

# The News - Banner

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2024      BLUFFTON, INDIANA • Wells County's Hometown Connection      \$1.00

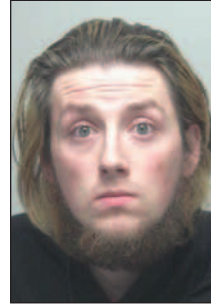


Zachary Delozier is pictured walking into the Wells County Jail after he was brought back to the state by the Wells County Sheriff's Department last Thursday. (Photo by Sydney Kent)

## All three kidnapping suspects arrive in Wells, new charges added

**By SYDNEY KENT**  
Prosecutors in Wells County have approved additional charges for a man accused of kidnapping an 11-year-old from Zanesville in late December.

Zachary Delozier, 27, South Dakota, in addition to a Level 5 felony for kidnapping, now faces additional charges for child molesting, a Level 1 felony, child molesting, a Level 2 felony, promotion of child sexual human trafficking, a Level 3 felony, and child solic-



Isaiah Schryvers



Sara Gaudino



Zachary Delozier

itation, a Level 4 felony. Multiple officials have referred to Delozier as the "leader" of  
(Continued on Page 2)

## Bluffton city engineer announces resignation

**By JONATHAN SNYDER**  
The usual chatter and camaraderie that follows Bluffton Board of Public Works and Safety meetings was exchanged for a quiet and somber atmosphere as a significant piece for Bluffton's city development resigned.

Bluffton Mayor John Whicker announced former city engineer Kelly White's letter of resignation Tuesday, much to the shock of Whicker's fellow Board of Works members Josh Hunt and Scott Mentzer. In the letter, White thanked the city for the knowledge and experienced she has gained while in the position.

White was hired Oct. 24, 2022, as the first-ever city engineer. Since then, she has helped rework Bluffton's standards for sewer and water pipes alongside road construction, overseen updates to the wastewater treatment plant and helped get the electric substation project on Cherry Street off the ground.

"Bummer," was the word from Whicker after he read White's resignation letter. Whicker then thanked White for all that she has done for the city, a sentiment echoed by both the board and the Bluffton Common Council, who met later on Tuesday. White's last day will be on Feb. 2.

There was still some excitement for the board, however, as they approved a bid from E&B paving for road improvements via the Community Crossings Matching Grant. E&B had the low bid, totalling out to \$1,966,039.64 for about six miles of paving. These include updates to Wiley Avenue, Johnson Street, West and East Wabash Street, and North and South Oak Street among other roads.

"Let's pave some roads," said Mentzer with excitement.

The board also discussed two issues surrounding clean up issues. One for a property on 80 Sunset Lot, as the Building Department's junk violation notification letters have gone unanswered since April of last year. There is a delinquent tax bill currently on the property, which leads Hunt to wonder if there is anybody still on the property. No official action was taken by the board.

The other clean-up issue involves the demolition of two houses on Hale Street and the 200 block of East Market Street. Bids were put out for the project in November of last year, but there have been no offers. Interest was shown by Grant Frauhiger of Frauhiger Excavating, but he stated that he  
(Continued on Page 2)



**Snow day**  
Ella McLeod celebrates her final day as a three-year-old with some fun in the snow. (Photos by Sydney Kent)

## Wells County expected to partner with Markle park

**By HOLLY GASKILL**  
Wells County Commissioners have pledged to work with the Markle Fish and Game Club Park to complete updates and renovations.

The fundraising committee for the project hopes to raise \$250,000 as matching funds for a grant available through the state of Indiana. Mike Grant, Markle assistant superintendent, and Nick Lund, Markle Town Council member, discussed their fun-

draising efforts during the commissioners' Tuesday meeting.

The town has a five-year plan of improvements, with renovations to the softball/baseball diamond, concessions, and concert stage area first on their list. Although the park is not within the Wells County portion of Markle, commissioners Jeff Stringer and Blake Gerber recognized that it is an asset to residents of Wells. "I  
(Continued on Page 2)

## Common Council handles ordinance amendments

**By JONATHAN SNYDER**  
It was an ordinance outburst for Bluffton's Common Council as three were approved Tuesday.

After the first reading on the Wells County Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance amendments in its Jan. 2 meeting, the council officially approved the changes on the second hearing. The only changes to the ordinance involve cleaning up the wording surrounding the standards for manufactured homes and recreational vehicles in special flood hazard areas.

The council also approved of a rezoning ordinance for Life Community Church's parking lot on South Street west of Jersey Street. The rezoning request was given a do-pass recommendation by the Wells County Area Plan Commission on Jan. 4. The parking lot is now an industrial zone, where

equipment and landscaping materials will be stored by Dubach Landscaping, who was given permission from the church to use the lot.

"It does fit the area," said council member Josh Hunt, a sentiment echoed by his peers on the council — Sarah Reed, Chandler Gerber, Rick Elwell, Scott Mentzer, Janella Stronczek and Blake Fiechter. Hunt further clarified that a screen will be put up to shield off the line of sight from the residential areas next to the site, in accordance with Wells County ordinances.

The council's final ordinance approval of the day involved approving additional funds from the Community Crossings Grant Fund. \$1,973,365.92 from the fund will be added to the Paving/ADA Curb Line Item. Half of those funds will be paid for by the Commu-  
(Continued on Page 2)

## State lawmakers seem unlikely to tackle school consolidation

*School officials are additionally pushing back against a new report that calls for small and rural schools to merge.*

**By CASEY SMITH**  
**Indiana Capital Chronicle**  
A new statewide report is fueling discussions about consolidating Indiana's smallest school districts, but state lawmakers continue to lack an appetite for action — at least for now.

For years, the Indiana Chamber of Commerce has asked the General Assembly to move legislation that encourages school districts with fewer than 2,000 students to consolidate.

Small and rural school officials — longtime critics of the

chamber's lobby for more school consolidation — are pushing back against the new study and the potential for Indiana policies that would require small schools to increase their student population.

"We don't have a problem with consolidation, but it needs to be

driven by locals — it has to be something they want for it to be successful," said Chris Lagoni, executive director of the Indiana Small and Rural Schools Association. "Our members do feel like there's a lot of attacking going on here."

"The state has said we want more private schools, we want more public schools, we want more choice, more choice, more

choice," he continued. "The chamber advocated for those policies. That's why we're just having a hard time understanding this issue — because we're not attacking it equally across all choices."

The business advocacy group's newest report highlights lagging academic performance in the state's smallest schools — where a fifth of Hoosier students are  
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<p><b>Inside</b></p> <p>Local/Area</p> <p>Obituaries . . . . . 3</p> <p>Police Notebook . . . 3</p> <p><b>Opinion</b></p> <p>Michael Hicks . . . . 4</p> <p><b>Also...</b></p> <p>Sports . . . . . 8</p> <p>Classifieds . . . . . 6</p> <p>Diversions . . . . . 7</p>	<p><b>Outside</b></p>  <p><b>Mostly sunny today, -15 wind chill values</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>Today</b></td> <td><b>Thursday</b></td> <td><b>Friday</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>High 23</td> <td>High 27</td> <td>High 19</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Low 19</td> <td>Low 17</td> <td>Low 4</td> </tr> </table> <p>More Weather on Page 2</p>	<b>Today</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	High 23	High 27	High 19	Low 19	Low 17	Low 4	<p><b>Online</b></p> <p>Follow us on Facebook! Go to <a href="http://www.facebook.com/newsbanner">www.facebook.com/newsbanner</a></p> <p>Place Your Classified Ads 24/7</p> <p>Vol. 95 No. 64</p> <p><b>WEDNESDAY</b> January 17, 2024</p>	<div style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; color: red; margin: 0;"><b>Pole Buildings</b></p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 1.2em; color: blue; margin: 0;"><b>FABRAL</b> 1-800-903-4206</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 0.8em; margin: 0;">METAL WALL AND ROOF SYSTEMS FABRAL Grandrib 3 Steel Roofing &amp; Siding Check Us Out on Facebook</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 0.8em; margin: 0;">260-724-3108 • Fax 260-724-4505 Call for all your building needs! 425 S. Winchester St., Decatur, IN</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 1.5em; color: red; margin: 0;"><b>Arnold Lumber Co.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 0.7em; margin: 0;">Hours: Monday-Thursday 7AM-5PM • Friday 7AM-4:30PM • Saturday 7AM-11:30AM</p> </div>	<p><b>How to contact us:</b></p> <p>Call us: <b>824-0224</b> or <b>1-800-579-7476</b> email@news-banner.com</p> <p>On the Web: <a href="http://www.news-banner.com">www.news-banner.com</a></p> <p>Follow us at: <a href="https://twitter.com/newsbanner">twitter.com/newsbanner</a></p> 
<b>Today</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>											
High 23	High 27	High 19											
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# City engineer

(Continued from Page 1)

needed a time frame within which to work. While May 31 was a suggested date, no official action was taken by the board.

Additionally, the board gave a \$1 hourly raise to Supervisor Dick Green of

the Electric Department. The board also approved an SRF payment request totalling \$134,508 for Inliner Solutions LLC for work on inlining the water lines for drainage. The tabled raise for Jonathan Templin of the Fire

Department was given an official decision as well. After looking at the salary ordinance in detail, the board saw that Templin's time as a part-time firefighter does not count towards his one year raise as a paid on-call

firefighter. The board also announced that the case of the missing water on West Wabash Street has been resolved. The new meters are working as intended so far.

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# Common Council

(Continued from Page 1)

nity Crossings Grant.

The council also unanimously elected to keep Mentzer as the council president and approved their appointments for other city bodies in 2024.

The appointments made by the council are as follows:

- Board of Public Works and Safety

- Mentzer and Hunt
  - Economic Development Council
- Elwell
  - Bluffton Redevelopment Commission — Gerber, Hunt, Stroncsek, Mentzer and Elwell
  - Wells Economic Development Commission — John Emshwiller
  - Wells County Area Plan Commission — Gerber
- 911 Board — Hunt and Elwell
- ABC Board — Ron Blewing
- Bluffton NOW — Stroncsek
- Wells County Convention and Visitors Commission — Brandy Fiechter
- Bluffton Fire Territory — Mentzer
- Wells County Solid Waste District — Mentzer
- Wells County Trails — Stroncsek

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# Markle park

(Continued from Page 1)

know the Norwell girls' league wears everything out out there," Stringer said.

However, the commissioners were unable to commit a specific dollar amount to the campaign on Tuesday. They advised they would need to review their budget and discuss it with Commissioner Mike Vanover, who was absent.

The fundraising committee has already raised \$100,000 for another matching grant, which can be used again as matching funds for this new grant. Grant reported the town of Markle will be voting on a \$25,000 contribution, and they expect Huntington County Commissioners to commit \$30,000.

Grant also stated they

would be taking some money from the Markle Fish and Game Club endowment.

"In this case, we're coming to the commissioners for an ask, but we're going to leave that open as to what you deem fit," Grant said.

"I don't think we can make a commitment that large — that's my opinion," Gerber advised.

Grant said they also hope to install new playground equipment and build pickleball courts, an outdoor fitness area, a utility building, and a new community building, among other items.

The deadline for the grant is Feb. 2. The commissioners' next regularly scheduled meeting is 5 p.m. Feb. 6.

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# School consolidation

(Continued from Page 1)

enrolled — and pushes to consolidate at least some of the state's rural schools and increase district sizes.

Although the latest study dropped just before the start of the 2024 session, the issue of school consolidation doesn't seem to be on policymakers' radars.

So far, none of the roughly 700 bills filed deal with consolidation, though such language could be amended into existing bills later in the session. One proposal, House Bill 1134, authored by Rep. Ed Clere, R-New Albany, addresses the distribution of local income taxes after school districts merge, but it does not seek to enact policy pertaining to — or requiring — consolidation, specifically.

Instead, education-related agendas released by the governor and GOP legislative leaders focus on literacy, career readiness and antisemitism.

When asked by the Indiana Capital Chronicle, Indiana Secretary of Education Katie Jenner said she hadn't reviewed the Chamber's report in full. She additionally did not say whether she thought more Hoosier school districts should consolidate.

The chamber maintains that — while difficult — conversations about consolidation and other reforms to improve performance at small and rural schools need to start now.

Chamber leadership said cutting the number of small districts in half will help increase educational attainment in Indiana and produce more workforce-ready graduates. It could also help school districts struggling financially.

"Consolidation is the boogeyman. Historically, it's the most controversial when talking about closing schools or consolidating districts. But we don't see this as a solution for everything," said Jeff Brantley, the chamber's senior vice

president of political affairs. "We have talked in the state a lot over the last two decades about what's happening in our urban districts. And there are still serious problems today. We don't talk enough about what's happening in small and rural towns in Indiana."

## A yearslong push

The School Corporation Reorganization Act of 1959 led to a significant decrease in the number of districts across Indiana — from 939 before the law took effect down to 382 by 1968.

In recent decades, consolidation has been far less common, however.

The 2007 Kernan-Shepard government streamlining report commissioned by Gov. Mitch Daniels recommended districts smaller than 2,000 students consolidate. Even so, legislation never advanced in the Statehouse.

That same year, lawmakers sent \$200,000 to the Indiana Department of Education for school corporations to conduct consolidation feasibility studies during the 2007-08 and 2008-09 school years. Eight studies were conducted under the IDOE grant program, with varied findings from corporation to corporation.

That led to the consolidation of only two districts — Turkey Run and Rockville — into western Indiana's North Central Parke Community School Corporation in 2013. District officials said students and families were supportive of the merger because it increased opportunities for students to take advanced courses and participate in athletics.

Consolidation efforts in other parts of the state, like Randolph and Wabash counties, have been unsuccessful, though.

The last serious push for school consolidation came in 2017, when a separate Ball State study commissioned by the chamber produced similar findings to

the one released earlier this month.

Researchers noted that school corporation size impacted nearly every measure of student performance studied. Corporations with fewer than 2,000 students generally performed worse on SATs, passed Advance Placement tests at a lower rate, had a lower ISTEP passage rate and scored worse on most end-of-course assessments.

Indiana lawmakers responded with a one-time financial incentive of \$250 per student to schools that wanted to consolidate. But no school districts applied for a grant from the \$5 million fund.

Other studies have shown that around 2,000 students is the minimum for school corporations in Indiana to support adequate student performance. But more than half of Indiana's school corporations had K-12 enrollment lower than 2,000 in 2022.

And small school districts are only getting smaller, according to the latest data. About 74 percent of the 162 districts with less than 2,000 students saw declining enrollments over the last decade.

The chamber's 2024 study emphasized that increasing school corporation size to around 2,000 students has the potential to reduce per pupil cost and free up funds for classroom instruction or other purposes — changes that could improve the educational outcomes of students.

Researchers said further that a more modest increase to student enrollment in the state's smallest school districts can improve performance, as well.

## 'Flawed' data?

But Lagoni, along with Indiana School Boards Association executive direc-

tor Terry Spradlin, point to what they say is a misrepresentation of data in the chamber's study. They maintain, too, that the idea of consolidation is "simply flawed altogether."

"The chamber's report is wholly inadequate. It's not complete. It doesn't look at the full spectrum of educational policy and systems that the state is funding," Spradlin said.

Spradlin noted the chamber's study doesn't adjust for poverty, for example.

"There's no secret — and they don't address this in the report — that the biggest predictor of academic outcomes is family income, poverty," he said. "Of course the smallest, rural districts and communities have high poverty. But the correlation here is that some of our largest urban districts also have a high concentration of poverty."

He pointed to data in the chamber study showing that students in districts with enrollment between 500 and 999 students earn the highest percentage of academic honors diplomas compared to all other districts.

Spradlin also emphasized that Indiana's small and rural school corporations currently operate 32 early college high schools that enable students to complete the Indiana College Core or an associate degree before graduation. Further, many Indiana small and rural high schools are leaders in Career and Technical Education programming, he said.

Spradlin additionally held that the chamber study fails to illustrate adequate data about charter schools, which would have been the lowest performing group of schools in the state had they been analyzed the same as small and rural schools.

# Weather

Wednesday, January 17, 2024

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

**High:** 7; **Low:** 2; **Precipitation:** 0.4 inches of snow  
**Wabash River Level** (at the Main Street bridge): 2.93 feet at 8:45 p.m. Tuesday

## Wells County forecast

**Today:** Mostly sunny, with a high near 23. Wind chill values as low as -15. Southwest wind 15 to 20 mph, with gusts as high as 30 mph.

**Tonight:** Cloudy, with a low around 19. Southwest wind 10 to 15 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

**Thursday:** A 50 percent chance of snow. Cloudy, with a high near 27. Southwest wind around 10 mph.

**Thursday Night:** Snow likely, mainly after 1 a.m. Cloudy, with a low around 17. North wind 5 to 10 mph. Chance of precipitation is 60 percent. New snow accumulation of around an inch possible.

**Friday:** Snow likely, mainly before 1 p.m. Mostly cloudy and cold, with a high near 19. Chance of precipitation is 60 percent. New snow accumulation of 1 to 2 inches possible.

**Friday Night:** Mostly cloudy, with a low around 4.

**Saturday:** Mostly sunny and cold, with a high near 17.

**Saturday Night:** Partly cloudy, with a low around 0.

**Sunday:** Mostly sunny, with a high near 21.

**Sunday Night:** Mostly cloudy, with a low around 14.

**Monday:** A slight chance of rain and snow. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 35. Chance of precipitation is 20 percent.

**Monday Night:** A chance of rain. Cloudy, with a low around 31.

**Tuesday:** Rain likely. Cloudy, with a high near 39.

# Kidnapping

(Continued from Page 1)

the three arrested.

Delozier could potentially spend the rest of his life in prison as he faces a sentence of up to 104 years if found guilty of the charges.

Delozier pled not guilty to the charges during his initial hearing in the Wells Circuit Court on Tuesday morning. He is currently being held on a \$500,000 bond and has been appointed a public defender.

Sara Gaudino, 23, and Isaiah Schryvers, 24, were also charged with kidnapping, a Level 5 felony. Less than three weeks after the trio allegedly abducted the child, all suspects have returned to the state. The van reportedly used in the crime was also brought to Indiana to be processed for evidence.

Both Gaudino and Schryvers arrived at the Wells County Jail on Monday evening. Both suspects are scheduled for initial hearings at 8 a.m. today in the Wells Circuit Court, where more charges may be

added.

The three suspects were located with the missing child at a traffic stop in Barneveld, Wisconsin, approximately 24 hours after a Silver Alert was issued on New Year's Eve.

In a statement to The News-Banner Tuesday evening, Sheriff Scott Holliday said the license plate reader cameras from Flock Safety were instrumental to locating the missing child and suspects.

"Unfortunately, as our investigation further unfolds it has warranted additional charges," Holiday said. "The use of Flock cameras was a key piece to us locating the child and bringing her home safe to her family. They were not our cameras, but this is one reason why I believe they are an important tool and why I am implementing them in our county."

The News-Banner will continue to follow these cases as they are processed in the Wells Circuit Court.

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OBITUARIES

Ernest "Ernie" J. Barclay, 73



Ernest "Ernie" J. Barclay, 73, of Uniondale, passed away Monday evening, Jan. 15, 2024, at his residence, surrounded by his loving family.

Ernie was born Nov. 4, 1950 in Cambridge, Ohio to John and Theresa (Miles) Barclay. He graduated from Meadowbrook High School in 1968.

He served as an aircraft mechanic for the U.S. Air Force for 12 years, three of those years were spent in Vietnam. He was a truck driver for 42 years. Ernie was able to be a part of Honor Flight 38 in September 2022. He enjoyed woodworking and camping.

On August 12, 2002, Ernie and Tina Barclay were married in Reno, Nev. They shared 21 years of marriage together.

Survivors included his wife, Tina of Uniondale; his children, Angela (Paul) Rose of Cumberland Gap, Ohio, Theresa Renaye Barclay and Lisa Ann (Michael) Gatrell, both of Fort Wayne, Brandy Stroncsek of Markle, Aaron (Janella) Stroncsek of Bluffton, Christopher (Gina) Stroncsek of Roanoke, Tamara York of New Haven and Heather (Aaron) Springer of Fort Wayne; along with 20 grandchildren and 9 great-grandchildren.

Ernie is preceded in death by his parents and a brother, Robert Barclay.

Funeral services take place at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 20, 2024, at the Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home with Pastor Troy Drayer officiating.

Visitation will be held from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. Friday, Jan. 19, 2024, and for one hour prior to the service Saturday at the funeral home.

A graveside service will be held at 10 a.m. Monday, Jan. 22, 2024, at Marion National Cemetery will full military honors by the United States Air Force Honor Guard and the American Legion Post 111 Honor Guard.

Memorials may be made in Ernie's memory to Honor Flight of Northeast Indiana.

Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to the care of the Lemler family of Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home. Friends can send online condolences to the family at www.thomarich.com.

Ossian Rotary to hear from Ben Reckenberger of Wells County United Way

At its regular weekly meeting on Thursday, January 18th, Ossian Rotary will host Ben Reckenberger, the new CEO and executive director of the United Way of Wells County. He's been in the non-profit world for over a decade and says he feels the most fulfilled when he is serving others.

United Way of Wells County is a locally governed, volunteer driven organization. The board is comprised of 13-17 community leaders, and the first full-time executive director was hired in 1999.

The focus of United Ways has shifted over the last few years from fundraisers and allocators of those funds to community impact. United Way of Wells County is in the business of improving lives with sustained changes in the local community. Ben says his goal is looking forward to continuing to get to know those that call Wells County home and make significant impact to help the community thrive.

Anyone is welcome to attend Ossian Rotary this Thursday morning, at 7:30 at First Baptist Church of Ossian, 1001 Dehner Drive for this program.

Next Thursday Ossian Rotary will hear from Grace Hochstetler, disaster program manager of the Wells County Red Cross.

Please note that Ossian Rotary will cancel when Norwell Community Schools has a delay or cancellation due to weather.

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

Obituary Policy

The News-Banner and Ossian Journal publishes "basic" obituaries free of charge for "local" deaths. "Basic" obituaries will include the deceased's name, age, community of record, date and place of death, basic genealogical information, the date, time and location of calling hours and services and the name of the funeral home handling arrangements.

If additional information and/or a photo is desired to be included, or if the deceased does not meet the definitions of a "local" person, there is a charge.

Area funeral homes will provide details on the policy and will coordinate obituary publication.

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Police Notebook

INCIDENTS

City: Saturday, noon, West Wabash and North Oak streets. Report of a loose dog.

Sunday, 7:41 p.m., West Market and North Johnson streets, Bluffton. Vehicle in middle of the road, subject advised he was delivering food. Advised to use an open parking space next time.

Monday, 3:26 p.m., Bluffton High School. Report of activated fire alarm. Water coming from under door.

Monday, 5:12 p.m., West Market and North Oak streets. Welfare check requested for child walking with backpack outside. Unable to locate.

Monday, 8:33 p.m., 200 block of Capri Court. Report of a person possibly using drugs.

Tuesday, 8:57 a.m., South Main and East Horton streets. Warrant served to Skylark Gearlds.

County: Friday, 1:12 p.m., 2700 West 300 North, Bluffton. Report of harassment via cell phone.

Friday, 2:51 p.m., 1100 South 700 West, Montpelier. Report of stolen television and video game system while caller was out on vacation.

Friday, 11:04 p.m., 5800

North Main Street, Uniondale. Report of a tree that fell and was blocking the roadway.

Saturday, 1:48 p.m., Ind. 116 and 600 East, Bluffton. Caller requested permit for dead deer.

Saturday, 6:18 p.m., South Main and East Market streets, Petroleum. Report of tree partially in roadway.

Sunday, 8:37 p.m., Ind. 218 and South 400 West, Poneto. Charter bus had vehicle issues due to weather, officer stood by with lights until they were on their way.

Sunday, 11:05 p.m., 900 South and South Ind. 3, Warren. Report of a black dog. Dog ran away.

Monday, 5:35 a.m., 2600 South Ind. 1, Bluffton. Report of a semi truck with trailer fallen in roadway. Ind. 1 shut down.

Monday, 1:58 p.m., South 475 West and 1000 South, Montpelier. Report of large tree in roadway. County Highway Department contacted.

Monday, 4:15 p.m., 7000 West 900 South, Warren. Subject reported neighbors tree fell into his yard.

Ossian: Sunday, 11:13 p.m., Ind. 224 and 250 East, Ossian.

Report of railroad arms malfunctioning.

Sunday, 12:31 a.m., Norwell Middle School. Report of fire alarm at school showing water flow. Found burst pipe and contacted maintenance staff.

Tuesday, 10:30 a.m., Ossian Town Hall. Subject came to town hall to report he hit two mailboxes earlier that morning.

FIRES

County: Tuesday, 1:45 a.m., 1700 West Ind. 218, Poneto. Caller reported fire in kitchen and on ceiling, all subjects safely out of residence. Fire under control approximately 2:31 a.m.

ACCIDENTS

City: Thursday, 11:15 a.m., 1250 S Wayne Street. Alexia Wheeler was backing her Ford Fusion when she collided with a Chevy Malibu driven by David Stults. The Malibu was also backing. Damages did not exceed \$10,000.

Saturday, 1:15 p.m., Main and Wiley streets. Mitchell Welbaum was talking to a passenger at a red light and began to proceed forward thinking the light had turned green. Welbaum's Grand Prix collided with a Chrysler

200 driven by Lori Wilson. Damages did not exceed \$2,500.

County: Tuesday, 6:30 a.m., Ind 124 and Ind 1. Tony Dowell was stopped at a red light when his Chevrolet Trailblazer was rear ended by a Mercury Milan driven by Vivian Girod. Girod advised she could not stop in time due to snow. Damages did not exceed \$2,500.

ARRESTS

Isaiah Alexander Schryvers, 24, Rapid City, S.D., kidnapping, a Level 5 felony. No bond set.

Sara Lynn Gaudino, 23, S.D., kidnapping, a Level 5 felony. No bond set.

Skylark Gearlds, 33, Bluffton, sex offender registration violation, a Level 6 felony. No bond set.

Casey Lee Huntley, 42, Bluffton, possession of a hypodermic syringe and possession of methamphetamine, both Level 6 felonies, possession of marijuana and possession of paraphernalia, both misdemeanors, and contempt of court. No bond set.

Clinton Aaron Gates, 42, Fort Wayne, operating a vehicle while intoxicated, a Class C misdemeanor. Bond set at \$1,000.

ICBA lists FBB among Top 100 lenders

First Bank of Berne FBB has once again been listed in the Top 100 Independent Community Bankers of America by the ICBA.

First Bank of Berne has a long history of agricultural lending, beginning when it opened in 1891. Today, FBB has grown into a regional leader in agribusiness lending, as evidenced by being named to the nation's Top 100 list, ranking 67th in 2023. FBB employs experienced farm financial consultants with a proven ability to help agribusinesses prosper. The community bank offers a variety of agricultural lending services, including both long and short-term loans.

"We are proud to have been selected by the ICBA as one of the nation's best ag lenders," said Rick Gentis, Agribusiness Banking Manager for the First Bank of Berne. "I am grateful to our wonderful ag customers, who trust us to help them grow year after year. I also must give credit to our amazing team of ag lenders, who make it their priority to provide our customers with the wisdom and insights that come from our bank's 133-plus years of ag lending experience."

Meals available for those in need at Yergy's

Free meals for those in need are available at Yergy's State Road BBQ, located at 1415 S Main St. in Bluffton. Those wishing to utilize the offering can find a ticket on the wall and submit it at the register for a meal.

Mike Vanover has partnered with the business to start the "pay-it-forward" opportunity. Other community members are welcome to participate and help another in need.

Corrections and clarifications

Seth Bennett was misidentified in a photo caption from Monday's fire on Central Avenue in Bluffton. Triston Niblick's name was also misspelled.

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## Thinking hard about the IREAD test

Governor Holcomb, along with leaders of the House and Senate, laid out a legislative plan to hold back students who fail to pass the 3rd Grade IREAD exam. This is a significant policy issue because about one in five Hoosier 3rd graders fail to pass the reading test. This pass rate has worsened substantially since COVID. My back of the envelope analysis suggests that adding another year of school for 15,000 children would cost over \$125 million a year.



Michael Hicks

## Hoosier Opinions

Other states have tackled this issue already, including West Virginia and Mississippi. West Virginia will begin to hold back current 1st graders who don't pass their reading tests by the end of third grade.

For almost a decade, students in Mississippi who fail the test have been held back. However, students in both states pass the tests at lower rate than do Hoosier students, though this may be due to different standards across states.

There are more than fiscal issues at play as well, and I certainly don't know what the right policy decision might be. Still, Hoosiers should welcome a full and open discussion of the matter. Of course, this should begin with a full set of facts combined with rigorous analysis to share with the legislature.

Before taking up the question of whether to hold 3rd graders back, we'd want to know the costs, as well as the benefits of doing so. So, I'd expect that we'll soon hear not only a more rigorous fiscal analysis than I provided above, but much more details on the effect of the IREAD test on ultimate student success.

Knowing this requires more than just restating statistics. After all, it should be very simple to report IREAD pass rates of high school graduates versus drop outs over several cohorts of students. This could be done by demographics such as gender, race, ethnicity, poverty rates and school corporation size. We'd also want to know the demographics of pass/fail for students in 4th grade this year. Georgia has a "Governor's Office of Student Achievement" that put together just such a study of their 3rd grade reading test in 2017.

These descriptive statistics data are fine, but they aren't really sufficient for policymaking. The key question is what the effect failing the IREAD had on later student achievement, controlling for all these other factors. Any competent researcher should be able to undertake this statistical test, so I would expect we will hear the answer in the coming weeks of testimony.

One recent study performed by the University of Chicago found that once individual student demographics and school effects were properly controlled for, very few educational outcomes differences were predicted by 3rd grade reading scores. This study is a perfect illustration of the issue.

The descriptive statistics of 3rd grade reading scores suggested major impacts on later reading scores, school attendance, course failure, GPA, graduation, school attendance and college attendance. But, when individual demographics (race, gender, poverty rate and cognitive impairment), 8th grade reading scores and school characteristics were included in the statistical model, the 3rd grade test scores lost all ability to predict student outcomes. Let me state this more plainly.

In a study of Chicago's schools, the research team found that when you control for individual student demographics, their 8th grade reading scores and individual school characteristics, passing or failing 3rd grade reading tests had no effect on later educational outcomes (GPA, absences, high school graduation or college attendance). It is worth noting that this comprehensive study was performed on Chicago's schools in 2010.

This is a classic problem in evaluating school outcomes and interventions. Many different variables are correlated, such as race, poverty, cohort performance and test scores. Descriptive statistics alone cannot answer questions about the role of 3rd grade reading and later school performance. To answer that question, you have to do analysis. Without it, you might be trying to fix a problem that doesn't exist.

Doubtless such a study has been conducted on Indiana students, and we'll soon learn the results of that study. But, there are other issues as well that the legislature should know as they approach this problem.

First among these is simply whether holding a student back improves later outcomes. A recent doctoral dissertation at Ball State reports that among the students held back for IREAD, outcomes improved in later reading tests. But, this study didn't go beyond 8th grade. Another study by a team of economists found that higher retention rates affected long-term average educational and economic outcomes. Interestingly here, the benefits of this effect accrued to students who were promoted. Those who were held back faced a large economic cost. Because the number who were promoted was much greater than those held back, the net benefits were very positive.

As COVID demonstrated, not everyone is comfortable with this sort of benefit-cost analysis. But legislators and governors don't have that luxury. They must consider such issues when evaluating policy alternatives.

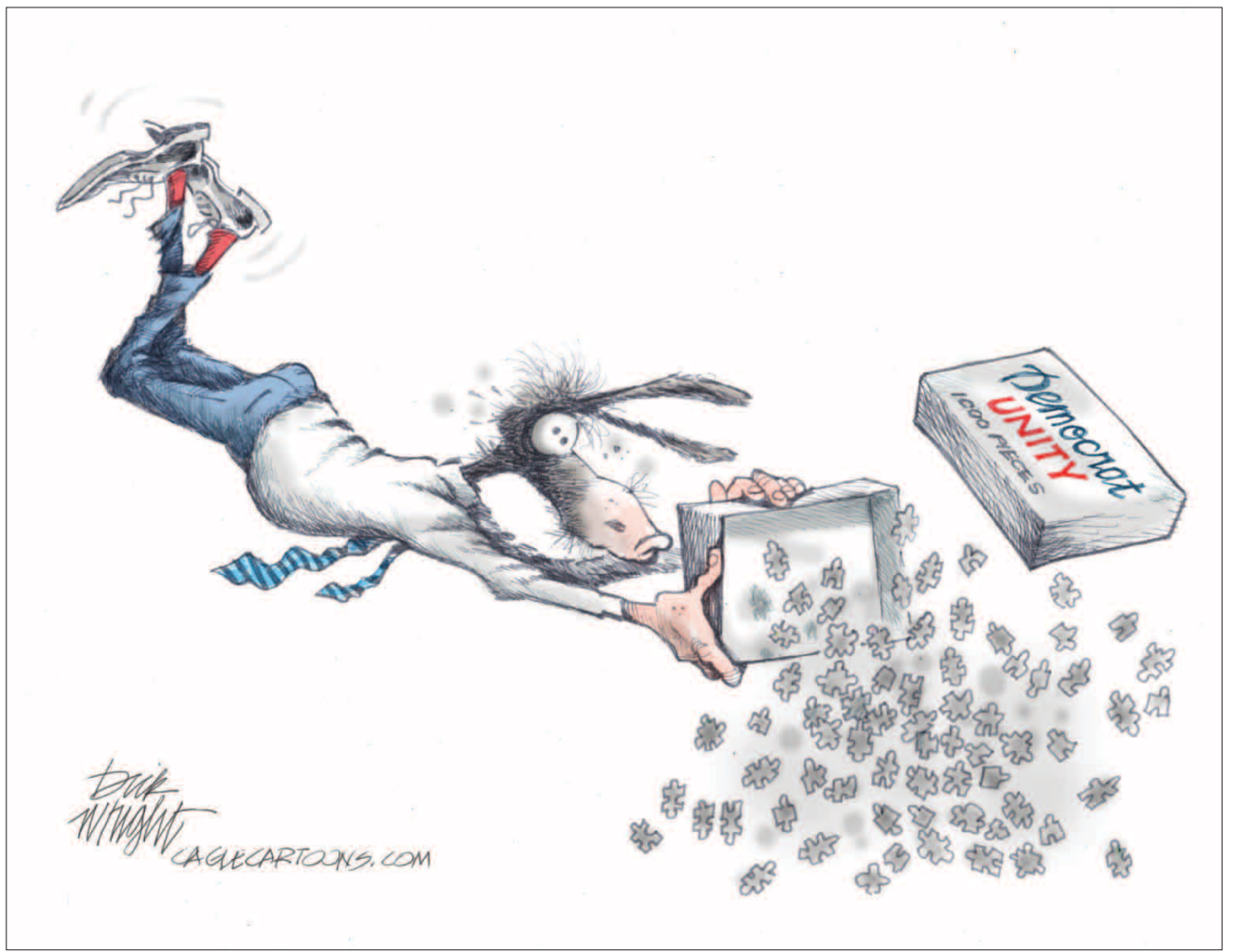
Of course, this debate raises other questions. Does grade retention have other costly effects that might not have been considered? What is the optimal age to hold students back, and does that vary by gender? Are there lower-cost interventions that could improve reading outcomes? Are the reading standards appropriate? This debate raises even bigger questions.

Indiana is more than 20 years into expanding school choice. Those policies vastly expanded options for parents, and focused heavily on cutting costs for taxpayers. What has been the effect? In 2000, before the first school choice, 88 percent of Hoosier students attended local public schools. In 2022, that number was 89 percent. Indiana has an almost fully operational school choice system, and traditional public schools have won the competition for students.

At the same time, we struggle on every important domain of educational attainment. In 2000 we were ranked 43rd among states in educational attainment. We rose to 38th by 2010, and are back down to 43rd today. The push for cost savings and choice has benefits, but higher levels of educational attainment are not among them. There are other concerns that warrant a focus on quality over cost savings.

Nationwide, the wage premium for completing high school is a roughly 35 percent pay boost above those who don't graduate. Here in Indiana, it is 10.1 percent. That may be because we have an excess supply of high school graduates, but it may also be that employers don't value our high school diplomas as strongly as those from other states. Either way, a focus on quality is in order, and 3rd grade reading is a fine place to start.

Michael Hicks is the George and Frances Ball Distinguished Professor of Economics and the director of the Center for Business and Economic Research at Ball State University.



## What Democrats will never do to defend democracy

Joe Biden went to Valley Forge to give a big speech telling us how much he cares about defending democracy against the threat represented by Donald Trump.

How much does President Biden care? Enough to give a speech defending democracy, one of what's sure to be many if Trump is his opponent.

Biden's alarm about the precariousness of the American system, though, will never translate into actions he wouldn't otherwise want to take.

To wit, if Joe Biden were, as a matter of the principle, devoted to defending democracy at all costs, the first thing he would do would be to step aside for some younger, more capable, less radioactive Democrat with a much better chance of beating Trump.

Biden taking this step would be politically electric, underlining how seriously he takes Trump's challenge to the republic and perhaps proving to some skeptics that his rhetoric about defending democracy is more than simply rhetoric.

Biden made much in his hackneyed speech -- it probably could have been written by a precocious eighth-grader in an AP government class -- of a painting in the U.S. Capitol of George Washington resigning his commission.

Biden correctly calls it a sublime act, because Washington, who could have been tempted to leverage his position after the Revolution for personal and political gain, gives up power in the service of his ideals instead.

Biden makes the contrast between the statesmanship depicted in the painting and Jan. 6, which is fair enough.

It probably doesn't even occur to him, though, that if a supremely talented military and political leader in his prime could step aside for the good of the whole, it should be much easier for a hack politician who is increasingly rickety and unpopular to make a selfless sacrifice for his party and, as he sees it, his country.

No?

No. Of course not.

Biden's defense of democracy has to end with him in the White House again, not some other Democrat who might vanquish Trump easily. (Granted, Kamala Harris would complicate a Biden-stepping-aside sce-

nario, but if the republic is at risk, perhaps Democrats could also be honest about how dreadful Harris is and nominate someone else -- although now we are really entering the realm of fantasy.)

OK, so Biden isn't voluntarily going anywhere. But if the stakes this November are so world-historical, surely the defense of democracy should include some moderation on progressive causes that are easy political targets for Trump.

Consider the chaos at the border, which, if Trump makes it back to the White House, will be one of the major reasons.

Would saving the republic make it worth going beyond whatever border deal might be in the offing with congressional Republicans and admitting that the Trump policies worked and should be restored immediately? Or is allowing millions of illegal immigrants into the country more important than increasing the odds that democracy itself survives beyond 2024?

Finally, if substantive concessions are too painful, there's always the possibility of staking out some genuinely new ground in the democracy debate itself. Imagine if Biden said that democracy is so important that no one should be striking his probable opponent from the ballot. Or if he said he now realizes that he, too, let down the constitutional order by undertaking executive orders that exceeded his authority and that, on second thought, he needs to lead by example in complete faithfulness to the system.

Would that kill him? Evidently, yes.

Biden's position is that democracy is under such a threat that he -- the man with abysmal approval ratings who most Americans believe can't possibly serve a second term -- needs to run again to eke out a narrow, no-margin-for-error victory against the man who embodies the threat.

Faith in our system of government, patriotism itself, supposedly demands nothing else. And if Biden flubs it, which is a real possibility? Then, I guess it's, "Oh, well, democracy can always be saved again in the 2026 midterms."

Rich Lowry is on Twitter @RichLowry



Rich Lowry

## Time to change the GOP logo

"Donald, you're not going to be able to insult your way to the presidency. That's not going to happen." -- Republican presidential candidate Jeb Bush during a 2016 debate with Trump.

After watching too many of the Republican non-debates and the insults each of the candidates (and former candidates) have thrown at each other, along with the especially demeaning characterizations by Donald Trump of his rivals, it's time for a dose of reality. For the sake of accuracy and truth the Republican Party should exchange its elephant symbol for one that is more reflective of today's GOP.

One candidate might be Triumph the Insult Comic Dog.

Consider some of the puppet's best insult lines as you imagine them being directed at a Republican presidential candidate. To an overweight man, Triumph said: "Are you a separatist? ... Maybe you should try separating yourself from donuts first."

Addressing a French person who spoke no English, Triumph said: "Pardon me, I only know your basic French expressions like 'I surrender.'"

Speaking to singer Bon Jovi, Triumph said: "So you're acting now, you're in a vampire movie, yes? That's good. Finally, a role that requires you to suck."



Cal Thomas

The difference between these comedic taunts, as well as those by the late comics Don Rickles and Rodney Dangerfield and the political insults, is that with the comedians people were usually in on the joke. While sometimes sounding caustic, the comical barbs are meant to produce laughter. Even the targets of the jokes often laughed.

That's different from repeatedly calling your political rival a liar.

Where is the noble rhetoric from campaigns and presidencies past? Why the constant putdowns? Xi Jinping, Vladimir Putin and Iran's ayatollahs don't get smeared as much as the presidential candidates who revile each other. We've regressed from the schoolyard to the barnyard.

John F. Kennedy had some good lines, including: "We can no longer afford to be second best. I want people all over the world to look to the United States again, to feel that we're on the move, to feel that our high noon is in the future." And the well-known one from his 1961 Inaugural Address: "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country."

Ronald Reagan always saw America as "a shining city on a hill" whose best days are ahead of us. When Reagan spoke of his political opponents, he often referred to them as "our

friends in the other party." During a 1984 debate with Walter Mondale, Reagan joked that "I will not make age an issue of this campaign. I am not going to exploit for political purposes my opponent's youth and inexperience." Mondale laughed, seeming to acknowledge the cleverness of the barb. His campaign manager, Bob Beckel, later told me, "Right then we knew we were going to lose the election" because the issue of Reagan's age (he was 74 at the time) had been laid to rest with that one line.

Here are a few more among many others: "If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader." -- John Quincy Adams.

This from Franklin Roosevelt would be a good one for modern presidential candidates to embrace: "If you treat people right they will treat you right ... ninety percent of the time."

President Harry Truman said: "It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit." Reagan liked the saying enough to have it on his desk.

In modern politics, debating the best way to make America better has been replaced by a war footing. It's DEFCON 1. Sadly, insults and anger seem to appeal to some voters. The price we are paying for tolerating this behavior is a diminished politics, which can only lead to a diminished and further divided country.

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# Fascinating, graceful, imperiled "Tall Blondes"

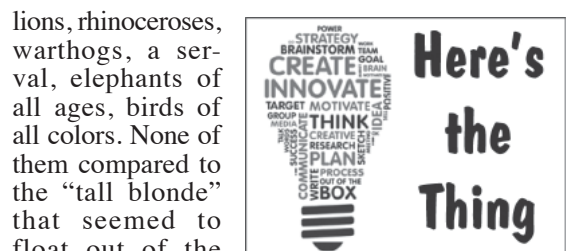
Lynn Sherr begins Tall Blondes this way: "To understand this book, you should know something about me. First, I stand five feet eight inches and have (mostly) blond hair. Second, that I went to Africa for the first time in 1973 and fell in love. With giraffes."



**Anna Spalding**

I could have written that with just a couple changes: I am five feet nine inches tall and went to Africa in 2003. Oh, that thing about blond hair—mine is now the work of my hairdresser. Ask anyone who really knows me and they'll attest to my extreme fondness for those gawky, graceful giants. The large landscaping giraffe that peaks over the reading nook on our deck speaks of that fondness.

In July 2003 Marianne Darr-Norman (a former writer of this column) and I flew to South Africa for three weeks, primarily to offer teachers strategies for teaching young writers. It would have been a crime to travel that far without spending some time exploring the country, so we began our sojourn with three days in Kruger National Park. With Pierre, our driver and guide, we saw large prides of lions, rhinoceroses, warthogs, a serval, elephants of all ages, birds of all colors. None of them compared to the "tall blonde" that seemed to float out of the winter foliage to check us out, large eyes staring from under long black, curled eyelashes. It was, for me, love at first sight. Granted, I had seen giraffes in zoos. None compared to the image of this single giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardis*—its scientific name, hinting at its camel-like appearance in a leopard's hide) in its natural habitat, stretching its bluish-purple tongue to strip tender leaves from a thorny acacia tree.



Since that time I have read several books—fiction and nonfiction—and articles about giraffes. I've collected a tower (the collective name for a group) of giraffes in wood, plastic, and glass. I have a shelf of children's books about giraffes and a wall of giraffe images in our study. Two favorite pictures are the one painted by a giraffe (Ozzie at Lion Habitat Ranch, NV) and the other a colorful chalk rendering of a giraffe done by a talented young artist who lives in Ossian (thanks again, Elias).

The giraffe is a fascinating creature. Just as all human fingerprints are distinct, so are the pat-

terns on the coats of all giraffes. No two are the same. The giraffe, of which there are four species and up to nine subspecies, is the tallest mammal in the world (14 to over 18 feet tall); newborns are taller than most humans. Speaking of newborns, their arrival on this planet is startling as females give birth standing up. Mother Earth provides the stimulus to get them breathing as they plummet about 6 feet to the ground. Within an hour they rise to walk on spindly legs.

Giraffes and humans share the same number of vertebral bones in the neck. Though our neck may be even shorter than one of their smaller neck bones, we both have just seven (as do most mammals). As long as it is, the giraffe's neck is still too short to reach a watering hole. To drink, the giraffe must play its forelegs and/or bend its knees to lower its head. In this position, giraffes are most susceptible to attack by predators (lions, leopards, hyenas) who frequent the same watering holes.

With a head 7 to 10 feet higher than its heart, the giraffe requires a unique circulatory system. The need for a specialized system is even more apparent when it bends down, in some cases nearly 20 feet, to drink. Consider the feeling you get when from a downward

facing position you rise rapidly. Dare I say "dizzy" or "whozy"? Imagine the giraffe's dilemma.

I'll try not to get too technical, but this is too fascinating to let it go unexplained. The giraffe's heart, two feet long and weighing twenty-five pounds with walls several inches thick, creates the highest known blood pressure in any mammal, 280/180. That heart beats normally at 170 bpm. The elastic walls of very long carotid arteries force blood to the head. Those walls then swell to absorb excess fluid when the head is lowered. In addition, the more than inch-wide jugular veins have a series of one-way valves that prevent back flow when the head is down. And when the giraffe snaps its head up after a satisfying drink or when danger is detected, its massive heart keeps the blood flow constant. (Sherr, *Tall Blondes*)

Below the heart, the problem is reversed. Just know that its circulatory plumbing is adapted so that blood doesn't accumulate at the base of the legs, creating swollen ankles. Muscles and skin that fits tightly on its body acting like compression hose (you know what I'm talking about) provide the squeezing necessary to send blood back to the heart. Sherr shared that NASA has even studied the amazing circulatory system of giraffes to design a space suit for prolonged travel.

If you wish to learn more about these captivating creatures, check

out the Giraffe Conservation Foundation (GCF). Give your kids or grandkids an assignment to visit the site and share what they learn with you.

**Here's the Thing:** As fascinating as they are, giraffes may not be around long enough for others to develop that love I have for them. A recent article in *Smithsonian* states that a 40 percent decline of the four giraffe species has occurred since 1985. Alex Fox, article author, reports the Nubian giraffe, a subspecies, has lost 95 percent of its population, down to around 3,000 in South Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Kenya. Destruction of huge areas of savanna by rapidly expanding agriculture and growing human communities has eliminated trees and shrubs that provide sustenance for the long-legged ruminants.

Lynn Sherr ends her informative and well-written book this way, "Of what use is a giraffe? I just like knowing it exists. Sure, I'm biased, but I can't imagine a world without tall blondes."

Let's talk.  
annaspalding1956@gmail.com

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

## Jefferson Homemakers hold January meeting

Mary Ann Ripperger opened the meeting by thanking Judy Schindler for helping host the January meeting.

Thought of the month: The Eskimo has 52 names for snow because it is important to him; there ought to be as many for love.

The inspiration was given by Judy Schindler entitled, "Use Your Talents" taken from the Bible reminding us that each person has a special talent and we should use it, and as Ben Franklin once said, for each one it varies.

The pledge to the American Flag and the Homemakers Creed were recited.

Roll call was answered by nine people responding to "What will the new year mean to you?"

Mary Ann gave a variety of traditions which several countries use as taken from the Almanac from making resolutions to ringing Church Bells.

In the absence of Sharon Jump, Mary Ann talked

about the study on plastic water bottles. It has not been proven they are all contaminated.

The secretary's minutes from the November meeting were read and approved.

Margie Huss, treasurer, gave the treasurer's report and it was accepted.

The club collection was taken by each person giving 35 cents for the letters in new year and the Coins for Friendship/Nickels for Leadership was collected.

January birthdays were mentioned: Sharon Friend on Jan. 17, Jean Reef on Jan. 26; and Judy Kaehr on Jan. 29, and Jean Reef will be celebrating her anniversary on Jan. 21.

Mary Ann read a cute little poem on "Walking with Grandma" as a small child would relate walking slow, looking at the scenery.

The Cultural Arts mentioned were the upcoming Norwell fish fry on Jan. 12 and the chicken dinner at Norwell on Friday, Jan. 26 with each dinner being \$15.

Mary Ann thanked Mar-

gie Huss and Judy Schindler for helping with the set up for the holiday luncheon.

Those that wanted to have a Secret Pal drew names and then also signed a paper letting Mary Ann know who you drew so there would not be any mix up.

The backpack program received a nice grant from Vealora that will help with the increase in number of bags being prepared as well as the cost of food to fill them. At the February meeting we are to bring a can of fruit or a package of individual fruit servings and a small or medium box of cereal.

Mary Ann received a print-out of current information for the new County Homemakers Booklet and asked each person to check their information.

As the weather is predicted to be severely cold, a work day at Carol Baker's in February has been moved to April with possibly combining the April meeting with the work day.

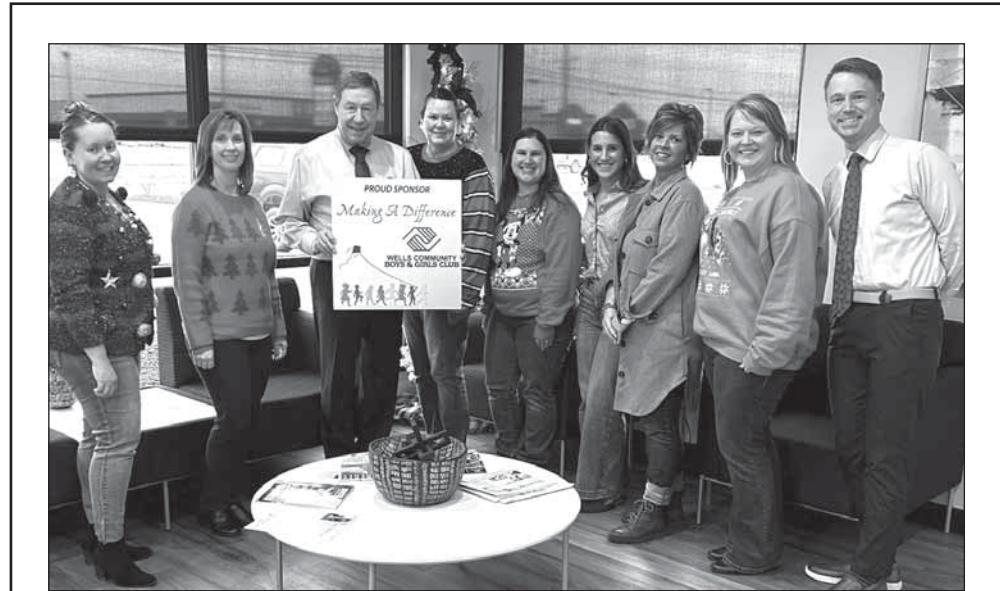
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**The Iron Claw**  
Friday, January 19th 6p & 8:50p  
Saturday, January 20th 2:45p, 5:45p, & 8:45p  
Sunday, January 21st 2p & 5p

**Mean Girls**  
Thursday, January 18th 6:20pm  
Friday, January 19th 6:20p & 9p  
Saturday, January 20th 3:30p, 6p, & 8:30p  
Sunday, January 21st 2:20p & 4:50p

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### 'Making a Difference' sponsor

Dale, Huffman & Babcock Lawyers are among the sponsors for the Wells Community Boys & Girls Club "Making Difference" fund-raising event on Jan. 22 at the club in Bluffton. Left to right are Bridgette Ewart, Cindy Rhoads, Keith Huffman, Dawn Miller, Deedra Bercot, Ella King, Shelly Scott, April McElhaney and Michael Huffman. (Photo provided)

### Community Harvest Farm Wagon

The Community Harvest Farm Wagon visits Life Community Church every Tuesday at 9 a.m. to give FREE fresh food to needy families. The church address is 428 S. Oak St. in Bluffton. Enter the parking lot at the south entrance off of Oak Street and park facing North.

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

- MR. KOOL** Heating and Cooling: mrkoolheatingandair.com
- DAZE'S SUPPLY**: dazeys.com/bluffton-in
- WELLS COUNTY 4-H** GROWS HERE: extension.purdue.edu/wells
- JC'S GARAGE DOOR** SALES & SERVICE: jcsgaragedoor.com
- Daniel's** JEWELERS: daniels-jewelers.net
- ABOVE & BEYOND** Vehicle Reconditioning: abovebeyondrecon.com
- Goodwin Cole & Hornish MEMORIAL CHAPEL** A Tradition of Caring: thegmfamily.com
- 3 RIVERS**: 3riversfcu.org
- Myers** FUNERAL HOMES: myersfuneralhomes.com
- KELLY'S** COLLISION CENTER, INC. 820 W. Washington Street, Bluffton: kellysautocollision.com
- FISHER'S** GARAGE DOORS: fishersgaragedoors.com
- RiverStone** DENTAL: riverstonedental.net
- Bluffton Tire**: blufftontire.com
- MOSER & SON** Heating, Cooling & Air Conditioning: moserandsonheatingandair.com
- INNOVATIVE CONCEPTS** AUDIO VIDEO SECURITY NETWORKING: icav.us
- HIDAY** AUTOMOTIVE GROUP: hidaymotors.com
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- State Farm** Erin Daugherty: 260.827.0527 www.MyEdututor31Agent.com myblufftonsfagent.com
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- LaFontaine Center** ARHF Community: lafontainecenter.org
- HomeCourt** HOME CARE: homecourthomecare.com
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Finding love later in life

Dear Annie: How do I deal with passive-aggressive siblings? When we are together, it can be all laughter and giggles, and the next minute all I hear are snarky comments.

now 58 years old. Is it too late for me? Some people say it is a choice, but I have not found anyone interesting, and during Covid I have been isolated.

Dear Annie by Annie Lane



I want a social life, but I don't know how to get myself out there. I was wondering how to get myself back out after so much time isolating myself? — Isolated Friend

Dear Isolated Friend: It's never too late to find love. But love is not just going to come to your doorstep; you have to go out there to find it.

As Nike says: just do it! And put yourself out there.

Best of luck to you.

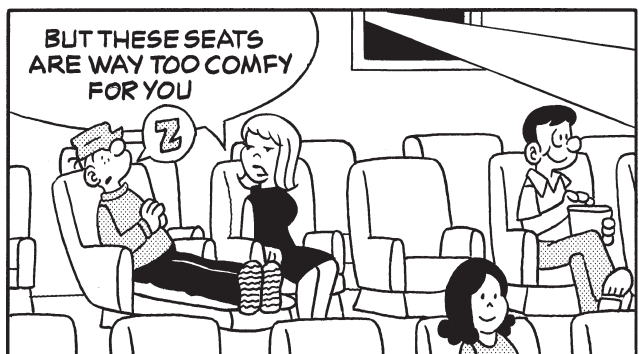
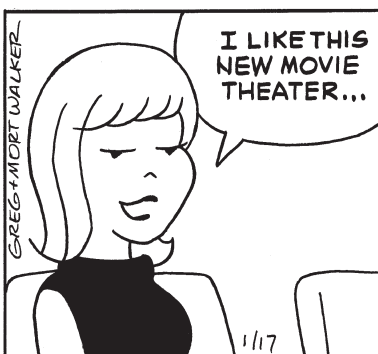
"How Can I Forgive My Cheating Partner?" is out now! Annie Lane's second anthology — featuring favorite columns on marriage, infidelity, communication and reconciliation — is available as a paperback and e-book.

How do I reconnect with my siblings? — Torn

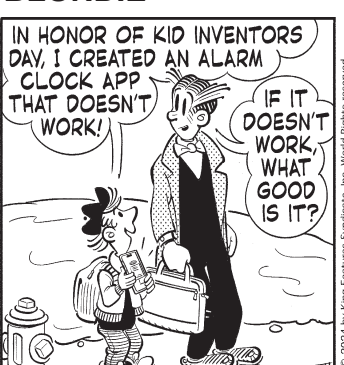
Dear Torn: Now that you know the pattern of their behavior, you know what to expect. When you are having good times with your siblings, focus on feeling grateful for the good times.

Dear Annie: I have always wanted to meet a man and be married. I am

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My Answer



By Dr. Billy Graham

Set aside pride as the center of life

Q: I've been very proud of my career and accomplishments, but I was unprepared for financial reversals I've faced since the pandemic and have lost my job — my identity.

but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6, ESV). Pride comes from looking only at ourselves; meekness comes through looking at God.

When people run into difficulty, many times they turn to God. But everyone — everyone — needs God. Better to turn to Him than not at all!

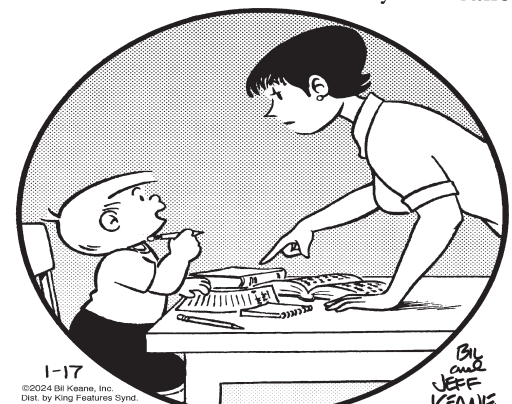
In our willful desire to live independently of God, we have severed the lifeline that flows from the source of life. Encountering a difficult turnaround could be the best time of life.

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

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THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane



"Very good, Mommy! You must have gotten all A's when you were in second grade."

The LOCKHORNS



"I'll bet this is the snow shovel Sisyphus used."

Table with columns for date, channel, and program listings for various networks including WINM, CBS, ABC, NBC, FOX, etc.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words, including 'Opposite of "sans" birds', 'Flightless birds', 'Shark Tank', etc.

Table with columns 1-11 and rows 1-11 for crossword puzzle solutions.

# Paxson, Needler lead Raiders to 1st ACAC win in 4 years

**By RYAN WALKER**  
**PONETO** — Southern Wells' first lead was the only one it needed to escape Heritage 36-35 with 15 seconds remaining in the fourth quarter Tuesday night.

Collena Reeves hit the first of her two free throws with the Raiders down by one with 17.6 seconds to go. The second attempt clunked off the front of the iron, but Ashlie Needler swooped in for an offensive rebound and put in an easy bunny to gain the team's only lead of the game and eventually win it.

That bucket clinched Southern Wells' first victory in the Allen County Athletic Conference since the 2019-20 season when they beat Bluffton by four.

The Raiders (5-13, 1-3 ACAC) overcame a deficit as large of 12 late in the second quarter before Needler helped trim the margin down to eight at halftime.

Slowly but surely they got it to one possession after Kyah Thomas swished a jumper from the right side of the free-throw line and Kenzie Paxson scored in the paint.

The Raiders kept within striking distance, but never got ahold of the lead. They were down by two with 23 seconds to go and Patriots' (1-16, 0-4 ACAC) freshman Trinitee Brown was fouled in a late-game desperation spot and a chance at the line to ice the game. Brown missed both and handed the Raiders the ball back down one possession.

Reeves, who did not have a point until stepping to the line in the big moment, nailed the first free throw that set up Needler's game-winner.

On Heritage's next and final possession, Grace Guenther was fouled taking a shot with 2.3 seconds on the clock. The first was no good, and Raiders' head coach Jessica Killingbeck blew a full timeout to ice the senior forward. It worked, missing both freebies again.

The rebound attempt was tipped out of bounds and a final opportunity for the Patriots in a time crunch. The inbounds pass was about 10 feet from the right baseline side of the basket back to Guenther being heavily guarded and never stood a chance to attempt a shot.

Despite trailing the entire game, the last two possessions to take and hold the lead were enough to squeak past Heritage.

"I'm just super proud of them," Killingbeck said after the game. "That's the toughness that our coaching staff has been waiting for all year long. That last three minutes really showed the grit that these kids can have. They didn't panic. They took exactly what we were trying to execute offensively and defensively. I'm just super proud, and it feels good to get that monkey off your back of not winning conference games for so long."

Southern Wells could not have done it without its two forwards.

Paxson and Needler accounted for all but one of the team's made field goals and both hit the double-double mark before the fourth quarter. Paxson finished with a game-high 16 points on a perfect 8-8 shooting and 12 rebounds. Needler had 15 points and added 12 rebounds.

The two single-handedly kept Heritage off the boards and Southern Wells on the scoreboard.

"Kenzie and Ashlie feed off of each other, so when Ashlie scores, Kenzie's pumped. When Kenzie scores, Ashlie's pumped," Killingbeck said. "That kind of energy motivates the rest of the team. Those two played really, really well with each other tonight, and it's the post-game that we've been trying to get all year."

Killingbeck gave a lot of credit to Paxson and her guards. She shared that Paxson has been frustrated with finishing around the rim, and has been working hard all season to fix it.

Her 100 percent rate from the floor was also attributed to guard play, who is also working on feeding Paxson and Needler in the post. She noted Erika Beavans as playing well on both ends of the floor, along with Collena Reeves for their efforts.

"We've been talking about getting that ball dragged down to the corners so we can get a good entry look, and I thought our guards did a better job of trying to get the ball in the post tonight and getting better angles," Killingbeck said.

The Raiders clearly have an edge with their forward play and scoring in the paint, and perhaps this was the best example this season of it.

Southern Wells will visit Jay County starting at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 20.



Kenzie Paxson (left) and Ashlie Needler shout for joy after stuffing Heritage in the final possession, securing Southern Wells' first win in the ACAC in four years Tuesday night at The Raider Dome. The two led the team with double-doubles and accounted for all but one of the Raiders' 16 baskets. (Photos by Ryan Walker)



Southern Wells guard Erika Beavans (right) stares down and locks up Patriots' Trinitee Brown. Beavans, a freshman, got props from head coach Jessica Killingbeck for her game against the Patriots on both offense and defense.

sports@news-banner.com

<b>SOUTHERN WELLS 36,</b> <b>HERITAGE 35</b> At Southern Wells	<b>HERITAGE (1-15):</b> Danica Fuller 3-8 2-2 9, Grace Guenther 3-9 2-6 8, Natalie Otte 3-10 0-0 7, Kaydence Wallace 2-8 0-0 5, Trinitee Brown 1-5 0-2 3, Olivia Lybarger 0-4 0-0 0, Audra Bickel 0-0 0-0 0. <b>TOTALS:</b> 12-44 4-10 35.
<b>SOUTHERN WELLS (5-13):</b> Kenzie Paxson 8-8 0-1 16, Ashlie Needler 7-18 1-4 15, Kyah Thomas 1-6 0-0 2, Collena Reeves 0-3 1-2 1, Gracie Reeves 0-1 0-2 0, Erika Beavans 0-3 0-2 0, Kaylea Coffel 0-1 0-0 0, Aubrey Meyer 0-1 0-0 0. <b>TOTALS:</b> 16-41 2-11 36.	<b>Heritage 16 9 6 6 — 35</b> <b>So. Wells 6 11 10 9 — 36</b> Three-point FG: Heritage: 4-15 (Wallace 1-3, Brown 1-4, Fuller 1-4, Otte 1-1, Lybarger 0-3), Southern Wells Rebounds: Heritage: 27 (Fuller 7, Guenther 4, Wallace 4, Otte 4, Brown 3, Lybarger 3, Bickel 1), Southern Wells 32 (Needler 12, Paxson 11, C. Reeves 3, Thomas 2, Beavans 2, G. Reeve) Turnovers: Heritage: 15, Southern Wells 20. Fouls: Heritage: 12, Southern Wells 13. Fouled Out: None. Technicals: None. JV: No JV game.

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## High School Calendar

<b>WEDNESDAY, JAN 17</b> <b>WRESTLING:</b> Norwell at South Adams, 6:30 p.m. <b>THURSDAY, JAN 18</b> <b>GIRLS BASKETBALL:</b> Eastbrook at Bluffton, 7:30 p.m. <b>SWIMMING &amp; DIVING (CO-ED):</b> Oak Hill at Norwell, 5:30 p.m.; Wayne at Bluffton, 5:30 p.m. <b>FRIDAY, JAN 19</b> <b>BOYS BASKETBALL:</b> Bluffton at Adams Central, 7:30 p.m. <b>GIRLS BASKETBALL:</b> Norwell at New Haven, 6 p.m. (no JV)	<b>SWIMMING &amp; DIVING (CO-ED):</b> ACAC Swim/Dive Invitational, 5:30 p.m. <b>WRESTLING:</b> Bluffton, Southern Wells at ACAC Tournament (at Bluffton), 6 p.m. <b>SATURDAY, JAN 20</b> <b>BOYS BASKETBALL:</b> New Haven at Norwell, 7:45 p.m. <b>GIRLS BASKETBALL:</b> Bluffton at Heritage, 7:30 p.m.; Southern Wells at Jay County, 7:30 p.m. <b>SWIMMING &amp; DIVING (CO-ED):</b> NE8 Meet at Norwell, 10 a.m. <b>WRESTLING:</b> Norwell at NE8 Meet at	Huntington North, 9 a.m. <b>MONDAY, JAN 22</b> No events scheduled. <b>TUESDAY, JAN 23</b> <b>BOYS BASKETBALL:</b> Bishop Luers at Norwell, 7:45 p.m.; Muncie Burris at Southern Wells, 7:30 p.m. <b>GIRLS BASKETBALL:</b> Southern Wells at Southwood, 7:30 p.m. <b>SWIMMING &amp; DIVING (CO-ED):</b> Norwell at Delta, 6 p.m. <b>WEDNESDAY, JAN 24</b> <b>GIRLS BASKETBALL:</b> Cowan at Southern Wells, 7:30 p.m.
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# Zach Edey comes up big again and leads No. 2 Purdue past rival Indiana

**By MICHAEL MAROT**  
**AP Sports Writer**  
**BLOOMINGTON, Ind.** (AP) — Purdue center Zach Edey arrived at Indiana determined to leave a lasting impact Tuesday night.

Then he showed everyone why he is the reigning national player of the year.

The 7-foot-4 senior drew fouls, made shots and even chased loose balls, finishing with 33 points and 14 rebounds while leading the second-ranked Boilermakers to an 87-66 rout over the rival Hoosiers.

"This was my last chance to get a win here," Edey said before handing Indiana its worst loss at Assembly Hall in this series.

Edey did it all, nearly single-handedly getting Indiana's big men into early foul trouble. He was 11 of 23 from the field and 11 for 12 at the free throw line. He dove for a loose ball, and his shot-blocking presence had the Hoosiers out of sync. It was his second straight 30-point double-double since Purdue's loss last week at Nebraska.

Thanks largely to Edey, the Boilermakers (16-2, 5-2 Big Ten) got their first win at Assembly Hall in three seasons and erased, for a moment, the bitterness of getting swept by Indiana last season. Fletcher Loyer scored 19 points and Lance Jones added 17 for Purdue,

but Edey was the catalyst.

"He causes a lot of attention, and you see when he goes 1-on-1, he's going to draw some fouls," Purdue coach Matt Painter said after securing his 214th career conference win to tie former Illinois coach Lou Henson for No. 5 in Big Ten history. "It's difficult to see someone at 7-4, 300 pounds that plays hard every single point. It just kind of shows you who he is."

The Hoosiers (12-6, 4-3) didn't like what they saw. Trey Galloway scored 17 points and Mackenzie Mgbakco had 15, but Indiana trailed for the final 37 minutes — most of that time by double digits after falling

into an early 25-13 hole and a 51-29 deficit at halftime.

Indiana charged back by opening the second half on a 20-7 spurt and cutting the margin to 60-51 with about 13 minutes left. But then Purdue answered with five straight points, the final two coming on Edey's free throws, and Indiana never got close again.

"I can't sit here and complain about the officiating. It's what it is. We couldn't get to Edey quick enough," Hoosiers coach Mike Woodson said. "I've got to get my two big guys a little tougher. I didn't think we played tough enough, and Edey kind of had his way."

## News-Banner Scoreboard

<b>FOOTBALL</b> <b>NFL</b> <b>Wild-card Playoffs</b> <b>Monday, Jan. 15</b> Buffalo 31, Pittsburgh 17 Tampa Bay 32, Philadelphia 9 <b>Divisional Playoffs</b> <b>Saturday, Jan. 20</b> Houston at Baltimore, 4:30 p.m. (ESPN/ABC) Green Bay at San Francisco, 8 p.m. (FOX) <b>Sunday, Jan. 21</b>	Tampa Bay at Detroit, 3 p.m. (NBC/Peach) Kansas City at Buffalo, 6:30 p.m. (CBS/Parmount)	<b>BASKETBALL</b> <b>High School</b> <b>Tuesday Boys' Scores</b> Columbia City 68, Homestead 49 Daleville 66, Eastbrook 62 DeKalb 49, Angola 40 Ft. Wayne Luers 69, Jay Co. 60 Greenfield 72, Indpls Shortridge 43	Indpls Ben Davis 64, Decatur Central 48 Jimtown 47, Goshen 38 Merrillville 60, Crown Point 57 Mishawaka Marian 35, Culver Academy 24 New Palestine 64, Richmond 59 W. Washington 66, Medora 35 Wabash 44, Mississinewa 51 Warren Central 57, Zionville 43 Westview 61, Hamilton 17	<b>Tuesday Girls' Scores</b> Angola 65, Westview 36 Churubusco 55, Lakeland 48	E. Noble 68, Prairie Heights 24 Eastern (Pekin) 57, Clarksville 30 Eastside 58, W. Noble 52 Fishers 44, Carmel 37 Ft. Recovery, Ohio 52, S. Adams 46 Ft. Wayne Blackhawk 56, Ft. Wayne Concordia 51 Ft. Wayne Luers 78, Ft. Wayne North 30 Henryville 45, Christian Academy 31 Lawrence North 69, Hamilton Southeastern 65 Southern Wells 36, Heritage 35 Valparaiso 67, Twin Lakes 51 Warsaw 69, Homestead 48
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