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TUESDAY, JANUARY 16, 2024

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Bluffton celebrates perfect graduation rate

By HOLLY GASKILL

Looking at the graduation rate from the Bluffton High School Class of 2023, district school board president Bruce Holland remarked, "The facts don't lie."

Principal Steve Baker reported a 100 percent graduation rate during the board's opening 2024 meeting Monday night. BHS is one of 10 schools in Indiana to accomplish this, Baker said. Students are technically permitted

until October to finish the requirements for graduation, meaning this data was only recently available.

There were 106 students who graduated in the class, over half of whom completed a Core 40 diploma or more, which has more comprehensive requirements than a general diploma.

Baker noted that the state recently permitted the inclusion of "alternate diplomas" for special education students in these statis-

tics. "I really want to applaud our special education department — that's a lot of work," Baker said. "They have to go through the same process as students that are going for general diploma, Core 40, in that they have a lot of requirements to meet. It's not something that they're just handed." One student earned an alternate diploma from BHS in 2023.

Baker and the board additionally emphasized that these statis-

tics embody a districtwide success, recognizing that the work toward graduation begins at the elementary and preschool levels. The district has a 98-percent graduation rate over the last 10 years.

Superintendent Brad Yates also advised that the district is looking into possible improvements to its special education programming considering Norwell's withdrawal. A committee has been meeting about the matter and a parent

meeting will be held Jan. 25.

"Do you anticipate any major problems with the changes in special ed," asked Bruce Holland. Yates replied, "No, I think we're well-equipped. We may need to adjust our staffing depending on parent choice in terms of enrollment for coming up in August, but we really won't know that until we get a little farther down that timeline."

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BHMSD to get new football, track fields

By HOLLY GASKILL

Bluffton-Harrison schools will partner with A-Turf Inc. out of New York for new football and track fields.

The board approved a contract with the group for \$550,500, and work is expected to begin directly following the track season this spring. The item will be paid for out of the operations fund.

Athletic Director Steve Thompson said the company was the best price, product and warranty the school could ask for. "I spoke with the (A-Turf) president last week, and they're in Buffalo, New York, and they want to work with us because of that (existing) relationship ... (the president) told me the field will be better than the Bills."

The board saw three renderings of the prospective turf fields, which included iterations of black and red endzones, the school name, and the tiger paw print logo.

Board member Julie Thompson remarked that she had noticed how the field had retained water this last season,

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Fire on Central Avenue

Local fire departments responded in the blustering cold Monday afternoon to a house fire on the 300 block of Central Avenue in Bluffton.

Above, a group of firemen watch team members target the flames on the second floor of the house. At right, Seth Bennett and Triston Niblick man the hose from the side of the building. **More photos on Page 12.** (Photos by Holly Gaskill)

U.S. continues a pattern of sub-zero temperatures

By CAROLYN THOMPSON, MATTHEW BROWN and VALERIE GONZALEZ

Associated Press

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — Brutally cold temperatures and dangerous wind chills stayed put across much of the U.S. Monday, promising the coldest temperatures ever for Iowa's presidential nominating contest, holding up travelers, and testing the mettle of NFL fans in Buffalo for a playoff game that was delayed a day by wind-whipped snow.

About 150 million Americans were under a windchill warning or advisory for dangerous cold and wind, said Zack Taylor, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in College Park, Maryland, as an Arctic air mass spilled south and eastward across the U.S.

Sunday morning saw temperatures as low as minus 20 degrees Fahrenheit to minus 40 F in northern and northeast Montana. Saco, Montana, dropped to minus 51 F. Subzero lows reached as far south as Kansas, Missouri, Illinois and parts of Indiana, Taylor said.

About 110,000 U.S. homes and businesses were without power late Monday, the bulk of them in Oregon after widespread outages that started Saturday. Portland General

(Continued on Page 2)

Houthi rebels strike U.S.-owned ship off coast of Yemen

By JON GAMBRELL

Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Houthi rebels fired a missile, striking a U.S.-owned ship Monday just off the coast of Yemen in the Gulf of Aden, less than a day after they launched an anti-ship cruise missile toward an American destroyer in the Red Sea.

The attack on the Gibraltar Eagle, later claimed by the

Houthis, further escalates tensions gripping the Red Sea after American-led strikes on the rebels. The Houthis' attacks have roiled global shipping, amid Israel's war with Hamas in the Gaza Strip, targeting a crucial corridor linking Asian and Mideast energy and cargo shipments to the Suez Canal onward to Europe.

The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations, which over-

sees Mideast waters, said Monday's attack happened some 110 miles southeast of Aden. It said the ship's captain reported that the "port side of vessel hit from above by a missile."

Private security firms Ambrey and Dryad Global told The Associated Press that the vessel was the Eagle Gibraltar, a Marshall Islands-flagged bulk carrier. The U.S. military's Central Command

later acknowledged the strike.

"The ship has reported no injuries or significant damage and is continuing its journey," Central Command said.

Houthi military spokesman Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree claimed the attack in a recorded television address that aired Monday night.

"The Yemeni armed forces consider all American and British ships and warships participating in

the aggression against our country as hostile targets," he said.

The vessel is owned by Eagle Bulk Shipping, a Stamford, Connecticut-based firm traded on the New York Stock Exchange. In a statement to The Associated Press, the company said the strike caused "limited damage to a cargo hold but (the ship) is stable and is heading out of the area."

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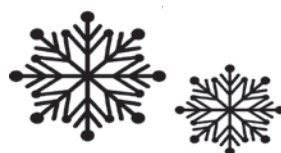
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Outside



Chance of snow today,
more freezing temps

Today	Wed.	Thursday
High 7	High 21	High 23
Low 2	Low 17	Low 11

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Online

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Graduation rates

(Continued from Page 1)

Later, the board unanimously agreed to change Monday, April 8, to an e-learning day due to the timing of the solar eclipse and the potential for increased traffic within the area. The e-learning day will end at 2 p.m. to allow families to observe the eclipse. Southern Wells has also decided to hold an e-learning day in light of the eclipse.

"I appreciate the foresight to keep our students safe," added board member Julie Thompson.

In the board's annual reorganization, Holland retained his position as president, Angie Sheets took over from Mike Murray as vice president, and Trent White took over from Thompson as secretary.

Also during the meeting, the board:

- Celebrated Jim Bueter, the district's Teacher of the Year. "I'm very honored to (receive) this award, (it's) very unexpected for me. But I have been very fortunate to be surrounded by a lot of great students who really want it to be great, and that's what it takes to build the department so I'm very appreciative," Bueter said.
- Approved a contract with Church, Church, Hittle, & Antrim for a legal review of the district's policies.

- Recognized Jodi Leas, BHS counselor, who has submitted her intent to retire at the end of the 2023-24 school year after 25 years of service with the district.

- Received resignations from Estefania Rangel, former elementary school mild intervention instructional assistant, and Candice Narvaez, former preschool childcare supervisor.

- Approved the following teaching recommendations: Felicia McElveen as preschool parent liaison, Paris Davis as elementary mild intervention instructional assistant and Candice Narvaez as a substitute teacher.

- Approved the following coaching recommendations: Lauren Brinneman as BHS softball assistant coach; Jason Pierce as BHS boys' baseball head coach, with Tim Garrett, Adam King, Todd Morgan, Mike Jefferson and Jeff Blair as assistant coaches; Brent Kunkel as BHS boys' track head coach with Michael Vanderkolk and Bob Dahl as assistant coaches; Spencer Schwartz as BHS girls' tennis head coach and Ashlee Xayyachack, Hunter Cunningham and Dharma Dynes as assistant coaches; Sebastian Baxter as BHS girls' track head coach and Tara Cocanower as assistant coach; Allison Harter as BHMS girls' track coach and

Erin McKinley, Abby Steffen and Tifani Tonner as assistant coaches; Luke Petty as BHS girls' softball assistant coach volunteer Erica Bluhm as Unified Track head coach; Ben Sprunger and Nick Krinn as Bluffton-Harrison Middle School boys' wrestling coaches and Ryan Thomas and Elliott Jimenez as volunteers; Justin Upgraft and Caleb Geimer as BHMS boys' swimming coaches; Kristi Searles and Jenny Boyd as BHMS girls' swimming coaches; Robert Vanderkolk as BHMS tennis coach and Spencer Schwartz, Hunter Cunningham, Jared Grandliard and Ashlee Xayyachack as volunteer coaches; and Ashlie Campbell, Danielle Kunle and Bethany Clem as BHMS boys' track assistant coaches. Stephanie White was approved as the middle school boys' track coach 4-0, with board member Trent White abstaining.

- Announced an intent to employ middle school diving and golf coaches and a summer school administrator.

- Accepted donations of \$200 from Farmers and Merchants, \$200 from Green Contracting, and \$200 from Travis Brown of Raber Electric to the wrestling program, specifically new mats and singlets. Family Ford of Bluffton also donated \$500 for BHS

Sub-zero temperatures

(Continued from Page 1)

Electric warned that strong winds forecast for Monday and threat of an ice storm Tuesday could delay restoration efforts.

Classes were cancelled Tuesday for students in major cities including Chicago — the nation's fourth-largest public school district — Denver, Dallas, Fort Worth and Portland.

The storm was blamed for at least four weekend deaths around Portland, including two people who died of suspected hypothermia. Another man was killed after a tree fell on his house and a woman died in a fire that spread from an open-flame stove after a tree fell onto an RV.

Three deaths of homeless people were under investigation in the Milwaukee area. They likely died from hypothermia, officials said. A 64-year-old man was found dead under a bridge Friday, a 69-year-old man was pronounced dead after being found in a vehicle on Saturday and on Monday a 40-year-old man was found dead near railroad tracks, the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office said.

In Utah, where almost four feet of snow fell in the mountains over a 24-hour period, a snowmobiler was struck and killed Sunday night by a semitrailer about 70 miles southeast of Salt Lake City, according to the Utah Highway Patrol. The victim was attempting to cross U.S. Highway 40.

In Wyoming, a back-country skier was killed after triggering a 50-foot wide avalanche. The victim was swept into a gully and through brush and trees, then remained buried for about fifteen minutes before being found by a companion in the mountains south of

Alpine, Wyoming, on Sunday afternoon, according to the Bridger-Teton Avalanche Center.

It marked the third U.S. avalanche fatality in recent days, following a Wednesday accident at a California ski resort that killed one person and injured three others, and another that killed a person on Thursday in the Idaho backcountry near the Montana border.

Swirling snow and avalanche dangers prompted numerous road closures across the Rocky Mountains. East of the resort community of Vail, Colorado, officials closed a 20-mile stretch of Interstate 70, the primary east-west highway through the state.

Crews on Monday continued clearing snow after a weekend avalanche briefly trapped the occupants of 10 cars and shut down the road over Berthoud Pass in central Colorado. Kaitlyn Punzalan was in a car with her husband and some friends heading home to Denver when they were caught in the slide.

"My friend was driving my car and all of a sudden he goes — 'Ah, avalanche!' And we just look up and see all of this snow coming down towards us," Punzalan told KUSA-TV. She said it took them about an hour to dig out, with help from others who were on the road. No injuries were reported.

The Buffalo Bills renewed their call for shovelers at Highmark Stadium in Orchard Park, New York, on Monday morning to dig out from more than a foot and a half of snow that fell through a blustery weekend.

Crews had the turf cleared by midmorning. Citizen shovelers working for \$20 an hour worked in temperatures in the teens to

clear seats for fans ahead of the 4:30 p.m. game.

At first glance it was a daunting task, Bob Isaacs of Buffalo acknowledged a few hours after arriving at 7:30 a.m. He considered his work a contribution to the team.

"You got to remember you're a Bills fan. It's all part of the deal," he said.

Neighboring towns saw even higher snow totals, with 41 inches in Hamburg and Angola.

Presidential campaigns were expecting the cold and dangerous travel conditions to hamper turnout for the Iowa caucuses, the opening contest in the monthslong Republican presidential primary. Voting was set to begin Monday night.

Transportation officials in Portland, Oregon, urged residents to avoid travel all day Tuesday as a forecast of up to half an inch of freezing rain could make roads hazily slick with ice and weigh down trees and power lines, causing them to fall.

Multnomah County, home to Portland, said it served a record number of people — 1,136 — at a record number of 12 overnight emergency weather shelters on Sunday night as low temperatures hit 17 degrees according to the National Weather Service. The county estimated it needed 100 additional volunteers to respond to the high demand in a city that has thousands of homeless people living on its streets.

"As we head into day five of the weather emergency ... the real limitation for us right now is staffing," said Dan Field, director of the joint county-city homelessness office. "We have to have enough people to keep the doors open of the emergency shelters."

Air travelers across the

country experienced delays and cancellations. The flight tracking service FlightAware reported about 2,900 cancellations Monday within, into or out of the United States.

Freeze warnings were issued by the National Weather Service across the Deep South. Mississippi forecasters warned of a "long duration freeze" that would last in some locations until Thursday.

Highs of 15 or 20 degrees F were expected across Oklahoma, Arkansas, northern Texas and western Tennessee. Louisiana and Alabama also had freeze warnings.

The winter storm was affecting travel across the central Appalachian region, with areas of Tennessee seeing as much as 8 inches of snow. The Tennessee legislature canceled its meetings for the week.

The snow was expected to continue accumulating through early Tuesday with bitter cold wind chills.

With the potential for record low temperatures in Texas, the state's electrical grid operator asked consumers to conserve energy. About 11,000 Texas customers were without power Monday, according to poweroutage.us.

Light snow was expected through the Mid-Atlantic and the Northeast through Monday and Tuesday, Taylor said, including 2 to 3 inches of snow forecasted for Washington, D.C. — what would be the most snowfall in a day in the nation's capital in at least two years.

Another round of cold air was expected in coming days to drop south into the Northern Plains and Midwest before reaching the Deep South by the end of the week.

Houthi rebels strike

"All seafarers onboard the vessel are confirmed to be uninjured," the firm said. "The vessel is carrying a cargo of steel products. Eagle Bulk management is in close contact with all relevant authorities concerning this matter."

Satellite-tracking data analyzed by AP showed the Eagle Gibraltar had been bound for the Suez Canal, but rapidly turned around at the time of the attack.

Central Command said it detected a separate anti-ship ballistic missile launch toward the southern Red Sea on Monday, though it "failed in flight and impacted on land in Yemen."

The U.S. Maritime Administration, under the Transportation Department, also issued a warning of a continuing "high degree of risk to commercial vessels" traveling near Yemen.

"While the decision to transit remains at the discretion of individual vessels and companies, it is recommended that U.S. flag and U.S.-owned commercial vessels" stay away from Yemen in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden "until further notice," the advisory said.

Sunday's missile launch toward the American warship also marked the first U.S.-acknowledged fire by the Houthis since America and allied nations began strikes Friday on the rebels following weeks of assaults on shipping in the Red Sea.

The Houthi fire in the direction of the USS Laboon, an Arleigh Burke-class destroyer operating in the southern reaches of the Red Sea, Central Command said.

The missile came from near Hodeida, a Red Sea port city long held by the Houthis, the U.S. said.

"An anti-ship cruise missile was fired from Iranian-backed Houthi militant areas of Yemen toward USS Laboon," Central Command said. "There were no injuries or damage reported."

The Houthis did not acknowledge that attack.

It wasn't presently clear whether the U.S. would retaliate for the latest attacks, though President Joe Biden has said he "will not hesitate to direct further measures to protect our people and the free flow of international commerce as necessary."

The first day of U.S.-led strikes Friday hit 28 locations and struck more than 60 targets with cruise missiles and bombs launched by fighter jets, warships and a submarine. Sites hit included weapon depots, radars and command centers, including in remote mountain areas, the U.S. has said.

The Houthis have yet to acknowledge how severe the damage was from the strikes, which they said killed five of their troops and wounded six others.

U.S. forces followed up with a strike Saturday on a Houthi radar site.

Since November, the rebels have repeatedly targeted ships in the Red Sea, saying they were avenging Israel's

offensive in Gaza against Hamas. But they have frequently targeted vessels with tenuous or no clear links to Israel, imperiling shipping in a key route for global trade.

Even the leader of the Lebanese militant Hezbollah group, Hassan Nasrallah, obliquely referenced the widening Houthi attacks on ships in a speech Sunday, saying that "the sea has become a battlefield of missiles, drones and warships" and blaming the U.S. strikes for escalating maritime tensions.

"The most dangerous thing is what the Americans did in the Red Sea, (it) will harm the security of all maritime navigation," Nasrallah said.

Weather

Tuesday, January 16, 2024

(24-hour observations at 10:16 p.m. Monday)

High: 6; Low: -6; Precipitation: None

Wabash River Level (at the Main Street bridge): 3.22 feet at 9:45 p.m. Monday

Wells County forecast

Today: A 30 percent chance of snow before 7 a.m. Partly sunny and cold, with a high near 7. Wind chill values as low as -15. West wind around 15 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

Tonight: Mostly clear, with a low around 2. Wind chill values as low as -15. Southwest wind around 15 mph, with gusts as high as 25 mph.

Wednesday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 21. Wind chill values as low as -15. Southwest wind 15 to 20 mph, with gusts as high as 30 mph.

Wednesday Night: A 20 percent chance of snow after 1 a.m. Cloudy, with a low around 17. Southwest wind 10 to 15 mph, with gusts as high as 25 mph.

Thursday: A 50 percent chance of snow. Cloudy, with a high near 23.

Thursday Night: A 50 percent chance of snow. Cloudy, with a low around 11.

Friday: A 30 percent chance of snow before 1 p.m. Mostly cloudy and cold, with a high near 16.

Friday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 3.

Saturday: Mostly sunny and cold, with a high near 15.

Saturday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 2.

Sunday: Mostly sunny and cold, with a high near 20.

Sunday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 12.

Monday: Mostly cloudy, with a high near 33.

BHMSD fields

(Continued from Page 1)

which Steve Thompson recognized. "It does stand water in it now, and there are some issues that need fixed. I appreciate your support in helping us provide the best product for our athletes," Thompson said.

Alongside this, the district also signed with FCI Inc. for the management of construction projects coming to Bluffton High School. According to Superintendent Brad Yates, the district had also received bids from Hagerman, W.R. Dunkin and Shawnee, and FCI was ranked to have the best bids considering multiple factors. They will charge 3.75 percent of the project.

The district held its annual Board of Finance meeting following its regular meeting, during which Yates reported an extraordinary \$400,948.01 earned on the district's investments. The 10-year annual average has been \$60,170.

Alongside this, Yates announced that the district had received an over \$8,000 grant from the Indiana Department of Education for accomplishments in early literacy. This amount will be distributed in employee stipends — \$180.84 for eligible certified personnel and \$60.28 for non-certified personnel.

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OBITUARIES

Timothy Langel, 64

Timothy B. Langel, 64, of Berne, passed away Saturday morning, Jan. 13, 2024, at Swiss Village.

He was born Dec. 30, 1959, in Bluffton to the late William K. Langel and Phyllis J. (Barnett) Langel Pease.

Tim was united in marriage to Linda L. Moeschberger on June 4, 1983, at Berne Evangelical Church.

He was a member of Berne Evangelical Church in Berne.

Tim graduated from Southern Wells in 1978. He worked at Gilpin Ironworks for 10 years and retired in November 2016.

Tim enjoyed hiking State Parks and fishing. He loved watching college and professional football, especially the Colts. Most of all he loved spending time with his family, especially his nieces and nephews and great-nieces and great-nephews.

He is survived by his wife, Linda Langel of Berne; mother, Phyllis Pease of Bluffton; sister, Cathy (Kelley) Householder of Bluffton; sister, Beth (Carl) Waterman of Coatesville, Ind.; brother-in-law, Jonathan Stutzman of Berne; step-sister, Janet (Herb) Heyerly of Bluffton; step-sister, Gloria (Noel) Phegley of Columbia City; several nieces and nephews; many great-nieces and great-nephews; and one great-great-niece and one great-great-nephew.

Tim was preceded in death by his step-father, John Pease; brother, Donald Langel; sister, Sarah Stutzman; and step-brother, Tom Pease.

A funeral service will be held at 10:30 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 18, 2024, at the Zwick & Jahn Funeral Home, Yager-Kirchhofer Chapel in Berne, with Pastor Bruce Rocke officiating. The funeral service will be live streamed and can be accessed by the Zwick & Jahn Funeral Homes Facebook page. Burial will follow at M.R.E. cemetery in Berne.

Friends and family will be received from 4-6 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 17, 2024, at the Zwick & Jahn Funeral Home, Yager-Kirchhofer Chapel in Berne, and one hour prior to the service at the funeral home on Thursday.

Preferred memorials are to Berne Evangelical Church. Arrangements by Zwick and Jahn Funeral Homes, Yager-Kirchhofer Chapel of Berne.



Rick Pharr, 61

CUMBERLAND HEIGHTS, TN — Rick Alan Pharr, 61, passed away Thursday, Nov. 30, 2023, at the SVHC emergency room in Dunlap, Tenn.

He was born in Decatur on June 7, 1962.

He owned and operated Songs Herbal RX shop along with his wife in Cumberland Heights, Tenn., and McMinnville, Tenn.

He is survived by his wife, Songsi Sakankhot Pharr; mother, Martha (Terry) Hammons of Bluffton; father, Derryle Pharr of Berne; son, Jarod Lee Pharr of Decatur; sister, Rita (Mike) Bolinger of Warren; and brother, Anthony (Pornnipa) Pharr of Decatur.

A memorial for friends and family will be held from 2-4 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 21, at the South Adams Senior Center, 825 Hendricks St. in Berne, with a short service to follow.

Police Notebook

INCIDENTS

City:
Friday, 2:46 p.m., 700 block of South Morgan Street. Caller reported vehicle parked in wrong direction. Parking ticket given.

Friday, 4:39 p.m., South Main Street and East Wiley Avenue. Welfare check requested for two people carrying small child wrapped in sheet. Subjects were walking home to apartment; it was their child.

Friday, 6:17 p.m., 200 block of South Jersey Street. Welfare check requested for woman. Juvenile at woman's

residence advised she was in the hospital and would have her contact the caller.

Friday, 6:57 p.m., Wells County Public Library. Report of a male juvenile that offered caller's granddaughter marijuana and to go to Florida. Officers unable to locate subject.

Friday, 11:57 p.m., Budget Inn. Caller requested assistance with eviction.

Saturday, 12:28 a.m., 200 block of East South Street. Caller reported unknown subject in residence that left through the back door. Unable to locate.

Saturday, 5:07 a.m.,

Hoosier House Restaurant. Employee unable to access building due to frozen door. Officer made entry.

Saturday, 12:07 p.m., North Main and West Water streets. Report of a man under the bridge.

Saturday, 10:49 p.m., Wells County Highway Department. Report of alarm at location, subject advised to disregard as the lock on the building is frozen. Buildings are also alarmed at this weather.

Sunday, 4:13 a.m., Capri Meadows. Caller found item in closet she did not put there, requested officer to

check it out.

Sunday, 1:48 p.m., Dollar General South. Report of theft.

Monday, 7:30 a.m., 350 North and Ind. 1. Driver blew a tire, officer followed vehicle to Walmart.

Monday, 10:15 a.m., 300 block of West Wabash Street. Report of a stolen television from apartment.

FIRES

City:

Monday, 5:58 a.m., 1600 block of Brook Court. Report of a vehicle on fire with no one inside. Fire extinguished at approximately 6:45 a.m.

Southern Wells announces jr./sr. high school honor roll students

Southern Wells Junior-Senior High School has released the names of its students on the high honor roll and honor roll for the second term of the 2023-24 school year.

Seniors

High Honor Roll — Joshua Bricker, Caleb Johnson, Tessa Maul, Kammy Miller and Rylie Wilson.

Honor Roll — Seth Alstoft, Case Boxell, Brittany Costello, Malaina Culbertson, Perrin Gates, Erik Habegger, Jaxon Heath, Brayden Jackson, Ella Lahr, Cambri Leas, Gabriel McElhaney, Andrew Pearson, Evan Pennington, Emma Peterson, Keith Pluimer, Kaiden Schmidt, Yazmine Tucker, Karlee Warner and Tristen Worster.

Juniors

High Honor Roll — Ava Adkins, Alyssa Green, Nickolas Lee, Hana McClain, Brandon Reed, Collena Reeves and Derek Rockwell.

Honor Roll — Matthew Aulbach, Aidan Carney, Colten Clark, Quinten Darling, Avery Gaskill, Tyler Grover, Colter Kiel, Owen King, Cohen Miller, Ashlie Needler, Alaina Nusbaumer, Kenzie Paxson, Matthew Pearson, Dominic Ramirez, Caroline Ripperger, Haidee Stetzel and Tucker Worster.

Sophomores

High Honor Roll — Sydney Alstoft, Laura Benbow, Peyton

Bertsch, Peyton Ellis, Korbin Eltzroth, Keith Gartin, Addison Gaskill, Shaylinn Geesaman, Jazlyn Gillum, Lucas Goodrich, Emma Parks, Gracie Reeves, Adeline Sabinske, Dannicka Sorensen, Emily Steffen and Braden Yencer.

Honor Roll — Kolbie Beavans, Chloe Enochs, Lexie Fiechter, Jarin Frauhiger, Kaitlynn Gardner, Lilly Gartin, Kaiden Gilbert, Leeland Goodnight, Wyatt Harker, Lucy Hayes, Kane Jenkins, Ronan Jump, Lillian Mahorney, Isabella Maul, Miley Michael, Hayden Morgan, Lillian Pence, Taylor Rogers, David Shelley, Dalton Stephan, MacKenzie Taylor and Emmigen Walden.

Freshmen

High Honor Roll — Kinley Allred, Joshua Aulbach, Cash Banter, Dirk Frauhiger, Gavin Howell, McKenna King, Carson Liddy, Sophia Meeks, Chanie Mounsey, Elisabeth Penrod and Kila Shelley.

Honor Roll — Jayda Brown, Andi Bryant, Aliah Carroll, Kaylea Coffel, Sylvie Gilbert, Miranda Holloway, Landon Johnson, Samantha Kahn, Savannah McEvoy, Aubree Meyer, Gunner Murray, Reagan Needler, Lillia Paxson, Catalina Ramirez, Lilly Roe, Delinda Schortgen, Jenna Shimp

and Bailey Trosper.

8th Grade

High Honor Roll — Adam Aulbach, Harlie Durham, Olivia Kahn, Sarah McFarren, Laren Schneider, Drew Steffen and Abrielle Zigler.

Honor Roll — Kaleb Boots, Kaylee Davis, Ellie DeWeese, Hallie Frauhiger, Madison Grover, Jacob Hahn, Sevoa Harris, Kameron Hawkins, Sophie Heckman, Mary Huffman, Bailey Jenkins, Drew Lahr, Violet McClain, Addison Miller, Marianne Pease, Alexis Pennington, Evelyn Peterson, Abbie Powell, Milee Rickard, Cadence Watkins, Caylee Williams and Kendal Zavattaro.

7th Grade

High Honor Roll — Mack Frauhiger, Rylen Gates, Adelyn Heim, Gabriella Hoffacker, Gwyneth Howell, Kyan Johnson, Logan Leas, Lyla Lyons, Olivia Newman, Amelia Penrod, Grace Rockwell, Annalyse Roe, Grace Rogers and Timothy Smith.

Honor Roll — Aubrie Beavans, Brooklyn Blinn, Alaina Edmonds, Camryn Hamilton, Chase Kirkwood, Rylan Leas, David McMillan, Lyric McQueary, Jacob Miller, Lucille Palmer, Kylie Peterson, Adelynn Robles, John Schneider, Ella Schwartz and Logan Tarr.

Judiciary committee wrestles with age verification for pornography and parental rights

By WHITNEY DOWNARD

Indiana Capital Chronicle

Legislation introducing barriers to minors attempting to access adult content passed out of the Senate Judiciary Committee unanimously Wednesday, over the concerns of legal advocates and some legislators.

Separately, legislation making it easier for parents to sue over government action also moved forward.

Senate Bill 17 would require that "adult-oriented websites" hosting adult content — such as pornography or other "material harmful to minors" — verify a user's identity before allowing access. That could be by scanning a driver's license or registering with a third-party verification service.

"Unfortunately, now, our kids are being subjected (to) and have content that is so, so readily available and of such a harsh, adult content nature that we need to try to put some speed bumps on this and try to make sure that it's not as accessible as just turning your phone on," bill author Sen. Mike Bohacek said.

Needing to scan some form of identification to purchase alcohol or other adult products is already normal for most Hoosiers, Bohacek, R-Michiana Shores, noted.

"A 16-year-old cannot walk in and buy an adult magazine, they cannot walk into a strip bar. There's a lot of things they cannot do," Bohacek said. "But the American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana disagreed, saying it subjects Hoosiers to harmful surveillance and puts their private informa-

tion at risk.

"(A state) can limit a minor's access to adult material. However, you can't do that in a way that impermissibly burdens an adult's access to the same material," said Chris Daley, the executive director of the ACLU, sharing court filings from a Texas case on this issue.

Sen. Greg Taylor, D-Indianapolis, emphasized his opposition to children accessing adult content but had concerns about infringing on adult access. He also worried about sharing Hoosiers' identifying information with a foreign entity that might own a pornographic website.

"... Pornhub pulled out of Utah, maybe that's (the) objective here. But Pornhub should be accessible to any adult who wants to watch it. Not children," Taylor said.

Potential for litigation

Daley, using the Texas case in which a judge issued an injunction, said the ACLU and others — especially operators of adult websites — might sue the state as they did elsewhere after other states introduced similar measures. In November, a the 5th Circuit of Appeals reversed that decision in the ongoing Texas case.

"We know that an age-verification system like the one laid out in SB 17 will deter some adults from accessing otherwise permissible material for them and the state can't use a means to limit the minor's access to adult material if there's a less burdensome means available to do so," Daley said.

"(I'm) very sympathetic to the goals of Sen. Bohacek here. We do, though, recognize that our Constitution requires that laws be appropriately tailored to project free speech," Daley said.

Sen. Aaron Freeman, R-Indianapolis, pushed back, saying that different judges could have a different ruling, but urged Bohacek to work with him on an amendment to rectify such issues.

Sen. Rodney Pol, D-Chesterton, noted the ease with which users in other states had bypassed such laws, including the use of virtual private networks to mask a user's location, and wondered why this bill didn't qualify as less burdensome.

Still, others urged the General Assembly to take action, including Micah Clark with the American Family Association of Indiana, who said, "There's no constitutional right for a child to see pornography."

"This is a worthwhile effort to protect children from pornographic material that is all too prevalent on the internet today," Clark said.

Even if a lawsuit followed, Sen. Liz Brown said some causes were worthwhile enough to spend state dollars defending them, such as Indiana's myriad of abortion bills that the ACLU also challenged.

"This isn't about eliminating pornography from the state of Indiana, though I would be okay with that," Brown, R-Fort Wayne, said. "... when it's a good cause, it's worth spending (tax dollars)."



Snow birds

Pictured are several birds braving the cold weather just over the Wells County line on Yoder Road. (Photos submitted by Kim Neuhauser)

Corrections and clarifications

Josh DeFonce's name was misspelled in Monday's News-Banner. In Friday's edition, local Paddlefish Solar representative Susan Poper was incorrectly identified as Mary Solada.

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Three memorable days in the southwest with an unfortunate ending

Less than two weeks ago we were feeling chilly as we quickly walked across campus so that we would arrive to the arena early enough to enjoy some of the pre-game activities.

It was in the low 60s as the sun was going down, and we had one last view of towering Mount Lemmon — the highest point in the Santa Catalina Mountains located in the Coronado National Forest north of Tucson, Ariz.

“In a few days, we’ll be wishing that it was 60 degrees,” my wife and I joked with our friends and their kids as we hustled across the University of Arizona’s campus toward the McKale Center arena.

Truer words have never been spoken, as the temperature hasn’t climbed above 10 degrees these last couple of days now that we’re back home in Hoosier country.

At this point, we’re ready to head back to the southwest.

I have been traveling to Arizona during the holidays for the past 15 years or so to visit my friends from college and their family with the exception of 2021 due to COVID-19.

The coronavirus reared its ugly head on this trip as well, but more on that later.

Spending a few days surrounded by desert landscape — mountains, cacti, rock formations and canyons — is good for the soul each December or January as we settle in for a few months of snow, ice and bone-chilling cold in northeast Indiana.

This year’s trip was no exception as we biked through mountains, hiked through the desert and watched the Arizona Wildcats defeat the Colorado Buffaloes by almost 50 points.

One of our go-to spots for mountain biking is the Desert Classic Trail in Phoenix’s South Mountains.

It is the ideal spot to bike because of its numerous ups, downs and wash crossings. Those steep wash crossings through the stunning desert landscape make it one of my favorite routes to bike in the Phoenix area.

We normally see a few coyotes while biking, and this year’s ride was no different from usual as we observed four of them from a distance.

The following day, we made the 90-minute drive on the I-10 from Phoenix to Tucson. This year, however, we stopped for a few hours on the way there to visit Picacho Peak State Park and climb to the top of the peak.

Anyone who has ever driven on I-10 between Phoenix and Tucson has seen Picacho Peak. Travelers use it as a landmark because it is visible from some 60 miles away.

The summit rises to 3,374 feet above sea level, and the climb to the top along the Hunter Trail is about 2 miles with an elevation gain of about 1,500 feet. The steep and twisting switchback trails, however, cause it to be labeled a difficult hike. There are steel cables along the steepest parts of the trail, which make the journey up (and down) a little easier.

For the first mile, it’s mostly straight up — until you reach the saddle, elevation 2,960 feet. Afterward, hikers drop down as the trail crosses a ridge to the back side of the mountain. Then, it is back up again as the trail on the south side of the mountain leads to the peak.

Once there, we were treated to a 360-degree clear view of the Sonoran desert and mountains, including the bustling traffic along I-10 some 3,000 feet below us.

A few hours after finishing the climb, we were in Tucson to watch the Wildcats defeat the Buffaloes — a great way to end a fun-filled trip to Tucson.

By the end of our four days in Arizona, we had hiked several miles, biked even more and spent several days with friends who we wish we could see a lot more often.

Time in the Grand Canyon state always leaves me feeling refreshed and rejuvenated, and my wife normally would say the same.

This year, however, her trip didn’t end as we thought. She came down with what we thought was a cold on our last day there.

She was still feeling ill when we got home the following afternoon, and she decided to take a COVID test. It didn’t even take five minutes for the test to come back positive.

She spent the rest of the week recovering from a terrible case of COVID. Somehow, I managed to dodge the COVID bullet after already having it twice since 2020.

The trip didn’t end the way we thought, but we’re glad we were able to enjoy three healthy days in a place that feels more and more like my second home each time I’m there.

jdpeeper2@hotmail.com



Justin Peeper



Gary Varvel
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garyvarvel.com

Austin’s dereliction undermined the crucial chain of command

In 2002, my then-boss, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, became concerned that the National Security Council was issuing orders, taskings and guidance directly to U.S. military combatant commanders in the field. That authority belonged solely to President George W. Bush, to be delivered solely to Rumsfeld and on to uniformed officers. So, he sent one of his famous “snowflakes” - short memos he dictated to staff and colleagues - to national security adviser Condoleezza Rice.

“You and the NSC staff need to understand that you are not in the chain of command,” Rumsfeld wrote. “Since you cannot seem to accept that fact, my only choices are to go to the President and ask him to tell you to stop or to tell anyone in DoD not to respond to you or the NSC staff. I have decided to take the latter course. If it fails, I’ll have to go to the President. One way or the other, it will stop, while I am Secretary of Defense. Thanks.”

This was not a matter of preference; it was a matter of law - a law that has come into renewed focus in light of Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin’s failure to inform the White House, Congress or his own deputy that he was hospitalized and incapacitated at a time when the U.S. military was carrying out a strike against an Iran-backed militia while under ongoing attack in Iraq, Syria and the Red Sea.

In 1986, Congress passed the Goldwater-Nichols Act, a sweeping reorganization of the military structure which states, “Unless otherwise directed by the President, the chain of command to a unified or specified combatant command runs - (1) from the President to the Secretary of Defense; and (2) from the Secretary of Defense to the commander of the combatant command.”

Former national security adviser Stephen Hadley provided some context for the Rumsfeld memo in a 2011 interview for the University of Virginia’s oral history project. Bush “would have a tendency to say, ‘I’ve decided that you should call Gates,’ or ‘Call Rumsfeld,’ and I would say, ‘Mr. President, I’m not in the chain of command.’” Hadley said. “You’ve got a phone there. Pick up and hit that third line and you’ll have Don Rumsfeld. You ought to give that order to him directly.” If someone else tried to pass on an order from the president, Rumsfeld would remind them they were not in the chain of command. And I vividly recall that he directed his staff to make certain that he and Deputy Secretary Paul Wolfowitz “will not be out of the city of Washington, DC at the same time. One of us will always be in the city” to preserve the chain of command.

Austin should know all about the chain of command.

As Rumsfeld wrote in his book “Rumsfeld’s Rules,” “in every case those in the senior ranks of leadership have worked their way up from the lower positions. Every three- or four-star officer once was a junior officer with a single gold bar on his or her collar.” That includes Austin, who received orders down the chain of command as a second lieutenant and eventually a four-star general, before passing down the president’s orders as the civilian leader of the Pentagon.

While he was incapacitated this month, the U.S. military carried out an airstrike in Baghdad that killed a high-ranking commander of an Iran-backed militia. I asked White House spokesman John Kirby how the order was given if Austin had been in the intensive care unit since Jan. 1. Kirby responded that the president gave the order to Austin on Christmas Day (leaving the decision on when to pull the trigger to the combatant commander).

That answer deserves examination by Congress. And it does not excuse Austin’s failure to disclose his incapacity to the president, the national security adviser or Congress. Austin did not even transfer his responsibilities in the chain of command to Deputy Defense Secretary Kathleen Hicks, who was vacationing in Puerto Rico, until Jan. 2, and even then he only transferred “certain operational responsibilities that require constant secure communications capabilities.”

What if something had gone wrong? What if Iran had retaliated, necessitating rapid decisions on how to respond? What if the president said “get me the secretary of defense” - but no one at the White House knew where he was? The fact that Austin disappeared for so long while no one at the White House noticed does not speak well of President Biden’s engagement with his defense secretary - especially at a time when Iranian-backed terrorists are launching almost daily attacks on U.S. forces, and American partners and allies are fighting major wars on two continents with support from the U.S. military.

The reason the chain of command exists, as Rumsfeld explained, is that it allows our troops to “know from whom they must take orders and to whom they must give them. Where there is no continuity there can be no accountability.” Austin’s failure to disclose his illness was a dereliction of duty - and now he needs to be held accountable.

Follow Marc A. Thiessen @marcthiessen on X



Marc Thiessen

In politics, there are liars and better liars

It’s a good thing Donald Trump doesn’t do campaign debates anymore. He couldn’t have survived Wednesday night’s liar-liar-pants-on-fire name-calling extravaganza between runner-up Nikki Haley, former ambassador to the United Nations and former governor of South Carolina, and third-place Ron DeSantis, governor of Florida.

Trump would have stalked off the stage, the clear winner in the liar sweepstakes. Instead, Haley and DeSantis argued between themselves for two exhausting and boring hours about who had lied most about this position or that policy.

Haley repeatedly referred viewers to DeSantisLies.com to check her opponents’ alleged prevarications, warning Drake University students: “Don’t turn this into a drinking game because you will be overserved by the end of the night.”

Such playfulness around the subject of lying is worrisome, as though lying is a prank, a harmless game of hyperbole. It risks normalizing deceit.

But lies are rarely harmless. Lies undermining objective fact, lies beyond respect, which is essential to a properly functioning republic. Powerful liars like Trump count on this. He has never been coy about his ambitions for greater control over the country, and his demands for loyalty are legendary. He has made clear his disdain for the truth-tellers and for anyone who would contradict him.

Trump’s biggest lie, of course, is that he won the 2020 presidential election and that it was stolen. And anyone disputing this falsehood is a liar. When journalists attempt to point this out, their reports are dismissed as “fake news.” Trump is married to “his truth,” the cloyingly popular idea that “your truth” and “my truth” are distinct and subjective.

This seems a good time to mention that “my truth” has become a trigger phrase for me. In the absence of a



Kathleen Parker

convenient safety zone, good Samaritans should direct me, when I hear it, to the nearest wine bar, where I shall find relief in the company of others who prefer to think about higher truths. (Lower truths will do in a pinch.)

Joking aside, the vulnerability of a nation divided by the very meaning of truth can’t be overstated. When a proven liar reaches the most powerful office in the world, we’re in a world of trouble.

In his novel “1984,” George Orwell wrote: “And if all others accepted the lie which the Party imposed - if all records told the same tale - then the lie passed into history and became truth. ‘Who controls the past’ ran the Party slogan, ‘controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.’”

We got our first taste of Orwellian doublespeak from the Trump administration when presidential adviser Kellyanne Conway explained an epic discrepancy between the White House’s version of Trump’s inauguration audience - the largest in American history - and what our own eyes could see.

“You’re saying it’s a falsehood,” she told Chuck Todd of NBC News, “and they’re giving - our press secretary, Sean Spicer, gave alternative facts to that.”

The thing about alternative facts is, apparently, they love to go forth and multiply. Fast-forward to 2024, and we hear an echo from Harvard University. Describing the serial plagiarism of its now-former president Claudine Gay, Harvard used the term “duplicate language.” Ah, I see. She didn’t steal another’s work; she merely duplicated some language.

Gay’s relatively sparse academic résumé consisted of 11 peer-reviewed articles, which included several passages that were nearly identical to passages in other people’s published works. Other statements from Harvard referred to Gay’s plagiarism as “missteps.”

A misstep is when President Biden trips on a sandbag. Lifting somebody else’s words is plagiarism. Such doublespeak sanitizes truth to make it less potent. People are supposed to feel that what Gay did wasn’t so bad. Needless to say, plagiarism and doublespeak don’t wash in academia (until now) or the media. There are consequences for both, as well as for fabrications, as we’ve seen on occasion. Obviously, there ought to be consequences for presidents, too. If not, we’re dealing with a dictator whose truth must be accepted. Or else?

This is the precipice upon which we teeter while Trump leads the Republican fold. I will never understand how people either know he’s a liar and accept it or are too blinded by their truth to see what’s in front of their noses. Do his supporters not care about the truth - at all?

Not once this cycle has Trump appeared onstage to debate his challengers. He’s the ghost candidate who materializes and speaks at his own events, where he can be in total control. This is not, my friends, the democratic way.

What’s he hiding? Or, what is he hiding from? Scrutiny, that’s what. The follow-up question. Challenges to the sovereignty of “his truth,” which isn’t mine, for the record. But you knew that.

Trump, a former reality TV showman, can be entertaining at times, but a second round in the White House would be no joke. Polling has shown that Haley would soundly defeat Biden in the general election, while Trump lost to Biden in 2020 fair and square. Why would this November be different? Trump isn’t more popular than he was before.

If Trump cared about his country half as much as he cares about himself, he’d drop out and let Haley’s comet soar. But he would rather destroy everything in his path than surrender his ego to the rabble that still dares to demand truth.

kathleenparker@washpost.com

Today in History

By The Associated Press
Today is Tuesday, Jan. 16, the 16th day of 2024. There are 350 days left in the year.

Today’s Highlight in History: On Jan. 16, 27 B.C., Caesar Augustus was declared the first Emperor of the Roman Empire by the Senate.

On this date:
In 1865, Union Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman decreed that 400,000 acres of land in the South would be divided into 40-acre lots and given to former slaves. (The order, later revoked by President Andrew Johnson, is believed to have inspired the expres-

sion, “Forty acres and a mule.”)

In 1920, Prohibition began in the United States as the 18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution took effect, one year to the day after its ratification. (It was later repealed by the 21st Amendment.)

In 2003, the space shuttle Columbia blasted off for what turned out to be its last flight; on board was Israel’s first astronaut, Ilan Ramon. (The mission ended in tragedy on Feb. 1, when the shuttle broke up during its return descent, killing all seven crew members.)

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'Making a Difference' sponsors



Parlor City Cabinetry will be among the sponsors of the "Making a Difference" fund-raiser for the Wells Community Boys & Girls Club to be held on Jan. 22 at the club. Left to right are Nick Huffman (club board member), John Stauffer and Nathan Stauffer (co-owners of PCC) and Vicki Bell (club director). Speaker for the evening will be Wayne Barker, former superintendent of the Bluffon-Harrison M.S.D. (Photos provided)



First Bank of Berne, represented by Branch Manager Erica Bennett, center, will also be a sponsor of the Boys & Girls Club "Making a Difference" banquet. Accepting the sponsorship were Club Director Vicki Bell, at left, and BGC Resource Development Officer Gene Bell, at right.



Farmers & Merchants Bank staff members were pleased to present Wells Community Boys & Girls Club Director Vicki Bell, second from the left, with a check for \$500 to become a sponsor for the club's Making a Difference banquet on Jan. 22. Left to right are Denise Ferguson, Bell, Sara Jones and Cindy Gordon. The evening also will include a live auction.

Zanesville News

by Melba Edwards

Come on over to the Zanesville Community Church of God and join in on the group that attend the Coffee Cafe on weekdays from 7:30 to 10 a.m. All area residents are welcome to come and get acquainted. The church is on the corner of Marzane/Indianapolis Road and 1200N/South County Line.

The Zanesville Town Council will meet at the Municipal Building at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 16. Everyone is invited to attend this monthly meeting of the town council.

The Zanesville Lions apple dumplings are available at the County Line Pizza and Pub downtown during open hours. You may also call me at 638-4327 for local deliveries. The dumplings are fully cooked and come with caramel sauce. They are

frozen and you can warm up in the microwave. The price is \$3 each.

Our 1976 Zanesville History Book is also available. It is \$20 which is the price of the printing. Call me if you would like to buy one.

At the December Town Council meeting, the council members were invited to the Jan. 8 Lions Club meeting at the clubhouse for supper and to exchange ideas on how to work together on more ideas for the betterment of Zanesville and this area. Those attending were handed out several papers of importance.

Those present for the evening were Town Board members president Isaac Zent and John Schuhmacher, vice president Barb O'Connor did not attend. Members present were

Robby Herron, Steve Kessler, Robin Phillips, Charles and Melanie Martin, and Melba Edwards.

The evening ended with the Town Board president agreeing with the town helping out with lots of activities whenever possible.

By the way, the four 175 Year Town of Zanesville signs are all up but one that is waiting for a site. Thanks to Issac, his boys and John for getting these placed.

Guests at our meeting were Lion Roger Cash, of Ossian who has and does hold many offices in Lions and is a great help always to our club, and John's wife Eileen who comes to meetings with him and shares him when we need help and repairs. Our repair person Larry sometimes needs another hand.

Podcasts begin at Allen County Public Library with Reusser featured

Allen County's Public Library has announced that it will be sponsoring a Podcast titled "Pages & Voices" that will feature interviews with area authors, including Wells county author Kayleen Reusser.

Megan Bell will be doing the interviewing of the six authors to be featured including Jaclyn Youhana Garver, Carrie Vrabel, Erica Anderson Senter, Michael Lindvall and Angela Jackson-

Brown. The first broadcast was the interview with Vrabel on Jan. 8th.

The remaining interviews will drop every other week and can be streamed or downloaded on the library's website, Apple podcasts, Podbean, Spotify, Amazon, iHeart-Radio, PlayerFM, Samsung and Podchaser.

Those interested in being interviewed in future seasons should submit information online to acpl.lib.in.us/local-authors.

Shrine circus at Allen County War Memorial Coliseum

The Mizpah Shrine Circus will be coming to the Fort Wayne War Memorial Coliseum Jan. 26-28.

Shows will be held on Friday, Jan. 26, 7 p.m.; Saturday, Jan. 27 at 10 a.m., 2:30 p.m. and 7 p.m. and Sunday, Jan. 28 at 2 p.m.

Ticket prices begin at \$16 per person. Information at allaccess@memorialcoliseum.com

Thank you for reading your local newspaper

The News-Banner

Get to the core of your problem

Also: Have a healthier, happier winter

Question: My doctor says that I will have less back pain, more upper body strength and better posture if I strengthen my core. Can you explain what core strength is, how to get it and why it matters? — Phil T., Atlanta

Answer: Your core is the center of your strength and well-being. It's composed of multiple muscle groups that are connected to your spine, pelvis and hips. That's why core strength — or lack of it — plays a role in everything from balance and the motion of your upper body and spine to the development of problems with back pain, urination and defecation, and even orgasm.

When you strengthen your core, you also reduce visceral belly fat and body-wide inflammation that's associated with chronic conditions such as diabetes and heart disease. You'll improve your golf and pickle ball swing and reduce the wear and tear that comes from sitting at a desk and in front of a computer for hours a day. You'll avoid lower back pain and shoulder and neck aches.

Waking up your core and strengthening core muscle groups can be done at the gym or at home.

Step 1: Meet your core muscles. Standing or lying flat on your back with your legs extended, place your hands gently on your stomach below your rib cage. Breathe in and tighten your stomach and side muscles from ribs to groin. Keep your shoulders back. Hold for a count of 10-30. Repeat three times.

Step 2: Practice core-tightening while walking. With eyes forward, shoulders back and down, back straight, walk for 100 steps with your stomach muscles contracted, breathing naturally. Once you get the hang of it, use this technique whenever and wherever you walk.

Step 3: It's beneficial to do core strengthening exercises daily, according to Harvard Medical School. Try the modified plank; dead bug; opposite leg and arm raise; clamshell, bridge, and one-leg balance tests. Examples are available at ClevelandClinic.org; search for core exercises.

Question: I find it hard to stay in shape in the winter, between the cold and dark and the tempting foods. Any tips to battle the January bulge? — Katie R., Rochester, New York

Answer: According to the University of Rochester Medical Center in your hometown, folks gain 1 to 3 pounds every



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

winter because of changes in sleep patterns, getting less exercise, overindulgence in sweet treats and excess alcohol. And many people don't lose it when the weather warms up — so over a decade, they can pack on 10 to 30 extra pounds!

Job number one is to set up a winter nutritional plan that lets you enjoy tasty foods that don't fuel weight gain. Look for recipes like Daphne Oz's roasted butternut squash soup with coconut milk and the ones in Dr. Mike's "What to Eat When Cookbook."

When it comes to staying active, you want to find routines that inspire and delight you. For some folks, tuning into online classes is motivating. Hooking up with an exercise buddy for "appointment workouts" at the gym can also help you stick to a weekly routine (aerobics at least five days a week and strength-training two days).

In addition, the changing amount of sunlight can disrupt your sleep cycle and too much or too little sleep can fuel weight gain and depression. It's important to stick to a sleep schedule — bed at 10 up at 6? — weekdays and weekends. Don't get lethargic when it's dark at 4:30 p.m.; do a 10-minute walk after your last food of the evening.

As for tempting holiday foods and drink: try allowing yourself a once-a-week treat (spiked egg nog and dessert or prosecco and creamy pasta). Then stick with a healthier diet the rest of the week.

If you make an effort to have a healthy winter, you will sail into spring with a more positive outlook, a spring in your step, and a lot more time living life without illness or disability.

American Legion Fish Fry this Friday

Wells county's American Legion Post 111 will be hosting a Fish Fry on Friday, Jan. 19, from 4 to 7 p.m.

To go orders are welcome and tickets are \$12 per person. To arrange for carry out call 260-824-3815.

The Legion also hosts a monthly Break-

fast Buffet All-You-Can-Eat event the last Saturday of the month, with the next on Jan. 27, from 8 to 10 p.m. Cost is \$11 for adults, \$5 for those 5 to 12 and free to those under 5.

Direct questions to Bob Buehl at 260-341-1928.

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Bills shake off cold, snow in playoff win over Steelers

By JOHN WAWROW
AP Sports Writer

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. (AP) — Josh Allen threw three touchdown passes and scored on a franchise playoff-record 52-yard touchdown run, and the Buffalo Bills beat the Pittsburgh Steelers 31-17 on Monday in an AFC wild-card playoff game that was postponed a day because of a lake-effect blizzard.

The Highmark Stadium stands erupted with snow being tossed into the air like confetti when Allen threw a 17-yard touchdown pass to Khalil Shakir with 6:27 remaining that restored a two-touchdown lead for Buffalo. Shakir caught the pass at the 10 over the middle, and then slipped Minkah Fitzpatrick's tackle attempt by spinning around before outracing the rest of the Steelers defenders into the end zone.

The second-seeded Bills (12-6), who closed the regular season with five straight wins, advance to host Patrick Mahomes and the No. 3 seed Kansas City Chiefs in the divisional round on Sunday night.

"We've got a resilient group. The veteran leadership that we have, I really think it's unmatched in the league," Allen said of a team that was 6-6 after an overtime loss

to Philadelphia on Nov. 26.

The Bills have longed for a home playoff game against the Chiefs after their 2020 and '21 seasons ended with playoff losses at Kansas City.

"It's going to take a team effort," Allen said. "We know the type of team that they are, obviously the type of quarterback that they have in Pat over there. ... Just thanking God that we get another chance to play another game."

Allen finished 21 of 30 for 203 yards and ran for 74 yards on eight carries, becoming the first quarterback in NFL playoff history to throw three or more TD passes while rushing for 70 or more yards and a score. He didn't have a turnover for just the fourth time this season.

Mason Rudolph threw two touchdown passes with an interception in his first playoff start for the Steelers (10-8), but Pittsburgh was too inconsistent on either side of the ball to keep up with Allen and the Bills. The Steelers lost their fifth straight playoff game; the franchise's most recent post-



season victory was exactly seven years ago.

Rudolph, a longtime backup, took over for the injured Kenny Pickett and the ineffective Mitch Trubisky to lead the Steelers to three straight wins to close the regular season and was given the playoff start even after Pickett recovered from an ankle injury.

"I'm appreciative of the efforts. But it's not mystical. We didn't do what was required to win tonight," Steelers coach Mike Tomlin said, noting that two Steelers turnovers led to the Bills scoring 14 points. "Can't come into an environment like this with a playoff-caliber team and turn the ball over like that and expect to be competitive."

Asked about his future in Pittsburgh after completing his 17th season — all of them with a record of .500 or better — Tomlin smirked and walked away.

Buffalo had a to wait an extra day to host the Steelers after a dangerous storm that dumped more than 2 feet of snow on the region, leading the NFL to bump the game from its scheduled Sunday afternoon start.

The elements didn't play much of a factor. Though temperatures were in the teens, the skies were clear and there was only a slight breeze blowing in off Lake Erie.

The Steelers came out flat, allowing Buffalo to score touchdowns on three of its first five possessions and build a 21-0 lead on Allen's electrifying touchdown run midway through the second quarter.

Rudolph went 22 of 39 for 229 yards with an interception.

Allen's 9-yard touchdown pass to Dawson Knox capped an 80-yard opening drive for the Bills.

After Buffalo linebacker Terrel Bernard recovered receiver George Pickens' fumble at the Pittsburgh 29, Allen threw a TD pass to Dalton Kincaid on the next play.

Allen's touchdown run came after cornerback Kair Elam inter-

cepted Rudolph's pass intended for Diontae Johnson in the end zone.

The Steelers finally capitalized on one of the Bills' few errors of the half, when coach Sean McDermott elected to attempt a 49-yard field goal into the wind with a little more than two minutes left.

Montravius Adams blocked Tyler Bass' low kick. The ball squirted some 20 yards into Bills territory and was recovered by Nick Herbig at Buffalo's 33. The Steelers scored five plays later on Rudolph's 10-yard TD pass to Johnson.

Pittsburgh eventually cut the lead to 24-17 on Rudolph's 7-yard touchdown pass to Calvin Austin with 10:32 left.

INJURIES

The Bills' already depleted defense held up despite losing several regulars to injuries. Buffalo allowed 324 yards and limited the Steelers to converting 5 of 11 third-down opportunities.

Bernard was ruled out after twisting his right ankle and starting nickelback Taron Johnson did not return after being evaluated for a concussion. The Bills began the game without cornerback Rasul Douglas (knee) and linebacker Tyrel Dodson (shoulder).

High School Calendar

TUESDAY, JAN 16
BOYS BASKETBALL: Southern Wells at Adams Central, 7:30 p.m.
SWIMMING & DIVING (CO-ED): Huntington North at Norwell, 5:30 p.m.
WEDNESDAY, JAN 17
WRESTLING: Norwell at South Adams, 6:30 p.m.
THURSDAY, JAN 18
GIRLS BASKETBALL: Eastbrook at Bluffton, 7:30 p.m.
SWIMMING & DIVING (CO-ED): Oak Hill at Norwell, 5:30 p.m.; Wayne at Bluffton, 5:30 p.m.
FRIDAY, JAN 19
BOYS BASKETBALL: Bluffton at Adams Central, 7:30 p.m.
GIRLS BASKETBALL: Norwell at New Haven, 6 p.m. (no JV)
SWIMMING & DIVING (CO-ED): ACAC Swim/Dive Invitational, 5:30 p.m.
WRESTLING: Bluffton, Southern Wells at

ACAC Tournament (at Bluffton), 6 p.m.
SATURDAY, JAN 20
BOYS BASKETBALL: New Haven at Norwell, 7:45 p.m.
GIRLS BASKETBALL: Bluffton at Heritage, 7:30 p.m.; Southern Wells at Jay County, 7:30 p.m.
SWIMMING & DIVING (CO-ED): NE8 Meet at Norwell, 10 a.m.
WRESTLING: Norwell at NE8 Meet at Huntington North, 9 a.m.
MONDAY, JAN 22
No events scheduled.
TUESDAY, JAN 23
BOYS BASKETBALL: Bishop Luers at Norwell, 7:45 p.m.; Muncie Burriss at Southern Wells, 7:30 p.m.
GIRLS BASKETBALL: Southern Wells at Southwood, 7:30 p.m.
SWIMMING & DIVING (CO-ED): Norwell at Delta, 6 p.m.

Browns' surprise season crashes in playoffs, team convinced future is bright with healthy QB Watson

By TOM WITHERS
AP Sports Writer

CLEVELAND (AP) — With a wild-card blowout win secured, Houston's rowdy crowd let loose, serenading rookie quarterback C.J. Stroud with "M-V-P!" chants after his stirring playoff debut.

Over on Cleveland's sideline, the QB the Texans traded watched in street clothes.

This wasn't what Deshaun Watson or the Browns envisioned.

None of it.
On Saturday, the team's inspiring run to the AFC playoffs despite losing Watson with a fractured shoulder in November, plugging holes all season because of numerous injuries to key players and rolling behind 38-year-old QB Joe Flacco over the final month, ended with a final rush of pain — a stinging 45-14 loss to the Texans.

It was a tough finish for the Browns. And the fact that it came against the Texans, who overhauled their roster with some of the draft picks they acquired from the Browns

in the March 2022 trade for Watson, only magnified the disappointment.

At some point, the Browns will look back on this season of adversity — four QBs won games — with pride. That's going to take some time.

"It definitely is painful," said linebacker Jeremiah Owusu-Koramoah, the only member of Cleveland's top-ranked defense to show up against the Texans. "You have to take an evaluation, take an audit of the season, that game and learn from those mistakes."

As the Browns cleaned out their lockers and parted ways Sunday, the present quickly turned to the future.

Such is life in the NFL.

While the timing of Watson's return to the field remains a little unsure as he continues to rehab his right shoulder, coach Kevin Stefanski made it clear that he's excited about what's ahead for the 28-year-old.

Watson's sample size is small, only six
(Continued on Page 7)

Jim Harbaugh interviews with Los Angeles Chargers about head coach opening

By JOE REEDY
AP Sports Writer

Jim Harbaugh has interviewed with the Los Angeles Chargers for their head coaching vacancy, a week after he led the University of Michigan to a national title.

The Chargers announced Harbaugh's interview on Monday without saying exactly when it took place. He is the eighth coaching candidate to interview with the Chargers, but his resume stands out from the rest.

The 60-year-old Harbaugh has an 89-25 record in nine seasons coaching his alma mater. Before that, he went 44-19-1 in four seasons as San Francisco's coach and took the 49ers to the Super Bowl after the 2012 season. He also had winning records at Stanford and the University of San Diego.

Harbaugh has a prior relationship with the Chargers and the Spanos family that owns the team. He played quarterback for the Bolts from 1999-2000.

The Chargers are looking for a coach and general manager after Brandon Staley and Tom Telesco were fired on Dec. 15, a day after a 63-21 loss at Las Vegas.

While Harbaugh is exploring his NFL options, he also is considering staying at Michigan, a person familiar with his thinking told the AP over the weekend. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the discussions.

Harbaugh has an offer from Michigan that would make him among the highest-paid coaches in college football.

The Wolverines beat Washington 34-13 in the College Football Playoff title game last Monday. Michigan held a celebratory parade on Saturday.



Jim Harbaugh

Burks comes off bench to score 34, leads Pistons past Wizards

By MATT SUGAM
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Detroit Pistons have done some historic losing this season, including an NBA record-tying 28-game skid. The team's effort and enthusiasm, however, haven't wavered.

Alec Burks matched his career-high with 34 points to lead Detroit to a 129-117 victory over the Washington Wizards on Monday, giving the Pistons only their fourth win of the season.

"We've had an unreal losing streak this year, and I don't think I've ever seen our guys consistently go in the tank," Pistons coach Monty Williams said. "Everyone's all in and wants to see each other do well."

Jalen Duren had 20 points and 19 rebounds and Jaden Ivey had 24 points, seven rebounds, and six assists for Detroit, which snapped a seven-game losing streak. Burks hit 8 of 12 from 3-point range as Detroit shot almost 56% from the field.

"He was in that bag today. He was in his Goel bag," teammate Isiah Stewart said, using the metaphor for someone doing something well and adding emphasis on a luxury brand. "I'm happy for AB. He's a great vet. He can really score the ball. I love playing with him. It's like every time he steps out on the floor, he's in range. He's the type of guy that just hits all kinds of shots. And once he's hot, he's hot."

The scoring outburst by Burks — who is averaging 11.5 points per game this season — matched his career high. He'd

scored 34 twice before. First on Jan. 13, 2014, with Utah against Denver. Then again on Dec. 29, 2021, with New York against Detroit.

Tyus Jones had 22 points, seven assists and six rebounds to lead Washington. Jordan Poole added 16 points and Deni Advija had 12.

Stewart had 16 points while Ausar Thompson added 14 for Detroit.

The game came just a day after the teams made a trade to send Marvin Bagley III and Isaiah Livers to the Wizards for Danilo Gallinari and Mike Muscala. The Pistons also will send two future draft picks to Washington.

The game was close for most of the first three quarters before a 9-0 run by Detroit gave the Pistons a 92-87 lead late in the third.

The Pistons led by 15 in the fourth quarter of a game between the two worst teams in the Eastern Conference.

"You could point to a number of things," Washington's Landry Shamet (11 points) said. "We had too many stretches where our attention to detail kind of fell off. Our attention to physicality."

Washington's Kyle Kuzma (21 points and eight rebounds) was ejected with 2:37 left and his team trailing 120-110 after receiving two technical fouls, the first for clapping in the face of an official and the second for continuing to argue.

UP NEXT

Pistons: Host Minnesota on Wednesday.

Wizards: Visit New York on Thursday.

Heisman winner Caleb Williams formally leaves USC, enters NFL draft as potential No. 1 pick

By GREG BEACHAM
AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Heisman Trophy-winning quarterback Caleb Williams has formally entered the NFL draft, leaving Southern California after two prolific seasons.

Williams made his long-anticipated announcement on social media Monday, the final day for underclassmen to enter the draft.

He is widely considered the favorite to be the No. 1 selection in the draft, which begins April 25. The Chicago Bears currently hold the top pick.

"I still have a lot to learn and I'm ready to do whatever it takes," Williams wrote on his Instagram post announcing the decision. "As a kid, I said this is what I was going to do for the rest of my life, but I didn't work this hard just to reach this point. I will continue my journey to make that little kid proud of the man I will be for many years to come. I'm excited for the future, and I am offi-

cially declaring for the NFL draft."

Williams passed for 10,082 yards with 93 touchdowns and 14 interceptions during three collegiate seasons at Oklahoma and USC. He became the Trojans' eighth Heisman Trophy winner in 2022 after following coach Lincoln Riley from Norman to the West Coast, and he put up another superlative statistical season last fall even while the Trojans struggled in an 8-5 season.

The Washington, D.C.-area native is considered one of the top quarterback prospects to enter the NFL in recent seasons. With a strong arm, superb elusiveness and playmaking acumen, Williams led the Trojans to a massive one-year improvement and a Cotton Bowl berth during his Heisman season.

The Trojans were much worse in the just-completed season largely due to one of the worst defenses in college football, but Williams still showcased enough of his remarkable

talent to remain the most desired quarterback in the nation.

Williams' well-rounded skill set also includes the ability to rush for 21 touchdowns in the past two seasons at USC, even though he doesn't see himself as a running quarterback.

The Bears will have the first chance to add Williams as the centerpiece of their roster, but Justin Fields has been their starter for most of the past three seasons since they drafted him No. 11 overall. The second pick in the draft is held by Williams' hometown Washington Commanders, and rebuilding New England is third.

Although Williams waited until the last day to declare for the draft, the Trojans have anticipated his departure for months. Williams didn't play in the Holiday Bowl, where backup Miller Moss threw a bowl-record six touchdown passes and emerged as the surprising front-runner to replace Williams at USC in the fall.

News-Banner Scoreboard

BASKETBALL

High School

Monday Boys' Scores

Bloomington South 74, Indianapolis Trailblazers Homeschool 57
Calumet 70, Lake Station 58
Carmi-White County, Ill. 60, Ev. Day 53
Chesterton 67, LaPorte 64
Eastside 53, Fairfield 24
Lakewood Park 37, S. Adams 34
Mt. Vernon (Posey) 68, Harrisburg, Ill. 54
Northeast Corner Conference Tournament
Championship
Fairfield 60, Angola 38

Monday Girls' Scores

Cols. Upper Arlington, Ohio 61, Avon 54
Indpls Sccecina 53, IMSA 23
Loyola, Ill. 51, Lake Central 39
Monrovia 64, Indpls Lutheran 40
N. Knox 67, N. Central (Farmersburg) 32
Northridge 72, NorthWood 36
Springs Valley 71, Washington Catholic 11
White River Valley 72, Union (Dugger) 17
Northeast Corner Conference Tournament
Championship
Eastside 53, Fairfield 24
Porter County Tournament
First Round
Washington Twp. 38, Westville 34

College

Men's Basketball Scores

AP Top-25

1. UConn 15-2
2. Purdue 15-2
3. Kansas 14-2
4. North Carolina 13-3
5. Houston 14-2
6. Tennessee 12-4
7. Duke 13-3
8. Kentucky 12-3
9. Baylor 14-2
10. Memphis 15-2
11. Wisconsin 13-3, 12. Arizona 12-4, 13. Auburn 14-2, 14. Illinois 12-4, 15. Oklahoma 13-3, 16. Utah State 16-1, 17. Marquette 11-5, 18. Creighton 13-4, 19. TCU 13-3, 20. BYU 13-3, 21. Dayton 13-2, 22. Mississippi 15-1, 23. FAU 13-4, 24. Iowa State 13-3, 25. Texas Tech.

Others receiving votes: Colorado St. 169, San Diego St. 153, Seton Hall 89, Alabama 60, Grand Canyon 49, Clemson 38, Nevada 22, Boise St. 22, Texas 20, Oregon 17, St. John's 15, New Mexico 14, NC State 8, Princeton 5, Gonzaga 5, Mississippi St. 3, South Carolina 2, Villanova 2, James Madison 1, McNeese St. 1.

Men's Basketball Scores

Monday, Jan. 15

EAST

American 66, Loyola (Md.) 52
Boston College 63, Notre Dame 59
Brown 74, Harvard 72
CCSU 75, Merrimack 70
Cornell 77, Penn 60
Fairfield 88, Canisius 63
Fairleigh Dickinson 81, St. Francis (Pa.) 71
George Washington 75, George Mason 62
Howard 78, Morehouse 72
Princeton 76, Dartmouth 58
Saint Joseph's 82, La Salle 62
Siena 93, Niagara 88
Wagner 64, Stonehill 54
Yale 89, Columbia 70

Chicago St. 77, Stetson 70
McNeese St. 88, Lamar 69
Nicholls 78, New Orleans 75
Norfolk St. 118, Va.-Lynchburg 73
Northwestern St. 69, Houston Christian 64
Texas A&M-CC 73, SE Louisiana 68

MIDWEST

Iowa 86, Minnesota 77
Marquette 87, Villanova 74
Michigan 73, Ohio St. 65

SOUTHWEST

Texas Southern 93, MVSU 61

Women's Basketball Scores

AP Top-25

1. South Carolina 15-0
2. Iowa 17-1
3. Colorado 15-1
4. NC State 15-1
5. UCLA 14-1
6. Southern California 13-1
7. Kansas State 17-1
8. Stanford 15-2
9. UConn 14-3
10. LSU 16-2
11. Texas 16-2, 12. Baylor 14-2, 13. Louisville 15-2, 14. Virginia Tech 13-3, 15. Florida State 14-4, 16. Indiana 14-2, 17. Gonzaga 16-2, 18. Ohio State 13-3, 19. Notre Dame 12-3, 20. Utah 12-5, 21. Creighton 13-3, 22. Marquette 15-2, 23. North Carolina 12-5, 24. Iowa State 12-4, 25. UNLV 14-1.

Others receiving votes: Oregon St. 59, West Virginia 29, Syracuse 25, Vanderbilt 8, Princeton 7, Auburn 5, Fairfield 4, Michigan St. 2.

Women's Basketball Scores

Monday, Jan. 15

EAST

Columbia 88, Yale 52
Fairleigh Dickinson 64, St. Francis (Pa.) 54
Harvard 73, Brown 59
Le Moyne 60, Sacred Heart 56
Merrimack 71, CCSU 53
Penn 67, Cornell 54
Princeton 63, Dartmouth 40
Saint Joseph's 64, La Salle 39
Stonehill 67, Wagner 44

SOUTH

Alabama A&M 66, Alabama St. 49
Grambling St. 88, Florida A&M 85, 30T
South Carolina 98, Kentucky 36
Southern U. 71, Bethune-Cookman 66

MIDWEST

LIU Brooklyn 66, Chicago St. 58

SOUTHWEST

MVSVU 70, Texas Southern 69

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	31	9 .775	—
Philadelphia	25	13 .658	5
New York	23	17 .575	8
Brooklyn	16	23 .410	14½
Toronto	15	25 .375	16

Southeast Division

W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	24	16 .600	—
Orlando	22	18 .550	2
Atlanta	16	23 .410	7½
Charlotte	8	29 .216	14½
Washington	7	32 .179	16½

Central Division

W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	28	12 .700	—
Cleveland	23	15 .605	4
Indiana	23	16 .590	4½
Chicago	19	23 .452	10
Detroit	4	36 .100	24

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

W	L	Pct	GB
Dallas	24	17 .585	—

W	L	Pct	GB
New Orleans	24	17 .585	—
Houston	19	20 .487	4
Memphis	15	25 .375	8½
San Antonio	7	32 .179	16

Northwest Division

W	L	Pct	GB
Minnesota	28	11 .718	—
Oklahoma City	27	11 .711	½
Denver	28	13 .683	1
Utah	21	20 .512	8
Portland	10	29 .256	18

Pacific Division

W	L	Pct	GB
L.A. Clippers	25	14 .641	—
Sacramento	23	16 .590	2
Phoenix	21	18 .538	4
L.A. Lakers	19	21 .475	6½
Golden State	18	22 .450	7½

Sunday's Games

Denver 117, Indiana 109
Miami 104, Charlotte 87
Minnesota 109, L.A. Clippers 105
Milwaukee 143, Sacramento 142, OT

Monday's Games

Philadelphia 124, Houston 115
Dallas 125, New Orleans 120
Detroit 129, Washington 117
Orlando 98, New York 94
Atlanta 109, San Antonio 99
Memphis 116, Golden State 107
Cleveland 109, Chicago 91
Boston 105, Toronto 96
Miami 96, Brooklyn 95, OT
Indiana at Utah, late
Oklahoma City at L.A. Lakers, late

Tuesday's Games

Denver at Philadelphia, 7:30 p.m.
Sacramento at Phoenix, 9 p.m.
Oklahoma City at L.A. Clippers, 10 p.m.

Wednesday's Games

Minnesota at Detroit, 7 p.m.
Houston at New York, 7:30 p.m.
Miami at Toronto, 7:30 p.m.
Milwaukee at Cleveland, 7:30 p.m.
Orlando at Atlanta, 7:30 p.m.
San Antonio at Boston, 7:30 p.m.
Charlotte at New Orleans, 8 p.m.
Dallas at L.A. Lakers, 8:30 p.m.
Golden State at Utah, 9 p.m.
Brooklyn at Portland, 10 p.m.

Thursday's Games

Chicago at Toronto, 7:30 p.m.
Washington at New York, 7:30 p.m.
Oklahoma City at Utah, 9 p.m.
Indiana at Sacramento, 10 p.m.
Memphis at Minnesota, 10 p.m.

FOOTBALL

NFL

Wild-card Playoffs

Saturday, Jan. 13

Houston 45, Cleveland 14
Kansas City 26, Miami 7
Sunday, Jan. 14
Green Bay 48, Dallas 32
Detroit 24, L.A. Rams 23
Pittsburgh at Buffalo, p.p.d. to Jan. 15

Monday, Jan. 15

Buffalo 31, Pittsburgh 17
Philadelphia at Tampa Bay, 8:15 p.m. (ESPN/ABC)

Divisional Playoffs

Saturday, Jan. 20
Houston at Baltimore, 4:30 p.m. (ESPN/ABC)
Green Bay at San Francisco, 8 p.m. (FOX)

Sunday, Jan. 21

Philadelphia or Tampa Bay at Detroit, 3 p.m. (NBC/Peacock)
Kansas City at Buffalo, 6:30 p.m. (CBS/Paramount)

HOCKEY

NHL

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Boston	43	26	8	9	61	144
Florida	43	27	13	3	57	136
Toronto	41	21	12	8	50	148
Detroit	43	22	16	5	49	155
Tampa Bay	44	22	17	5	49	149
Montreal	43	18	18	7	43	120
Buffalo	44	19	21	4	42	130
Ottawa	38	15	23	0	30	127

Metropolitan Division

GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
N.Y. Rangers	42	27	13	2	56	138
Philadelphia	44	24	14	6	54	130
Carolina	43	24	14	5	53	148
Pittsburgh	42	21	15	6	48	129
N.Y. Islanders	43	19	14	10	48	128
New Jersey	41	22	16	3	47	144
Washington	41	20	15	6	46	99
Columbus	44	14	21	9	37	134

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Central Division

GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Winnipeg	42	28	10	4	60	139
Colorado	44	28	13	3	59	163
Dallas	42	25	12	5	55	129
Nashville	44	24	19	1	49	139
Arizona	41	21	18	2	44	126
St. Louis	42	21	19	2	44	120
Minnesota	43	18	20	5	41	126
Chicago	43	12	29	2	26	97

Pacific Division

GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Vancouver	44	29	11	4	62	168
Vegas	44	25	14	5	55	140
Los Angeles	40	21	11	8	50	134
Edmonton	39	23	15	1	47	138
Seattle	43	19	15	9	47	122
Calgary	43	20	18	5	45	136
Anaheim	43	15	27	1	31	111
San Jose	44	10	31	3	23	88

NOTE: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.

Sunday's Games

N.Y. Rangers 2, Washington 1
Detroit 4, Toronto 2

Monday's Games

Buffalo 3, San Jose 0
Pittsburgh 3, Seattle 0
Columbus 4, Vancouver 3, SO
Boston 3, New Jersey 0
Anaheim 5, Florida 4, OT
Los Angeles 5, Carolina 2
Vegas 4, Nashville 1
Minnesota 5, N.Y. Islanders 0
Montreal 4, Colorado 3
Philadelphia 4, St. Louis 2

Tuesday's Games

Anaheim at Washington, 7 p.m.
Colorado at Ottawa, 7 p.m.
Seattle at N.Y. Rangers, 7 p.m.
Los Angeles at Dallas, 8 p.m.
N.Y. Islanders at Winnipeg, 8 p.m.
San Jose at Chicago, 8:30 p.m.
Arizona at Calgary, 9 p.m.
Toronto at Edmonton, 9 p.m.

Wednesday's Games

Detroit at Florida, 7 p.m.
Montreal at New Jersey, 7 p.m.
Chicago at Buffalo, 7:30 p.m.

Thursday's Games

Colorado at Boston, 7 p.m.
Dallas at Philadelphia, 7 p.m.
Minnesota at Tampa Bay, 7 p.m.
Montreal at Ottawa, 7 p.m.
St. Louis at Washington, 7 p.m.
Seattle at Edmonton, 9 p.m.
Toronto at Calgary, 9 p.m.
Arizona at Vancouver, 10 p.m.
N.Y. Rangers at Vegas, 10 p.m.
Nashville at Los Angeles, 10 p.m.

TRANSACTIONS

Monday's Transactions

BASEBALL

Major League Baseball

American League

DETROIT TIGERS — Agreed to terms with 3B Nestor Miranda and SS Jose Dickson on minor league contracts.

Michigan snaps 5-game losing streak, beats Ohio State in front of the Fab Five

ANN ARBOR, Mich. (AP) — Olivier Nkamhoua scored 20 points, Terrance Williams II added 18 points and Michigan beat Ohio State 73-65 on Monday in front of the Fab Five to snap a five-game losing streak.

All five members of Michigan's Fab Five attended a basketball game in Ann Arbor for the first time since they played there three-plus decades ago. Chris Webber, Jalen Rose, Ray Jackson and Jimmy King sat together courtside, while coach Juwan Howard led the Wolverines.

Rose said they were there to support Howard as a person coming off heart surgery and as a coach in a challenging season.

Michigan closed the game on a 13-4 run over the final four minutes. Williams got a friendly bounce on a 3-pointer to

give the Wolverines the lead, 63-61, for good with 3:37 left and Dug McDaniel was credited with a basket following a goaltending call on their next possession for a four-point lead.

Nkamhoua made a baseline jumper with 58.1 seconds left for a 69-63 lead and Williams sealed it with a 3-pointer from the corner — just in front Webber and Rose.

McDaniel, who didn't play on the road against Maryland on Thursday, finished with 15 points for Michigan (7-10, 2-4 Big Ten). Nimari Burnett grabbed 10 rebounds to go with seven points.

Bruce Thornton scored 19 points for Ohio State (12-5, 2-4). Roddy Gayle Jr. added 12 points and Felix Okpara had 10 points and nine rebounds.

Nkamhoua and Williams combined

for 20 of Michigan's 37 first-half points. Nkamhoua and Williams went 8 of 15 from the field, and the rest of their teammates were just 6 of 19. Ohio State shot just 32 percent from the field in the first half, going 1 of 14 from 3-point range. Nkamhoua, Williams and McDaniel each made two of Michigan's seven first-half 3-pointers.

Ohio State took its first lead of the second half with 8:25 remaining when Okpara made a shot in the lane to make it 56-55. Thornton followed with the Buckeyes' third 3-pointer, in 18 attempts, to cap a 16-0 run. Michigan missed eight straight shots during the run.

Michigan hosts No. 14 Illinois on Thursday. Ohio State, which has lost three straight, returns home to play Penn State on Saturday.

Browns surprise season crashes

(Continued from Page 6)

starts, but his last one was encouraging.

Despite his shoulder fracture and a sprained ankle, Watson, who has started just 12 of 34 possible games in two seasons, completed all 14 passes in the second half to rally the Browns to a 33-31 road win at AFC North champion Baltimore.

There would be no more heroics, but the Browns are convinced more will come from Watson.

"Every time it felt like we were taking a step, he got banged up or hurt," said left guard Joel Bitonio. "With our defense, if they play at the level we know and expect them to play to, I feel very confident with Deshaun coming back and being our quarterback."

While that's assured, there's another issue with Watson. His guaranteed, five-year \$230 million contract includes a record \$64 million salary cap hit for next season, which will force the Browns to restructure some deals.

After the season they just endured, that seems easy.

BACKUP PLAN

Flacco saved the Browns' season. It's unlikely he'll be back for a second one with Cleveland.

Indiana-based NutraMaize receives \$460K grant to study heat stress in hens

By **HOOSIER AG TODAY**

NutraMaize, an ag company based in West Lafayette, has received a three-year, \$460,455 grant from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The grant will study how a class of antioxidants called xanthophyll carotenoids affect egg-laying hens that experience heat stress. The project builds on previous studies conducted by NutraMaize and Purdue University collaborators funded by USDA Small Business Innovation Research grants. These studies demonstrated the ability of NutraMaize Orange Corn to reduce the incidence and severity of foot pad dermatitis in broiler chickens and significantly enhance yolk pigmentation in laying hens. The findings were published in the peer-reviewed journal Poultry Science.

NutraMaize was founded by CEO Evan Rocheford and his father, Torbert Rocheford, the Dr. Fred L. Patterson Endowed Chair in Translational Genomics for Crop Improvement and a professor of agronomy in

Purdue University's College of Agriculture. The company's nutritionally enhanced orange corn is currently available through a line of premium milled products under the brand Professor Torbert's Orange Corn.

Heat stress and its effects on laying hens

Evan Rocheford said heat stress is a major health and productivity challenge for egg-laying hens. Due to climate change, heat stress events are becoming increasingly frequent and severe, leading to physiological changes in laying hens. These changes result in reductions in productivity that equate to millions of dollars of lost revenue for egg producers every year.

"One of the major consequences is oxidative stress, which is caused by the production of excess free radicals, or unstable atoms that damage cells," Rocheford said. "Antioxidants neutralize free radicals and prevent damage. Therefore, increasing the antioxidant intake of birds has been proposed as a mitigation strategy for heat stress."

Several antioxidant compounds have demonstrated beneficial effects against

heat stress, but no studies have been conducted on the effect of xanthophyll carotenoids.

"Xanthophylls are potent antioxidants and anti-inflammatory agents that have high physiological activity within laying hens," Rocheford said. "Xanthophylls are involved in yolk pigmentation and they bioaccumulate throughout laying hens' bodies. They provide the color of the birds' distinctive yellow fat, beaks, shanks and feet."

Goals of the NutraMaize project

Rocheford said the research project has three goals:

Investigate the role xanthophyll carotenoids play in the physiological response of egg-laying hens during a heat stress event.

Determine if increasing carotenoid intake can be used as a strategy to help mitigate the negative health and production effects of heat stress.

Evaluate NutraMaize's high-carotenoid Orange Corn as an alternative feed ingredient to deliver the potential benefits to egg-laying hens.

"NutraMaize Orange

Corn has significantly higher xanthophyll carotenoid levels compared to yellow corn," Rocheford said. "The carotenoids in orange corn also appear to be more bioavailable than commercial carotenoid supplements, making it an attractive alternative for delivering higher levels of carotenoids into the diets of laying hens."

Rocheford said the project will test the hypothesis that the NutraMaize Orange Corn will deliver more carotenoids into the blood and tissues of egg-laying hens and increase their total antioxidant capacity. It is hypothesized that, in turn, this will reduce oxidative stress, stabilizing egg-laying hen health and performance during a heat stress event.

"This project will make a meaningful contribution to poultry science and the laying hen industry for a number of reasons," Rocheford said. "First, there is a need for more investigation into the effects of heat stress on laying hens as most heat stress research

is conducted on broiler chickens. Second, there is a need to investigate how heat stress affects laying hens across their lifetime, not just during an acute challenge period. Third, there have been no previous investigations into the role of xanthophyll carotenoids in the laying hens' response to heat stress. Finally, if successful, this project would offer the laying hen industry a practical nutritional approach for addressing heat stress that also enhances yolk pigmentation and the nutritional quality of the table egg, one of America's most important sources of protein."

Research approach of the NutraMaize project

NutraMaize will collaborate with researchers at Purdue's College of Agriculture and Egg Innovations, a leading producer of humanely raised eggs based in Warsaw, Indiana.

Purdue co-principal investigators Darrin Karcher, associate professor of

animal sciences and poultry extension specialist, and Gregory Fraley, associate professor of animal sciences and the Terry and Sandra Tucker Endowed Chair in Poultry Science, will oversee a 90-week controlled environment heat stress study at Purdue's Animal Sciences Research and Education Center. The NutraMaize and Purdue team will also work closely with Egg Innovations to conduct an 84-week field study on three 20,000-bird barns located across the Midwest.

Egg Innovations CEO John Brunnquell said, "As a leading producer of humanely raised eggs with an active research program, we are very excited to partner with NutraMaize and Purdue on this project. Heat stress is becoming an increasingly serious problem for producers like us, so there is an urgent need to identify practical and effective solutions to help mitigate its negative effects on both animal welfare and producer profitability."

State Rep. Kendell Culp files bill to prevent Russia, China from buying or leasing Indiana farmland

By **C.J. MILLER Hoosier Ag Today**

As the state's legislative session is underway for 2024, one of Indiana's state lawmakers has written and introduced a bill (HB 1183) that would prevent adversarial countries, such as Russia and China, from buying or leasing Indiana farmland beginning July 1.

"This is about food security, because we know food security is national security," says State Rep. Kendell Culp, who serves in District 16 in northwestern Indiana. He's also a farmer based in Jasper County and the only full-time farmer in the 2024 Indiana General Assembly.

The six countries that would be prohibited from buying or leasing farmland in Indiana not only includes Russia and China, but also North Korea, Iran, Cuba, and Venezuela.

"A lot of [land] purchases today are made by LLCs, shell companies, or a consortium of groups, so we've addressed that in the legislation," says Culp. "[The purchaser] would have to sign an affidavit guaranteeing that ownership would not belong to one of those six adversarial countries. If we found out there was a concern, and then they in fact were not truthful, the Indiana Attorney General would be required to follow up with that and then they would be able to take that farmland from them and then resell that to

someone who is eligible to farm it."

Sen. Mike Braun (R-IN) and Sen. Jon Tester (D-MT) are among two lawmakers in Washington who introduced the Protecting America's Agricultural Land from Foreign Harm Act in 2023 to prohibit America's foreign adversaries from purchasing or leasing U.S. farmland. Culp says his bill mirrors the federal bill.

"One of the things that is happening is China will come over and form a shell company in Canada. Then that Canadian shell company will come to Montana, buy timber land, strip the timber, and export it back to China. So, we've addressed that so hopefully that doesn't happen in this piece of legislation," he says.

Culp adds that his bill does more than prevent those countries from buying or leasing Hoosier farmland.

"Also in this bill, we prohibit the purchase of water rights, mineral rights, and riparian rights from those six adversarial countries," according to Culp. "As we talk a lot about water now in this country, it's really important that we secure our water supply as well."

Culp's bill is also co-sponsored by State Representatives Mike Aylesworth (R- 11th District) and Chris Jeter (R-88th District).

The bill has been assigned to the Indiana House Agriculture Committee and is set for a hearing on Monday, Jan. 29.

Wyoming ranch challenges child labor and trafficking allegations

By **AGDAILY**

A Powell, Wyoming-based family, operating a ranch intended to aid troubled teens, has launched a legal bid to dismiss a federal lawsuit against them related to disturbing child-labor allegations. The Schneider family's defense counsel contends that the accusations of child labor and human trafficking lack substantive connections to actual incidents.

The operation, Triangle Cross Ranch, is a 50,000-acre working cattle ranch that operated with 1,000 head of cattle. Troubled youth ages 10 to 17 worked on the ranch that, according to their social media account, "Offered clients an opportunity to engage with livestock and other ranch activities as a means to educate the mind, body, and elevate the spirit of the struggling teen. By combining the 'Paternal Teachings' of St. John Bosco with the western 'cowboy' code of ethics."

A link to the program leads you to the rebranded Sunlight Mountain Cattle Ranch.

According to Cowboy State Daily, a recent court filing by owner Jerry Schneider, his wife, sons, and son-in-law highlights the absence of specific allegations against any named defendant.

Sources indicate that the owners stress that participants in their program are enrolled with explicit parental consent and comprehensive disclosure regarding the demanding nature of the program and ranch chores.

Andrew Lewis and Andrew Unruh, former residents of Triangle Cross Ranch in 2014, filed a lawsuit in October 2023, alleging that the Schneider family and the ranch violated federal regulations by imposing rigorous work and engaging in trafficking practices.

Allegations ranged from threats of food and sleep deprivation to confinement in a shed, restricted communication, and extensive ranch chores.

Lewis' and Unruh's plea also includes reimbursement, which the Schneiders have refuted, saying that the fees would belong to the plaintiff's parents, who paid for their children's camp enrollment and subsequent attendance.

The Schneiders counter these claims in their legal response, characterizing them as

speculative and exaggerated. They argue that Lewis and Unruh have failed to establish a clear link between their legal claims and specific actions by individuals.

The filing casts doubt on the feasibility of Lewis accomplishing exhaustive chores within a restricted time frame and questions the credibility of the allegations.

Furthermore, the ranch owners dispute the assertions of forced labor, emphasizing that the participation of these teenagers was sanctioned by their parents or guardians, who retained the authority to withdraw them at any time. They portray the complaints as discontent from troubled teens who were reluctant participants but whose attendance was desired by their guardians.

The family's legal filing challenges Lewis' and Unruh's trafficking claims, asserting a lack of substantive support. They also underscore the Alzheimer's condition of Schneider's wife, arguing against the plausibility of her causing harm in 2014, given her mental state since 2002.

The filing argues that Lewis and Unruh have targeted the wrong entity. They state that the LLC mentioned in the lawsuit wasn't established until 2018, differing from the incorporated entity, that existed during the plaintiffs' stay.

Additionally, the filing seeks to dismiss claims against specific family members, asserting that the allegations lack factual grounding and fail to demonstrate any wrongdoing.

Another lawsuit was filed in 2020 by a different set of plaintiffs, including females, against Triangle Cross Ranch and another facility. In 2022, U.S. District Court for Wyoming Chief Judge Scott Skavdahl denied the lawsuit class-action status.

Plaintiffs appealed that suit in the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals.

Another lawsuit was filed in 2020 by a third set of plaintiffs against the Triangle Cross Ranch, the Schneiders, another family member, and the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity. The case was dismissed after an agreement was reached between the parties.

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Tuesday, January 23rd, 2:00 pm - 6:00 pm ET

PROPERTY LOCATION: 3 miles southeast of Markle, IN and Wells Co, Rockcreek Twp

TRACTS 1 & 2: located on both sides of 200 N between 200 W and 300 W.

TRACT 3: located at the intersection of 300 N and 500 W.

207.3+/- total acres

Tract 1: 19.83+/- Acres

Tract 2: 110+/- Acres

Tract 3: 77.47+/- Acres





Rick Johnloz: 260.827.8181

Auctioneer: Russell D. Harmeyer IN Auct. Lic. #AU10000277, HRES IN Auct. Lic. #AC69200019, HLS# RAJ-12975, Farm: Susan Dunn Estate

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AUCTION

Tuesday, January 30th, 2:00 pm - 6:00 pm ET


PROPERTY LOCATION: 3 miles northwest of Craigville, IN; 1/4 mile south of US 224 along 500 E in Lancaster Township, Wells County


SOIL TYPES: Pewamo silty clay loam, Bount Del-Rey silt loam; WAPI: 140.6 bu corn, 43.8 bu soybeans

Additional information including a drone flight and photos are available at halderman.com.

34.5+/- Tillable • 2.25+/- Non-Tillable

36.75+/- total acres





Rick Johnloz: 260.827.8181 | Neal Wolhete: 260.336.2219


Auctioneer: Russell D. Harmeyer IN Auct. Lic. #AU10000277, HRES IN Auct. Lic. #AC69200019, HLS# RAJ-12972, Farm: Mann Farm

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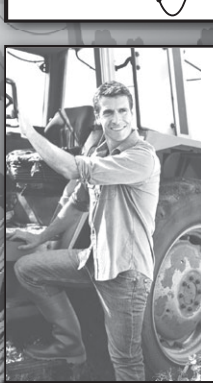
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Miscellaneous

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

Help Wanted

SOUTHERN WELLS COMMUNITY School is seeking a second shift custodian. \$20.31 per hour with benefits. Please send a resume of contact rking@swraiders.com



LEGAL ASSISTANT FOR ADVANCED ELDER LAW/MEDICAID PLANNING

Sprunger Elder Law is growing and is seeking a Legal Assistant. Responsibilities include documentation gathering, scheduling, prep for e-signing, lead tracking, communicating with clients, and handling logistics. Experience is preferred, but not required. The ideal candidate is someone who is dedicated and driven person who excels in a team environment. They will be a focused and organized professional with strong attention to detail and a desire to deliver impeccable service for clients. sprungerandsprunger.com

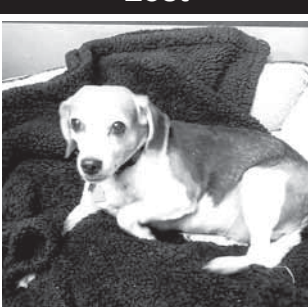
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NOTICE

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Read & recycle this newspaper

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

King Classic Sudoku

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

Difficulty: ★★

1/16

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Lottery Numbers

Monday's Drawings HOOSIER LOTTERY
Cash 5 — 15-33-36-42-43
Cash4Life — 17-28-30-37-48, Cash Ball: 03
Quick Draw Midday — 05-14-15-18-19-23-24-29-33-43-56-57-61-62-64-66-67-69-74-80, BE: 43
Daily Three-Midday — 05-01-09, SB: 07
Daily Three-Evening — 06-08-05, SB: 03
Daily Four-Midday — 03-06-06-09, SB: 07
Daily Four-Evening — 04-01-04-03, SB: 03
Quick Draw Evening — 04-11-15-16-25-27-28-34-39-42-43-46-56-58-59-61-64-66-76-78, BE: 64
Hoosier Lotto — Estimated jackpot (for Wednesday): \$3 million
MEGA MILLIONS Estimated jackpot (for Tuesday): \$208 million
POWERBALL Estimated jackpot (for Wednesday): \$88 million

EMPLOYMENT

Help Wanted

WELLS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE is currently seeking applicants for the position of Maintenance/Custodian. Applicants must have general knowledge of heating/cooling, plumbing, electrical with the ability to make minor repairs and/or adjustments. Additional responsibilities include building maintenance and ground keeping. 20-year matrix salary range for the position is \$43,682 - \$52,774. Years of service and experience will be honored for a starting salary up to five years in the pay matrix. Apply at www.wellscountysheriff.com under "Job Opportunities". Deadline for Pre-application submission is no later than February 5, 2024. A full job description is also listed on the website for review.

HELOISE HINT: Using social media to enhance your online presence can be helpful. Write about your industry, comment on news that affects your business and share updates about your day-to-day on the job. Your profile needs to be current, smart and relevant. Fax Heloise @ 210-HELOISE (435-6473).

THE WELLS COUNTY Prosecutor's Office is looking to hire a person for an Investigator position. The position is a part-time county-paid position making \$21/hour. The investigator would be responsible for conducting criminal investigations and assisting the Prosecutor in preparing cases for trial. The investigator must be an effective communicator, be proficient with a computer, be able to work independently, and have the ability to be on 24-hour call for assistance at crime scenes. Interested persons should go to wellscounty.org/prosecutor/ for a more detailed description of this position. Send any resumes to the Wells County Prosecutor's Office, 102 West Market Street, Suite 405, Bluffton, IN 46714 or submit them by email to prosecutor@wellscounty.org.

Public Sale Calendar

BIDDING 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. **Krueckeborg Auction & Realty LLC**, 260-724-7402, Kjauction.com.
BIDDING 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 by appointment, 617 N. Main St., Geneva. **Krueckeborg Auction & Realty LLC**, 260-724-7402, Kjauction.com.
BIDDING ENDS JANUARY 21 - (online only auction) - Various consignors, sellers. 1999 Ford F350 truck with lift bucket, antiques, display cases, advertising memorabilia, jewelry and pocket watches, Fenton and Indiana glass, mid-century modern, industrial quality fans and tools. Preview: Jan. 16th and Thurs. Jan. 18 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., 118 East Craig Street, Ossian, IN. **The Steffen Group Inc.**, 260-824-3006, www.steffengrp.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.

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; WAPL: 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.
FEBRUARY 2 - 10 a.m. - Secured creditors & various consignors, owners. 815 Adams St., Decatur. Online only truck & equipment auction. 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 & much more! Accepting consignments! **Krueckeborg Auction & Realty LLC**, 260-724-7402, Kjauction.com.
FEBRUARY 12 - 6 p.m. - Daniel E. Schloss, Elizabeth L. Burchfield (f/k/a Elizabeth L. Schloss), Estate of Meshell L. Schloss. Wells County 4-H Community Center, Bluffton. Online bidding available. 164+/-A offered in 8 Tracts or combination. Productive tillable land, professionally designed and stocked pond, recreational woods, newer tree plantings w/conservation grasses, potential country building sites, Huntington County, Salamone Township. Inspection Feb. 5, 3-5p.m., call for private showing. Auction managers: Jerry Ehle, 260-410-1996, Steven C. Coil, 260-446-2037, **Schrader Real Estate and Auction Com-**

pany, Inc., schraderauction.com, 800-451-2709.
FEBRUARY 13 - 6 p.m. - Keith L. Gilbert estate. Markle Volunteer Fire Department, 150 W. Sparks St., Markle. Property: From Town of Markle, travel northeast on Marzane Road 4 miles. 67.5+/-A offered in 4 tracts or any combination, Wells County, Union Township. Tract 1: 18+/-A w/16.44+/-A tillable. Tract 2: 9.5+/-A w/7.26+/-A tillable. Tract 3: 20+/-A, mostly tillable. Tract 4: 20+/-A, mostly tillable. All tracts have road access! Online bidding available. Inspection: Jan. 16, 4-6 p.m., Feb. 3, 10 a.m.-noon. Auction manager Al Pfister, 260-760-8922, **Schrader Real Estate and Auction Company, Inc.**, schraderauction.com, 800-451-2709.

Public Notice

NOTICE OF SHERIFF'S SALE
By virtue of a certified copy of a decree to me, directed from the Clerk of Wells Superior Court of Wells County, Indiana, in Cause No. 90D01-2308-MF-000019, wherein PennyMac Loan Services, LLC was Plaintiff, and Jessie C. Click, Ashton Click and Profed Federal Credit Union were Defendants, required 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 102 W Market St, Bluffton, IN 46714, the fee simple of the whole body of Real Estate in Wells County, Indiana.
Lots Numbered One Hundred Eleven (111) and One Hundred Twelve (112) as known and designated on the recorded Plat of Oak Park Addition to the City of Bluffton.
More commonly known as 926 S Morgan St, Bluffton, IN 46714-3504
Parcel No. 90-08-04-503-061,000-004
Together with rents, issues, income and profits thereof, said sale will be made without relief from valuation or appraisalment laws.
/s/ BARRY T BARNES
BARRY T. BARNES, Plaintiff Attorney
Attorney # 19657-49
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8	9	9	7	1	1	6	2	8
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9	6	8	1	1	8	9	7	2
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Ukraine says it shot down 2 Russian command and control aircraft in heavy blow to Moscow

By ILLIA NOVIKOV
Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — The Ukrainian air force shot down a Russian early warning and control plane that can spot targets up to 400 miles away and a key command center aircraft that relays information to troops on the ground in a significant blow for the Kremlin's forces, Ukraine's military chief said Monday.

The planes are fundamental tools in helping orchestrate Russian battlefield movements in Ukraine. Shooting them down, if confirmed, would be a landmark feat for Ukraine in the almost two-year war, as fighting along the front line is largely bogged down in trench and artillery warfare.

Russia has largely ensured its air dominance during the war, as Ukraine fights with its fleet of Soviet-era warplanes against Moscow's more modern aircraft.

Gen. Valeriy Zaluzhnyi, the commander-in-chief of the Ukrainian armed forces, didn't say how the two aircraft — a Beriev A-50 and an Il-22 — were brought down, but Ukraine has received sophisticated air defense systems from its Western allies.

Zaluzhnyi also did not say where the interceptions occurred, though he attached a video to his social media post with an airplane tracker showing two targets disappearing above the Azov Sea, which lies between Ukraine and Russia, north of the Crimea Penin-

sula and the Black Sea.

There was no immediate official comment from Moscow. Russian war bloggers said both planes had come under friendly fire, though they presented no evidence of that. They claimed the Il-22 was damaged but made a successful landing.

The A-50, which is topped with a large radar, typically carries a crew of 15. The Russian air force reportedly has been operating a fleet of nine such aircraft.

A February 2023 drone attack at an airfield in Belarus damaged a parked A-50, but Russian and Belarusian officials described the damage as minor.

The Il-22 is an airborne command post. It oversees military operations and sends radio signals to troops on the front line. The Russian air force reportedly has a dozen such planes.

Ukraine is eager to impress its Western supporters with its ability in deploying the advanced weapons it has received.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy was due to meet Swiss President Viola Amherd in Bern later Monday before attending the World Economic Forum in Davos on Tuesday.

Ukrainian officials are striving to keep world attention on the war amid concerns that the conflict is slipping down the list of global priorities.

The United Nations appealed Monday for \$4.2 billion to help people

in Ukraine and displaced outside the country this year.

Martin Griffiths, the U.N.'s humanitarian chief, acknowledged that "the competition for funding is getting greater" because of crises elsewhere, including the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza.

Russia, meanwhile, was looking to deepen its ties with North Korea, whose foreign minister began a three-day visit to Moscow on Monday.

The Kremlin is eager to replenish its weapons stockpiles. It has in recent times turned to Iran and North Korea for supplies.

Pyongyang has likely supplied several types of missiles to Russia to support its war in Ukraine, along with its widely reported shipments of ammunition and shells, the U.S. and its allies have alleged.

Russian and Iranian defense and foreign ministers spoke by phone Monday to discuss bilateral military and military technical cooperation and regional security issues, according to official statements. They noted that the two countries are preparing to sign a landmark cooperation treaty.

Ukraine is also determined to build up its stocks for a protracted conflict and is "dramatically expanding" its domestic manufacturing capacity for military items, a U.S. think tank said.

Ukraine is well-positioned to succeed in its plans to make up for any shortfall in Western-supplied weaponry, the Institute for the Study of War said.

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Austin released from hospital after complications from prostate cancer surgery

WASHINGTON (AP) — Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin was released from the hospital on Monday, after spending two weeks there to treat complications from surgery for prostate cancer he kept secret from senior Biden administration leaders and staff for weeks.

Austin will be working from home as he recovers, and his doctors said he "progressed well throughout his stay and his strength is rebounding." They said in a statement the cancer was treated early and his prognosis is "excellent."

In a statement, Austin expressed thanks to the medical staff and said that "as I continue to recuperate and perform my duties from home, I'm eager to fully recover and return as quickly as possible to the Pentagon."

Austin, 70, was admitted to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center on Dec. 22 and underwent surgery to treat the cancer, which was detected earlier in the month during a routine screening. He developed an infection a week later and was hospitalized Jan. 1 and admitted to intensive care.

Dr. John Maddox, the trauma medical director, and Dr. Gregory Chesnut, the director of the Center for Prostate Disease Research at Walter Reed, said that during Austin's hospitalization he underwent medical tests and was treated for lingering leg pain. They said he has physical therapy to do but there are no plans for further cancer treatment other than regular checks.

President Joe Biden and senior administration officials were not told about Austin's hospitalization until

Jan. 4, and Austin kept the cancer diagnosis secret until Jan. 9. Biden has said Austin's failure to tell him about the hospitalization was a lapse in judgment, but the Democratic president insists he still has confidence in his Pentagon chief.

During Austin's time at Walter Reed, the U.S. launched a series of military strikes late last week on the Iranian-backed Houthis in Yemen, targeting dozens of locations linked to their campaign of assaults on commercial shipping in the Red Sea. Working from his hospital bed, Austin juggled calls with senior military leaders, including Gen. Erik Kurilla, head of U.S. Central Command, and White House meetings to review, order and ultimately watch the strikes unfold over secure video.

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Nomad searching for a place to call home

Dear Annie: Our little girl died. She was ill for a relatively short period of time, terminally, and while she lived longer than expected, it will never have been enough.

In the couple of years of caring for her, and even after losing her, the people we thought would be there for us for support were not.

The grandparents were too busy tending to a sibling's children and to their parents. I'm being vague, I know.

We have never needed help until this happened, and we thought those close would want to sit with us and with our daughter through her short life. But instead, they didn't. Barely even checked in.

When we related to be closer to our parents, we learned that, even still, our family was not a priority. So we moved back.

She passed away, and our lives feel forever changed, but we have anger inside of us and now it feels as though things can never be corrected.

We asked for support, and our sibling and parents chose to not show up in the ways we needed or wanted.

Due to this, the family feels very disjointed. I have no desire to be around them or to spend holidays with them or to give them back any precious time of our lives.

Am I wrong for my heartbreak? — Heartbroken

Dear heartbroken: I am so sorry for your loss. Of course you are not wrong for your heartbreak. And though there is no excuse for your family's lack of support, it is important to recognize that many people are uncomfortable with grief. They don't know what to say or how to act around those who are suffering a loss as profound as yours. Please know that there is life before

your child dies and life after, and you have every right to feel heartbroken. Please seek grief support groups as soon as possible.

Dear Annie: I hate the area of the country I live in and wish to live in another part. The issue is each time I move away, I get homesick, not for the place that I detest but for the people. The place I move to never seems like "home" even though I love it there. Therefore, I keep doing this repetitive cycle of moving away and moving back. I need to land somewhere and don't know how to make it happen. — Nomad Who Wants to Settle

Dear Nomad: Home is where the heart is. That phrase has all sorts of meanings, but the way I look at it, if you fall in love with yourself, then wherever you go you will feel settled. As the mindfulness phrase goes, "Wherever you go, there you are."

Once you feel more peaceful within, I have no doubt you will settle easier somewhere or be at peace with the fact that you enjoy the nomadic life.

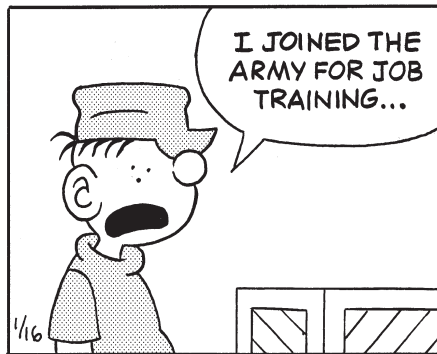
Either way, it's a win-win.

"How Can I Forgive My Cheating Partner?" is out now! Annie Lane's second anthology — featuring favorite columns on marriage, infidelity, communication and reconciliation — is available as a paperback and e-book. Visit http://www.creatorspublishing.com for more information. Send your questions for Annie Lane to dearnie@creators.com. © 2024 CREATORS.COM

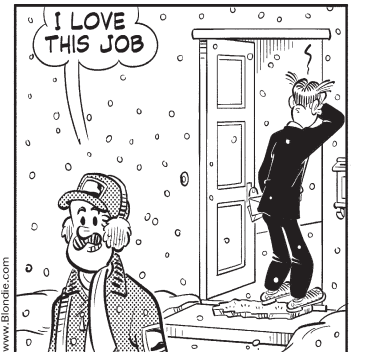
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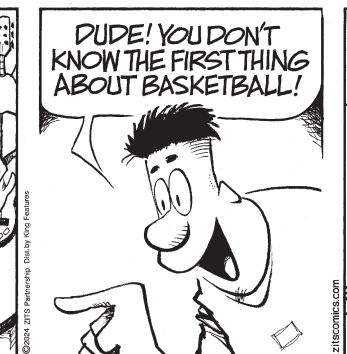
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My Answer

By Dr. Billy Graham



True Christians are the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit

Q: I hear the phrase often to "rest in the Lord," yet the Bible says that we should work. Resting in the Lord must mean something very different from doing nothing, and I'd like to know what this means because I find that I am restless and unfocused when I rest. — R.L.

A: God is near to those who belong to Christ and have Him at the center of life. When we struggle, fight, and strive for our way, we are not resting in the Lord. The psalmist wrote, "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him" (Psalm 37:7, NKJV).

True Christians are the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. Jesus prom-

ised that God the Father would send His Spirit to help us in all things. We must admit our weakness so that we can ask Him to take over. Standing with Christ means that we stand aside and let Him have His way in our hearts and minds. The human heart is resistant.

What a comfort to know that our Savior is constantly praying for those who belong to Him. Paul wrote, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:1, NKJV).

A true victorious Christian is one who, in spite of worries, inner

conflicts, and tensions, is confident that God is in control and will be victorious in the end. In reliance on Him, we will find that many ailments will disappear along with many worries. Faith implies four things: self-renunciation, reliance with utter confidence in Christ, obedience, and a changed life.

Our hope does not rest in the affairs of this world. It rests in Christ, who lives within us and is coming again.

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

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CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words. Includes solution time: 22 mins.

Yesterday's answer 1-16 grid with solution words like AVA, MGS, VERB, etc.

Television schedule table with columns for date, time, and channel, listing various programs and their times.

Television schedule table with columns for date, time, and channel, listing various programs and their times.



Central Ave. fire

Monday's fire at 315 W Central Ave. in Bluffton was reported at 1:32 p.m. Pictured, firefighters attack the flames from above and either side of the building. Due to the freezing cold temperatures, the water running off quickly froze, as shown with the frozen icicles on the grill and ladder in the front yard.

On their day off from school, Mason Olivaris, kneeling in the photo at right, and Carter Conley, shown ladeling from a pot, served hot chocolate to first responders in the cold. Kristan Conley helped the boys. (Photos by Holly Gaskill)

MLK Jr. holiday celebrations include acts of service, parades, but some take political turn

By **JEFF MARTIN and JEFFREY COLLINS**
Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Communities across the nation celebrated the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday on Monday with acts of service, prayer services and parades. But with the November presidential election as a backdrop, some events took on an overtly political turn.

In King's hometown of Atlanta, several speakers at the 56th annual commemorative service at the historic Ebenezer Baptist Church, where King served as pastor, touched on the divisive partisan climate in the United States.

Former U.S. Rep. Liz Cheney, who served on the House committee that investigated the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the Capitol, had harsh words for Trump, whom she did not mention by name. On that day, Trump's supporters tried to block Congress from counting the Electoral College votes that would affirm Joe Biden's victory in the 2020 presidential race.

"A former president refuses to acknowledge that he lost, and he has convinced millions that our elections and our democracy no longer work," she said. "He threatens the foundations of our nation and everything Dr. King persevered to save."

She also criticized some religious leaders in the way they seemed to worship Trump, not God.

U.S. Sen. Raphael Warnock, the longtime senior pastor of Ebenezer, told the audience, "You better stand up and vote!" to rousing applause. "If your vote didn't count, why are folks trying so hard to keep you from voting? Stand up and use your voice. Stand up and use your vote. Speak up!"

Bernice King, the daughter of the late civil rights leader, warned that "our humanity is literally under attack." But she noted that her father's legacy of nonviolence taught the world that "we can defeat injustice, ignorance and hold people accountable at the same time without seeking to destroy, diminish, demean or cancel them."

Speaking at the MLK Day at the Dome rally at the South Carolina Statehouse, Vice President Kamala Harris said young people two or three generations removed from King have seen their freedoms shrink — from laws restricting voting to bans on abortions and the ever-present threat of gun violence, especially in schools.

"They even try to erase, overlook and rewrite the ugly parts of our past. For example, the Civil War — which must I really have to say was about slavery?" Harris said.

Harris also used her speech at the event — which started in 2000 to pressure the state to remove the Confederate flag from atop the Capitol dome — to urge the younger generation to regain those rights lost

through voting and action.

"Generation after generation on the fields of Gettysburg, in the schools of Little Rock, on the grounds of this Statehouse, on the streets of Ferguson and on the floor of the Tennessee House of Representatives — we the people have always fought to make the promise of freedom real," Harris said.

In Philadelphia, President Joe Biden marked Martin Luther King Jr. Day by volunteering at Philabundance, a nonprofit food bank. He stuffed donation boxes with apples and struck up casual chatter with workers at the organization, where he volunteered for the third time as president or president-elect to mark the January day of service.

The 29th annual Greater Philadelphia Martin Luther King Day of Service is billed as the first and largest King day of service in the nation. Volunteer activities included preparing care packages for victims of gun violence and distributing voter information packets.

Also in the city, the Philadelphia MLK Association held its annual tapping of the Liberty Bell on Independence Mall, and the National Constitution Center offered free admission with a slate of civil rights era events and a school supply drive.

In Washington, Martin Luther King III participated in a wreath-laying event at his father's memorial.

In Wisconsin, Gov. Tony Evers, at a noontime ceremony

in the state Capitol rotunda, said the holiday is an opportunity to recommit to addressing health disparities, fully funding public schools and providing affordable housing, child care and transportation.

Doing that "we can build the sort of future we all want to see for our state," the Democratic former educator said.

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Judge rules in favor of South Bend in 25-foot "buffer zone" lawsuit

By **WHITNEY DOWNARD**

Indiana Capital Chronicle

A federal judge on Friday rejected a request to block an Indiana law establishing a so-called "buffer zone" around law enforcement during official duties, a measure that includes both the public and the press.

Under House Enrolled Act 1186, law enforcement officers were granted a 25-foot buffer zone from bystanders around police activity. This came over the objections of advocacy groups who warned it would infringe on public efforts to document police misconduct. Authors and supporters of the measure said it would keep law enforcement safer and those who violate an officer's order could be charged with a Class C misdemeanor.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana filed a lawsuit in August on behalf of South Bend's Donald Nicodemus, whose "Freedom 2 Film" YouTube channel captures his interactions with the local police force, saying the law infringed on his constitutional rights.

Nicodemus has previously encountered controversies as a "citizen journalist" and captured video of an officer ordering Nicodemus to stand 25 feet away.

But U.S. District Court Judge Damon R. Leichty appeared not to sympathize with the ACLU's arguments and found the law constitutional.

"Indiana's buffer law has many constitutional applications within its plainly legitimate sweep. It never once permits an officer to tell a reporter or citizen-journalist to leave altogether or to cease recording police activity," Leichty said in a 15-page ruling. "And at 25 feet, in measure small steps from an officer's work, this law has only an incidental effect on the public's First Amendment right to capture audio and video and otherwise scrutinize police conduct."

The ACLU, in a release, said it planned to appeal the decision.

"We're obviously disappointed in this decision, as we believe this new law gives unbridled discretion to law enforcement officials and invites content and

viewpoint-based discrimination," said Ken Falk, legal director at the ACLU of Indiana. "With this ruling, police officers will continue to have unchecked authority to prohibit citizens from approaching within 25 feet of the officers to observe their actions, even if the actions of the citizens are not and will not interfere with the police."

A separate lawsuit filed by several media entities in Indiana's Southern District Court is ongoing.

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