folks to know that if you come here, it will hurt if you jump," he added.

Firefighters in both San Francisco and Marin counties are being trained to climb down and rescue anyone who jumps into the nets. For now, ironworkers who

maintain the bridge and are trained in rescue techniques perform many of the rescues. On the deck, members of a bridge patrol work to spot people considering suicide and prevent them from jumping. Last year, they dissuaded 149 people from jumping, Mulligan said.

Bridge officials were first asked to do something about the suicides shortly after the bridge opened eight decades ago. But it was a small group of parents, including Hines' father, Patrick, who formed the Bridge Rail Foundation in 2006 and got the job done.

The name stems from the group's demand that the 4-foot-high railing along the bridge be raised. Its members often showed up at bridge meetings clutching large photos of their loved ones.

But a public comment campaign showed most people didn't want to raise the railing because it would block the sweeping views from the bridge.

An architectural firm recommended the nets based on the success a similar net had in preventing suicides in Bern, Switzerland, where officials installed one at a popular terrace overlooking a river, said Paul Muller, president of the Bridge Rail Foundation.

In 2008, bridge officials began exploring the idea of installing nets and after settling on a design, officials had to come up with the money to build them. In 2014, Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District officials approved the project for \$76 million.

Construction costs have risen to \$224 million, Mulligan said. In a lawsuit filed against the district that year, Shimmick Construction Co. and Danny's Construction Co., the lead contractors on the project, said the nets and

other work on the bridge as part of the project would cost about \$400 million.

Changes and flaws in the government's design of the nets and deterioration of the bridge's maintenance platforms raised the construction price, the companies said. The contractors say they have lost approximately \$100 million on the project and spent another \$100 million to pay expenses and laborers to ensure the project's completion.

"At no point did we let the litigation, or the fact that we haven't been paid everything we are owed, get in the way of the work," Steve Richards, CEO of Shimmick, said in a statement.



Voted #1

Locally Owned Restaurant in Wells County!

260-824-4950

1415 South Main Street, Bluffton, IN 46714



Enjoy \$5 Off Your Next Oil Change With This Coupon



*No Appointment Necessary

1309 S MAIN ST
BLUFFTON, IN 46714
260.353.1610

Attention Advertisers!

COMING IN FEBRUARY ... OUR 26th ANNUAL

Wells County

Fact Book

2024

Wells County Fact Book


One of our most popular annual projects, it is sure to be a "keeper!"

Jampacked with information we use everyday but take for granted, updated with newly elected officials and more!

Useful information for new residents and visitors as well as natives! From who to call at city hall, county offices, schools and utilities ... how to get a building permit, listings of regional zip codes, important phone numbers...

There are statistics, information on health care, recreation, churches, state government, maps and so much more!

You'll want your business to be a part of this year-round handy reference guide to Wells County!



The News-Banner

AD DEADLINE: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24

Contact Your Ad Rep Today or

Call 824-0224

or 800-579-7476 and ask for Display Advertising

CONSIDERING SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY?

Have you been thinking about applying for Social Security Disability benefits? Healthcare Solutions was founded in 2009, and we have served more than 4,800 people. Many feel they don't need any help in filing an application, and that may be true. However, most people who try to manage the application independently are disappointed when they receive a rejection. At that point those applicants give up or seek help. The procedure becomes quite complicated at that point unless the applicant has kept copies of all the material they have submitted. We suggest that all prospective applicants seek the advice of an experienced representative before launching an application. Even in seasoned hands the process can take many months, and can be very frustrating if you don't understand what you are doing. We also offer services as authorized representatives for Medicaid, Medicare, early Social Security retirement, Healthy Indiana Plan applications and SSI child's benefits. Call our office at 260-353-3315 any weekday morning from 8-12 for further information or to set up an appointment.