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TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2024 BLUFFTON, INDIANA • Wells County's Hometown Connection \$1.00

Health Board to hold special session Wednesday

Decision expected regarding health officer's removal

By HOLLY GASKILL
A special meeting of the Wells County Health Board has been scheduled for the evening of Wednesday, Jan. 24. The special session is scheduled for 6 p.m. or directly following an executive session scheduled for 5 p.m. The stated purposes of

the executive session are litigation and discussions of classified records and employees' job performances. The special session is open to the public, but executive session is not. The only item on the special meeting agenda is the consideration of the removal of Dr. Kay

Johnson, health officer for the Wells County Health Department. Their prospective decision follows a 4.5-hour hearing on the matter Jan. 10. At the time, Chris Esterling, president of the board, and Steve Bales, board member, argued that Johnson had been an absent

department leader during ongoing understaffing, among other issues. Since April 2023, the department has had turnover in three of four full-time positions and one part-time position. Johnson and her legal counsel, Martha Lemert, countered that there had never been expectations for a more directive health officer, nor had that been communicated

since she had first assumed the role in 2010. She was most recently re-appointed to a four-year term in 2022. In response, several board members questioned the necessity of telling the health officer to assume responsibility when full-time leadership resigns. "You are not a neophyte (novice) ..." (Continued on Page 2)



From left to right, Heath Gentis, Eric Kiefer, Bruce Griewank and Rick Johnloz showcase some items up for bid in the auction, including a dog bed, a Milwaukee pack out toolbox and a Terry Redlin painting. (Photo by Jonathan Snyder)

Wells County gets local wildlife preservation chapter

By JONATHAN SNYDER

A new Quail Forever chapter has been started with the goal of planting different wildlife habitats in Wells and other nearby counties. The chapter members — Rick Johnloz, Heath Gentis, Eric Kiefer and Bruce Griewank — started this conservation effort because the wildlife areas they grew up seeing and enjoying are diminishing. Their mission is to purchase equipment needed to plant habitats for all animals, not just quail and pheasants, so that more of nature's beauty can shine.

The founding members wanted to benefit their local habitats in Adams, Wells, Jay, Blackford and Grant counties. They chose

to work with the Quail Forever organization because it allows over 90 percent of funds to be used directly for local projects. The chapter promises to work with local land and farm owners to purchase areas that are not showing significant profit for their owners. They will be interacting with yield maps to find areas that the landowners would be willing to part with. While the Quail Forever national website promotes hunting and conservation efforts, Kiefer mentioned that this chapter will focus on nature restoration, not quail hunting. The first annual banquet is scheduled for 4:30 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 27 at the Wells County 4-H Community Center. Many items (Continued on Page 2)

Assessed value boom drives jump in maximum levy appeals

Indiana's local units of governments increasingly seek reviews that could mean more funding

By LESLIE BONILLA MUÑIZ
Indiana Capital Chronicle
As Hoosier communities tally up ever-rising property values, they're increasingly eligible to ask the state to double-check their predetermined tax limits. And they're taking advantage, citing growing funding pressures on the services they provide. "New population growth creates more need for new construction such as roads, bridges and drainage, or more services such as police patrols, courts and election precincts," said David Bottorff, the executive director of the Associa-

tion of Indiana Counties. A statewide formula, he said, is designed to account for inflation-related revenue growth, not "unusually high" growth. Indiana restricts how much money local units of government can collect in property taxes. The Indiana Department of Local Government Finance calculates a maximum levy for every unit annually. Units set property tax rates that they think will come in under their maximums. But they also have an out: a list of reasons they can use to appeal. That includes annexation, consoli-

dation, error correction, emergency, service extension, shortfall and three-year assessed value growth above a minimum. Dozens of local taxing units — from libraries and townships to cities and counties — submitted 95 requests to review their maximum levies last year, according to DLGF records. About 80 percent were based on a three-year growth in assessed value. Clarksville Clerk-Treasurer Aaron Stonecipher called Indiana's property tax restrictions — like the maximum levy and the circuit-breaker property tax caps enshrined in the state's constitution — a "great deal for the taxpayer" but a continued "challenge"

for municipalities making do. The number of petitions was up 11 requests from 2022 and was more than three times the number of requests made in 2019. DLGF approved maximum levy boosts worth \$40 million across 84 partially or fully granted requests. That means taxpayers in those areas are on the hook for more. The agency denied an additional 11 appeals worth \$10 million. But even those who failed say they'll try again. **More people, more work** As fast-growing Hoosier communities add more buildings, their net assessed values rise too. Carmel Mayor Sue Finkam said via email that "natural growth"

leads to increased demand for public services. Hancock County Auditor Debra Carnes said growth in the county's northwestern area meant more emergency calls, straining the fire and sheriff departments. Carnes said the county council wanted to "capitalize on some more of that revenue to be able to assist with our public safety." Local fiscal bodies must approve the appeal submission to DLGF. Bottorff, from the Association of Indiana Counties, noted that assessed value growth doesn't always translate into more tax revenue. "More (assessed value) lowers (Continued on Page 2)

U.S., British launch new round of joint strikes against Houthi

By LOLITA C. BALDOR and TARA COPP
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. and British militaries bombed multiple targets in eight locations used by the Iranian-backed Houthis in Yemen on Monday night, the second time the two allies have conducted coordinated retaliatory strikes on an array of the rebels' missile-launching capabilities. According to officials, the U.S. and U.K. used warship- and submarine-launched Tomahawk missiles and fighter jets to take out Houthi missile storage sites, drones and launchers. The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss a military operation, said Australia, Bahrain, Canada and the Netherlands contributed to the mission, including with intelligence and surveillance. In a joint statement, the six allied nations said the strikes specifically targeted a Houthi underground storage site and locations associated with the Houthis' missile and air surveillance capabilities. They added, "Our aim remains to de-escalate tensions and restore stability in the Red Sea, but let us reiterate our warning to Houthi leadership: we will

not hesitate to defend lives and the free flow of commerce in one of the world's most critical waterways in the face of continued threats." Britain's Ministry of Defense confirmed that four Royal Air Force Typhoon jets struck "multiple targets at two military sites in the vicinity of Sanaa airfield" with precision-guided bombs. The strikes, said Defense Secretary Grant Shapps, were "aimed at degrading Houthi capabilities" and would "deal another blow to their limited stockpiles and ability to threaten global trade." One senior U.S. military official told reporters the strikes dropped between 25 and 30 munitions and hit multiple targets in each location, adding that the U.S. "observed good impacts and effects" at all sites, including the destruction of more advanced weapons in the underground storage facility. The official said this is the first time such advanced weapons were targeted. The official also said fighter jets from the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower aircraft carrier conducted strikes, and other ships involved included the USS Gravelly and USS Mason, (Continued on Page 2)

Families of hostages storm Israel's parliament meeting

Demand deal for release

By MELANIE LIDMAN and WAFAA SHURAFRA
Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Dozens of family members of hostages held by Hamas stormed a committee meeting in Israel's parliament Monday, demanding a deal to win their loved ones' release, as European foreign ministers joined growing international calls for Israel to negotiate on the creation of a Palestinian state after the war. The developments showed the increasing pressure on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has dug in on both fronts. He has insisted to the Israeli public that pursuing the devastating offensive in Gaza is the only way to bring the hostages home. At the same time, he has rejected the United States' vision for a postwar resolution, saying he will never allow a Palestinian state. The dispute over Gaza's future pits

Israel against its top ally and much of the international community. It also poses a major obstacle to plans for postwar governance or reconstruction of the coastal territory, large parts of which have been left unlivable by Israeli bombardment. As fears grow that Israel's war in Gaza will spark a wider regional conflict, the U.S. and British militaries bombed eight locations in Yemen used by the Houthi rebels. It's the eighth time the U.S. has bombed Houthi sites since Jan. 12, U.S. officials said late Monday, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss a military operation. The Iranian-backed Houthis have attacked shipping in the region's waterways, saying they aim to end the Israeli offensive in the Gaza Strip. In southern Gaza, Israeli strikes and shelling intensified in and around the city of Khan Younis, sending Palestinian families fleeing south in pickup trucks and donkey carts loaded with possessions. (Continued on Page 2)

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Outside

Weather only a polar bear could like

Today	Wed.	Thursday
High 37	High 46	High 52
Low 35	Low 42	Low 38

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Health Board special session

(Continued from Page 1)

how could you see problems that were developing and not become a more active participant?" asked board member Dr. Mary Donley.

Johnson said she would be willing to take the board's directives for leadership but had not been given a chance. Johnson stated,

"Because after (over) 10 years in this job, and never having had an unfavorable evaluation, suddenly I get hit with, 'You're not doing this,' and 'You're not doing that' and 'This is a failure of this or that or whatever.' ... I seriously doubt that the performances of health officers over 100 years (in Wells County) were all

perfect and that when there were problems, there were solutions other than the public humiliation of the health officer."

Indiana Code 16-20-1-28 permits a health officer's removal for failure to perform statutory duties, failure to enforce state rules and "other good cause." The Health Board unani-

mously voted to initiate removal in a special session on Dec. 6.

Other board members are Molly Hoag, Ann McNabb, Dr. Bartholomew Hott and Tamara Troutt. Hott and Troutt's terms began in 2024, filling a vacancy and replacing former board member Tom Longenberger.

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Wildlife preservation

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have been donated for the banquet by local businesses and individuals. Fishing trips, beef, outdoor gear, ladies items, guns, a Terry Redlin painting and other Quail Forever items will be raffled and auctioned at the event.

The initial goal for the chapter is to purchase a no-till drill for habitat plantings in the area, which is estimated at \$42,000. This drill will allow the group to plant small seeds like grass and clo-

ver to help jumpstart habitat growth.

In exchange for renting out the expo hall, the chapter will purchase physical assets like new chicken cages for 4-H to use.

As the chapter is still getting off the ground, they are looking to add new events to their calendar. Kiefer stated that the next event will be more youth oriented, but the date for it is unknown.

Johnloz, in a release to The News-Banner, stated that the initial banquet

and fund raising has already secured matching funds of up to \$20,000 from Lightsource Solar and Paddlefish Solar projects. Many other local businesses have also pitched in with sponsorships to secure the matching funds.

Kiefer mentioned that the chapter is still looking for various donated items for their banquet auction. Contact chapter Kiefer, the chapter president, at 260-273-1643, with inquiries.

jonathan@news-banner.com

Assessed value boom

(Continued from Page 1)

the tax rate and the county receives the same growth quotient as a unit that does not have higher than normal growth," Bottorff said.

To qualify for the three-year assessed value growth appeal, the growth must exceed a statewide average growth quotient by at least 2 percent.

"The number of appeals has grown largely based on the general assessed value growth throughout the state, which means more local units of government would be mathematically eligible," DLGF spokeswoman Jenny Banks told the Capital Chronicle over email.

When units submit their petitions, they need to back it up.

Clarksville's Stonecipher said the town "had the data to justify the growth and need."

DLGF approved about \$730,000 — nearly all of the town's request.

Stonecipher, who came into office this month, said that if the town has a "strong argument" during the next filing cycle, he'd pursue another appeal.

When high inflation collides with the state's levy growth quotient and tax caps, he said, "We just can't rely on property taxes anymore to fund public services."

'We'll make it'
Not all communities got approvals back.

DLGF's Banks said appeals were denied for a variety of reasons: pursuing the wrong appeal category, not meeting the statutory requirements for an appeal type, and so on.

Hancock County had the second-highest denial, at about \$900,000. It was made on the basis of three-year assessed value growth.

Auditor Carnes said that meant the county would have to draw more from its general fund to add more public safety officers or pull more from a tax increment financing district to help out one of its townships.

"We do have to have a healthy budget but we never know what the economy's

going to bring," Carnes said. "So you want to make sure that you're covered."

The county was told it didn't provide enough evidence for its appeal, according to Carnes. She expected the council to try again in the future, but said the county would double down on documenting its additional fire and police runs and other side effects of growth.

That township, Buck Creek, won approvals of \$5,000 and \$280,000 for its fire services based on assessed value growth, but a denial of \$500,000 based on service extension.

Trustee Micki Simunek said the majority of her township is "TIF'ed" and that there are "lots of other things tugging on the TIF money."

TIF districts are established to pay for development using the future increase in property taxes that same development is expected to generate. But entities that would normally benefit from increasing tax revenue receive the same base amount for the life of the district.

"All of our farm fields are now full of buildings. And all of these buildings are full of things and people," Simunek said, noting that the fire services required have changed accordingly.

The township has gained about 20 million square feet of building space in four years, according to Simunek, including one of the largest Walmart fulfillment centers in the nation. For a township with two-dozen firefighters, it's a stretch.

"In any given 24-hour period, not including some (civilian medic) part-timers, we have ... eight firefighters (on duty) in the entire township for all these buildings," Simunek said. "It's not safe for our firefighters. You can't roll up to an open-space fire with eight people."

But the township's reasoning didn't quite match up with the requirements for a service extension appeal.

Instead, according to Simunek, the township plans to bring on six firefighters using funds from a variety

of sources. But long-term financial planning is a priority: "I'm not going to hire six people and then have to lay them off next year," Simunek said.

The city of Carmel heard the priciest denial: \$8 million for an emergency-based appeal. It was also granted just \$225,000 of a nearly \$10 million shortfall request.

Mayor Finkam said that decision took the city's tax rate from 0.7877 in 2023 down to 0.7783 in 2024. But she said that wouldn't lead the city to ask for a property tax rate increase.

Finkam said she was happy that state officials hadn't "questioned whether the City is spending efficiently and wisely," adding, "On balance, we were not disappointed with the results of their review."

She indicated that if Carmel continues to experience high assessed value growth, the city would "probably follow the same policy" next year in petitioning DLGF.

Longtime Covington Mayor Brad Crain said his city of under 3,000 people has recently added or is adding about 160 houses across three subdivisions. An appeal of \$85,000 was intended to cover sanitation and police, and — in particular — finance some part-time firefighters for a department that's currently all volunteer.

"I wasn't really counting on (the appeal), you know?" Crain said. "We'll get by, but I think sometimes, (state officials) don't know what's going on out here in rural Indiana."

He said Covington would promote its volunteer fire department more and "make do" with the police officers it already has.

"We'll make it," he said. "You know, we'll be okay."

'I'd balk at it too'

Three-year assessed value growth drove the bulk of the requests, but not all.

The city of Hobart in Lake County earned the second-largest approval from DLGF: more than \$3 million for a shortfall following a court battle.

In 2021, a Hobart shop-

ping mall won a unanimous decision from the Indiana Supreme Court overturning a higher assessed value — about \$240 million — in favor of an earlier 2010 assessment of just \$110 million.

That left all the taxing units hosting the mall on the hook for millions of dollars of back pay from tax year 2011 through 2014. Hobart's share alone was more than \$17 million plus the interest owed to the mall, according to Clerk-Treasurer Deb Longer.

She said Lake County made the refund upfront, then would withhold Hobart-bound property taxes over the repayment period to pay itself back.

"(The county) handed us a schedule and said, 'This is what you're going to have to do and there's no way around it. This deal is already done,'" Longer recalled.

"So, the first people I call is the DLGF."

Hobart began with two interest-laden bonds, according to the Times of Northwest Indiana, but ultimately secured state legislation last year. Local and state officials came together on House Bill 1454, which allowed Hobart to obtain a new 25-year, no-interest bond.

"I feel lucky," Longer said. "... I spent a year and a half being worried because we had this huge bill and had to provide services to a city of 30,000 people, and we weren't sure how we're going to do it."

Longer said Hobart will submit similar shortfall appeals over the repayment period. Next year's is expected to be upwards of \$7 million.

"I have absolutely no idea, next fall, what the DLGF is going to do with that," she said. "I'll have all of the facts and figures in front of me, but ... they might balk at that. ... and if I were in their shoes, I'd balk at it!"

Longer encouraged other communities to review their property tax collections for errors, omissions, refunds and more to see if they qualify for an appeal.

Weather

Tuesday, January 23, 2024

(24-hour observations at 9:43 p.m. Monday)

High: 35; **Low:** 9; **Precipitation:** Trace of rain
Wabash River Level (at the Main Street bridge): 1.54 feet at 9:45 p.m. Monday

Wells County forecast

Today: Rain or freezing rain, becoming all rain after 11 a.m. High near 37. Southeast wind 5 to 10 mph. Chance of precipitation is 100 percent. New ice accumulation of less than a 0.1 of an inch possible.

Tonight: Rain likely, mainly after 1 a.m. Cloudy, with a low around 35. South wind 5 to 10 mph. Chance of precipitation is 60 percent.

Wednesday: Rain, mainly before 1 p.m. High near 46. East wind 5 to 15 mph. Chance of precipitation is 80 percent. New precipitation amounts between a quarter and half of an inch possible.

Wednesday Night: Rain. Low around 42. South wind 5 to 10 mph. Chance of precipitation is 80 percent. New precipitation amounts between a tenth and quarter of an inch possible.

Thursday: Rain likely, mainly before 1 p.m. Cloudy, with a high near 52. Chance of precipitation is 60 percent.

Thursday Night: A 30 percent chance of rain before 1 a.m. Cloudy, with a low around 38.

Friday: Cloudy, with a high near 45.

Friday Night: Cloudy, with a low around 35.

Saturday: Cloudy, with a high near 43.

Saturday Night: A chance of rain and snow. Cloudy, with a low around 32. Chance of precipitation is 30 percent.

Sunday: A slight chance of rain and snow. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 39. Chance of precipitation is 20 percent.

Sunday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 30.

Monday: Mostly cloudy, with a high near 38.

Hostages

(Continued from Page 1)

In the city, which has been a battle zone for weeks, people dug graves for the dead inside the yard of Al-Nasser Hospital as staff struggled to deal with dozens of newly killed and wounded, including children. Health care workers said strikes hit at least four schools sheltering displaced people on the city's western edges, including two inside a coastal strip that Israel had declared a safe zone for people fleeing.

Gaza's internet and phone networks collapsed again Monday for the 10th time during the war. The repeated blackouts severely hamper distribution of aid that's essential for the survival of the territory's population of 2.3 million, U.N. officials said. The loss of service also prevents Palestinians from communicating with each other and the outside world.

Netanyahu has vowed to continue the offensive until "complete victory" over Hamas and to return all remaining hostages after the Oct. 7 rampage in southern Israel that triggered the war. In that attack, some

1,200 people were killed and Hamas and other militants abducted around 250 people.

Israelis are increasingly divided on the question of whether it's possible to do either.

Around 100 hostages were freed under a weeklong cease-fire deal in November in exchange for the release of Palestinians imprisoned by Israel. Around 130 remain captive, but a number have since been confirmed dead. Hamas has said it will free more captives only in exchange for an end to the war and the release of thousands of Palestinian prisoners.

Netanyahu has ruled out such an agreement, but anger is rising among hostages' families. Relatives and other protesters set up a tent camp outside Netanyahu's residence in Jerusalem, vowing to remain until a deal is reached.

On Monday, dozens of family members of the hostages stormed into a gathering of the Knesset's finance committee, holding up signs and yelling, "You won't sit here while they are dying there!"

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Joint strikes

(Continued from Page 1)

both naval destroyers, and the USS Philippine Sea, a cruiser.

The joint operation comes about 10 days after U.S. and British warships and fighter jets struck more than 60 targets in 28 locations. That was the first U.S. military response to what has been a persistent campaign of Houthi drone and missile attacks on commercial ships since the start of the Israel-Hamas war in October.

The Houthis' media office said in an online statement Monday that raids targeted Sanaa, Yemen's capital. And Jamal Hassan, a resident from south Sanaa, told The Associated Press that two strikes landed near his home, setting off car alarms in the

street. An Associated Press journalist in Sanaa also heard aircraft flying above the skies of Sanaa overnight Monday.

Al-Masirah, a Houthi-run satellite news channel, said there were raids on three areas of Sanaa: al-Dailami Air Base just north of the capital, Sarif, northeast of the city center, and al-Hafa, which is south of Sanaa.

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak spoke with President Joe Biden earlier Monday. Sunak's office said the two leaders agreed to take "as needed, targeted military action to degrade Houthi capabilities."

The latest barrage of allied attacks marks the eighth time the U.S. has conducted strikes on Houthi sites since

Jan. 12. And it follows an almost-daily assault on Houthi missile launchers by U.S. fighter jets and ship-based Tomahawks over the past week. The rapid response missions, which officials said go after launchers that are armed and ready to fire, demonstrate the military's increasing ability to watch, detect and strike militant activities in Yemen.

The chaotic wave of attacks and reprisals involving the United States, its allies and foes suggests that the retaliatory strikes haven't deterred the Houthis from their campaign against Red Sea shipping, and that the broader regional war that the U.S. has spent months trying to avoid is becoming closer to reality.

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OBITUARIES

Nancy S. Willett, 79

Nancy S. Willett, 79, of Bluffton, passed away Friday evening, Jan. 12, 2024, at Coventry Meadows Memory Support Assisted Living in Fort Wayne, surrounded by her family.



Nancy was born Nov. 12, 1944 in Highland Park, MI to Edwin A. and Roseland (Violet) Willett.

She received her bachelor's and master's degrees in Elementary Education from Eastern Michigan University. She taught at Henry Ruff Elementary School in Garden City, Mich. for 34 years. She was an avid reader, a very accomplished pianist and enjoyed knitting and crocheting. She was a devoted sister, aunt and great-aunt who always put others' needs above her own.

Survivors include her siblings, Rodney (Sue) Willett of Rock Island, Tenn., Marjorie (John) Rollins of Westland, Mich., Rochelle (Mark) Anthony and Daphne (Bob) Dahl all of Bluffton.

She is preceded in death by her parents.

A celebration of life will take place in the spring for family and close friends.

Memorials may be made in Nancy's memory to Alzheimer's Association or a local animal shelter.

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 will host Grace Hochstetler, Red Cross Disaster Program Manager, at its Thursday, Jan. 25 meeting. (Photo provided)

Ossian Rotary to host Red Cross disaster program manager

At its regular weekly meeting Thursday, Jan. 25, Ossian Rotary will host Grace Hochstetler, disaster program manager, from the Northeast Indiana Chapter of the American Red Cross.

Grace is a native of Fort Wayne who graduated from Homestead High School. She then went on to pursue a degree in International Business, Management, and Economics from Northwood University while also playing basketball. She used her final year of eligibility to earn her MBA while in school. Grace has worked and volunteered for many years in community organizations, including NeighborLink, Special Olympics, Greater Fort Wayne, Habitat for Humanity and Court Appointed Special Advocate.

Hochstetler is currently the disaster program manager at the Red Cross for the Northeast Indiana Chapter. She will share how the Red Cross prepares for and responds to emergency events throughout the 17 counties in the chapter. In Northeast Indiana, these events typically are home fires (both single resident and multi-family buildings), flooding, and severe storms. Grace states emphatically, "I am so grateful for the incredible support that we receive from the community."

Anyone is welcome to attend Ossian Rotary this Thursday morning, Jan. 25, at 7:30 at First Baptist Church of Ossian, 1001 Dehner Drive for this program.

For more information, please contact Jeremy Penrod, Ossian Rotary President, at jeremy.penrod@edwardjones.com.

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

Next Thursday, Feb. 1, Ossian Rotary will host Erica Downing, Parkview Health advanced care planning specialist.

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.

People's Choice Awards announced for Christmas in the Mansion

The Wells County Historical Museum has announced the winners in the "Christmas in the Mansion" people's choice awards for 2023. Visitors to the museum had the opportunity to vote for their favorite Christmas tree from the 26 trees that were decorated by individuals and businesses.

The first-place award was tree No. 26 decorated by Hope Myers and was displayed upstairs in the Master Bedroom, north window. The second-place vote getter was tree number 16 which was on display in the Dining Room and decorated by Posey Pot, Donna Anderson.

The third-place award winner was a tie.

Tree No. 2 displayed in the Grand Stairway and Lobby. It was prepared by Becky Behning. The other tree was No. 14 displayed in the Back Hallway on the first floor and was decorated by Marcia Hotopp.

The Wells County Historical Society wishes to express their gratitude to all the individuals and business who decorated trees and assisted with the event.

The Wells County Historical Museum will open in April from 1-4 p.m. on Wednesdays and Sundays. Donations of items to the museum can be made by contacting Historical Society President, Jim Sturgeon, 260-273-1878.

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

County:

Friday, 2:12 p.m., West 100 North and Marzane Road, Markle. Vehicle in ditch, no injuries.

Friday, 4:56 p.m., 300 West and Ind. 124, Bluffton. Report of vehicle broken down in roadway. Owner arrived to remove from roadway.

Friday, 6:13 p.m., Wells County Jail. Warrant served to William K. Bennett.

Friday, 11:13 p.m., 100 block of North Union Street, Bluffton. 911 disconnect call. Woman crying and man heard inside. Subjects refused to answer door and officers were unable to force entry and left the scene. Report of subjects leaving residence approximately six hours later, medics requested for strangulation. Trey Allen O'Reilly arrested.

Saturday, 10:50 a.m., Stoney Lane and 300 West, Markle. Car vs. deer.

Monday, 10:18 a.m., Wells County Courthouse. Jeremy Voland taken trans-

ported to Wells County Jail on arrest warrant.

Ossian: Friday, 6:36 p.m., 3700 East 1200 North, Ossian. Caller reported missing bag with medication and ID inside.

Saturday, 8:07 p.m., Ind. 1 and East 1200 North, Ossian. Report of a vehicle slide off causing a traffic hazard.

Sunday, 2:10 a.m., Ind. 1 and East 700 north, Ossian. Driver cited for speeding 66 in a 55 mph zone.

Monday, 8:40 a.m., 1100 Ind. 1, Ossian. Report of a domestic issue. Monday, 6:43 a.m., 1800 East 300 North, Bluffton. Car vs. deer. Driver advised no damage to vehicle, however, damaged deer was in residential yard.

ARRESTS

Mitchell Dale-Allen Herrick, 33, Bluffton, possession of methamphetamine, possession of cocaine, possession of a legend drug, and possession of hypodermic syringe or needle, all Level 6 felonies, and possession

of marijuana, a Class B misdemeanor. Bond set at \$21,000.

Joshua Alan Gabehart, 42, battery resulting in bodily injury and criminal trespassing, both Class A misdemeanors. Bond set at \$1,500.

Nicholas Sylvester Debruler, 33, Bluffton, operating a vehicle while intoxicated, a Level 6 felony, operating a vehicle with an ace of .15 or more, and operating a vehicle while intoxicated — endangerment, both Class A misdemeanors. Bond set at \$5,000.

William Kyle Bennett, 27, domestic battery in the presence of a child, a Level 6 felony. Bond set at \$25,000.

Julie Ann Dettmer, 51, Fort Wayne, possession of cocaine, a Level 6 felony, and possession of paraphernalia, a Class C misdemeanor. No bond set.

Nichole Janine Aschliman, 45, Decatur, operating a vehicle while intoxicated — endangerment, and operating a vehicle with an Ace of 0.15 or

more, both Class A misdemeanors. Bond set at \$1,500.

Trey Allen O'Reilly, 23, Bluffton, strangulation, a Level 6 felony, interference with the reporting of a crime, a Class A misdemeanor, domestic battery, a Class A misdemeanor, and disorderly conduct, a Class B misdemeanor. Bond set at \$32,500.

Jadon Kelly Kent, 27, Huntington, possession of marijuana, a Class B misdemeanor, possession of paraphernalia, a Class C misdemeanor, and driving while suspended — prior suspension, a Class A misdemeanor. Bond set at \$1,500.

David James Wolford, 20, Ossian, possession of marijuana, a Class B misdemeanor, and possession of paraphernalia, a Class C misdemeanor. Bond set at \$1,500.

Jeremy Roland, 45, Warren, criminal mischief, a Class B misdemeanor, and invasion of privacy, a Class A misdemeanor. Bond set at \$25,000.



Story music by the Phil

On Thursday, Jan. 25, at 7 p.m. the Calhoun Brass Quintet will explore the music for the children's book "Where the Wild Things Are" at the Wells County Public Library in Bluffton, narrated by Abby Cleveland of the Philharmonic staff, at left. (Photo provided)



Pictured left to right are Erica Bennett, FBB branch manager and Kylie Tomlin, Helping Hands executive director. (Photo provided)

First Bank of Berne donates to Helping Hands

First Bank of Berne recently made a \$2,000 donation to Helping Hands. Helping Hands is a multi-faceted organization who builds relationships through education, medical services, and advocacy.

Its programs and services have an appreciation for life that extend beyond a pregnancy and birth and are

designed to initiate and build relationships with women, men and their children of all ages. They desire abundant life (John 10:10) for those they serve: basic needs are met, positive relationships, healthy pregnancies and children, life-affirming choices, and most importantly - eternal hope.

How the donation will be used:

During the year, Helping Hands holds numerous events to help with fundraising. First Bank of Berne is donating towards their Bow Campaign, Disc Golf Tournament, and Annual Benefit Dinner.

The easiest way to donate is to visit our website! <https://helpinghandssec.org/donate>.

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Aiming for a little less screen time in 2024

The white Christmas that many of us hoped for in northeast Indiana arrived a few weeks too late and has certainly caused some stress these past few days trying to traverse the frigid winter wonderland.

Some stress from the winter weather, however, might not be as severe as what many Americans said they were feeling during the holidays last month.

I read a short story on CBS News a few days before Christmas about how a third of Americans reported they were more stressed out during 2023's holiday season than the previous year. The article cited a survey from the American Psychiatric Association in which the top sources of stress were listed as buying holiday gifts, finding gifts and the price of holiday meals.

Fast forward a couple of weeks.

While my wife and I were in Arizona, we heard another report about stress. This time, it was on NPR as the reporter cited another recent poll in which the American Psychological Association found that almost 25% of adults across the United States said they were experiencing "high levels" of stress — up from 19% in 2019.

The alarming statistics caught my attention as we listened to the report. The story was actually about a new book that has come out to help people manage stress. The book is titled "The 5 Resets" by Dr. Aditi Nerurkar, the reporter shared.

I haven't read it yet but it's on my list of non-fiction books to borrow from the library sometime this year, as the NPR reporter did a superb job of capturing my attention with the report.

As we listened to the report, one of the tools the author of the new book suggested for having less stress revolves around technology and cutting back on how much we use it, as everything from emails, news headlines and social media are causing us to be more stressed.

Few statistics stop me in my tracks as much as the one that was cited in the report about how often we touch our phones in a given day.

People interact with their phones — which includes tapping it, swiping it or clicking something on it — an average of 2,617 times a day. That mind boggling number represents more interactions with our phones than there are minutes in a day.

I use my phone a lot throughout the day but I certainly hope I'm not interacting with it even half that many times.

The article also pointed out that more than 50% of people surveyed said they grab their phones within five minutes of waking up each morning.

I would be part of that 50%.

I stopped using an alarm clock about a decade ago, as my phone wakes me up each morning to the tune of a loud radar beeping sound. It's the first object I reach for each morning as I turn it off.

And since it's already in my hand, I'm quick to open the morning's headlines to catch up on any news from around the state, nation and world that happened overnight.

About the same time I stopped using an alarm is probably around the time I started consistently consuming more news online instead of picking up the print product from the gas station or having it delivered to my door each morning.

So what's one to do?

The NPR report suggested spending no more than 20 minutes a day scrolling on our smartphones. My iPhone tells me that my daily average is two hours and 50 minutes — well over the suggested time I should spend.

I'm not sure I'll ever reach the 20 minutes since I use my phone for so many purposes — from my calendar to tracking my runs. Using it some three hours a day, however, is too much.

Another takeaway we heard on the report was to move your phone away from your nightstand so that it's out of reach and less likely to be used right before you fall asleep or right after you wake up in the morning.

Seems like a good idea to me and an easy change to make.

My wife and I have already started working on the first suggestion to limit time on our phones. My daily average use was down 20% from last week.

Now we just need to find an alarm clock so that we can put our phones on the other side of the bedroom.

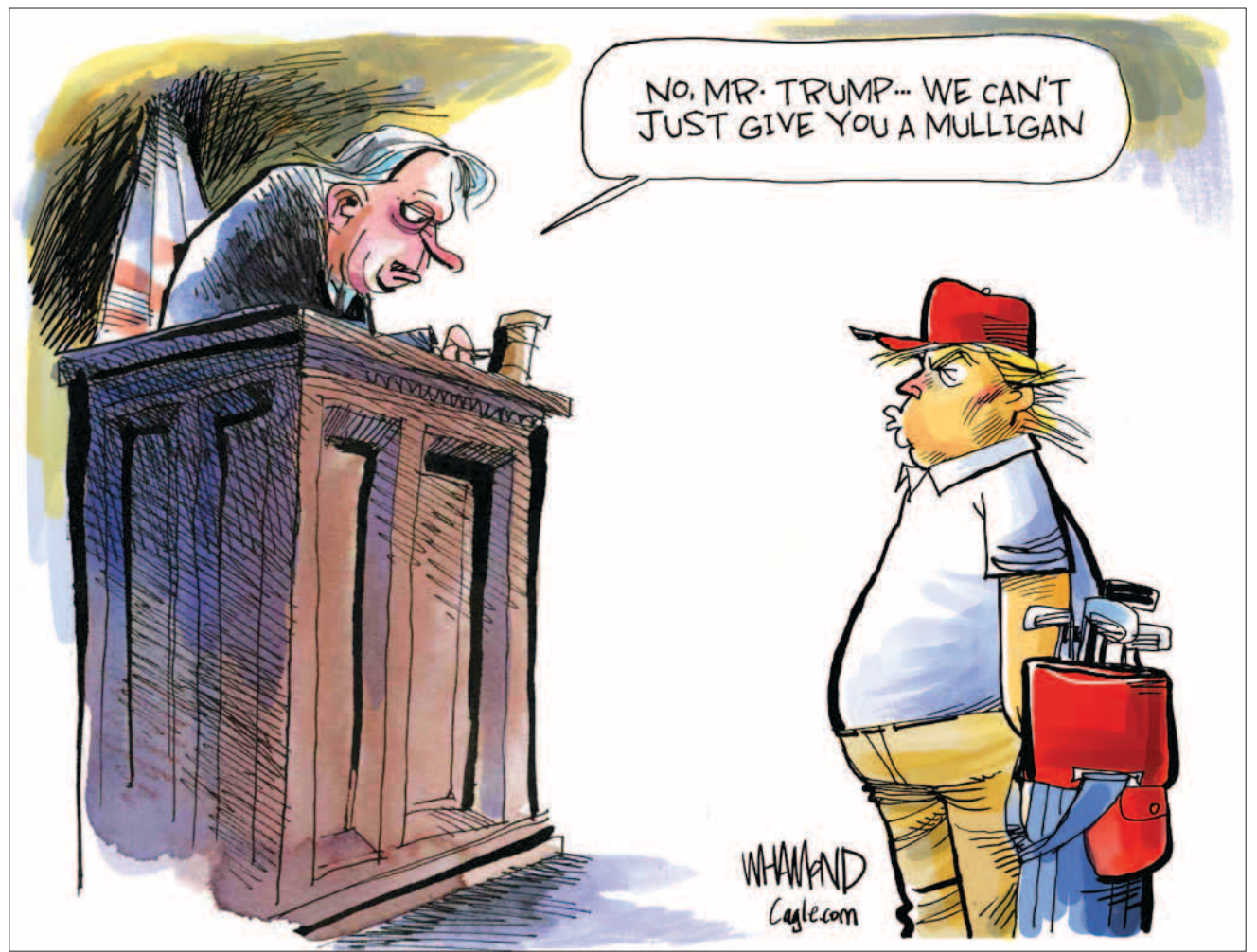
I'm sure we have one somewhere in the bottom of a box in the basement. If not, buying one with those Amazon gift cards from Christmas sounds like a great idea.

I think I can justify a bit of screen time this week to make that purchase.

jdpeeper2@hotmail.com



Justin Peeper



Jack Smith is an arsonist

Jack Smith is a threat to American democracy.

He is blatantly seeking, as a prosecutor, to influence the outcome of the 2024 election. This is not his role and, in fact, is against Justice Department guidelines. If Smith succeeds, the consequences will be long-lasting -- the special counsel will have delivered a devastating blow to the legitimacy of our electoral system, in the name of defending it.

Donald Trump and his allies were able to fashion a narrative of a rigged election in 2020 with much less material than Jack Smith is now going to give them in 2024.

He clearly is not playing it straight, and is not proceeding at anything like a normal pace. Fairly routine Jan. 6 cases have taken longer to get from indictment to trial. There is no reason that the question of criminal immunity -- a big, consequential question never taken up directly by the Supreme Court -- needs to be decided with lightning-quick rapidity.

Of course, Smith has to worry that Trump will get elected again and, as president, squash the case. This was a foreseeable eventuality, though, and the Justice Department could have addressed it by indicting Trump years ago. It didn't only recently emerge, after all, that Trump gave a speech on Jan. 6 to a crowd that went on to storm the U.S. Capitol.

Once the timing of the case pushed hard up against a national election in which Trump was likely to run, forbearance would have been the proper and public-spirited course.

Trump didn't shoot someone on Fifth Avenue. He engaged in unworthy and impeachable acts, but nothing that is straightforwardly criminal. There was no reason that this absolutely had to be prosecuted no matter what; at best, the case is discretionary.

But influencing the outcome of the election is clearly a feature, not a bug, for Smith and his minders.

There is no way President Biden, Merrick Garland, Jack Smith and Judge Tanya Chutkan would be going down this route if they thought doing so

would help Donald Trump become president again. But nearly everyone assumes that a conviction would, at a minimum, hurt Trump's chances and perhaps destroy them.

The posture of the Biden administration is, basically, it'd be really awful if Republicans supported a felon for president, and, by the way, we are going to move heaven and earth to make your likely candidate a felon.

Democrats fear losing the election but apparently haven't thought about what it would mean to win this way, or maybe they just don't care.

Now, if he loses, Trump won't accept the result, even if it is a strictly by-the-books affair, and his rhetoric will be angry and irresponsible. But after a conviction and a 2024 loss, Trump would have legitimate reason to complain -- to wit, he was targeted in a politicized prosecution that succeeded in its goal of taking him down in a national election.

Smith's prosecution would be much more consequential than, say, how Twitter handled the Hunter Biden laptop story prior to the election in 2020.

Imagine if, because Chutkan has to wait on a Supreme Court ruling on obstruction, the trial doesn't start until July or August, and a guilty verdict comes down in October? Smith will have fashioned a classic October surprise. Even on the current timetable, sentencing easily could take place in October. The most extreme scenario, of course, is that they actually jail Joe Biden's opponent.

And how do they expect any of this to be received by the roughly 47% of the country that would support Donald Trump in a rematch with Joe Biden? Are these people supposed to believe in the neutrality of Joe Biden's Justice Department, even though that's absurd, or simply accept that this is how the system works now?

Exactly how this plays out this year is impossible to predict, but what's clear is that Jack Smith has foolishly and unnecessarily set in motion a dangerous dynamic.

Rich Lowry is on Twitter @RichLowry



Rich Lowry

Trump is not a colossus. And his party is a mess.

The prevailing wisdom going into Tuesday's New Hampshire primary sees Donald Trump as triumphant. But don't mistake him for a colossus leading a mighty band. This view ignores the opportunism behind many of the endorsements he is winning and the sharp split between Republicans who want to govern and those who don't.

Though there is certainly polarization between our parties, the primary cause of the deep temper in American politics is the polarization within the Republican Party. Trump's apparent dominance distracts from what the behavior of elected GOP politicians in Washington teaches us day after day: The party is a mess.

That doesn't stop the Trump-Is-All-Powerful Industry from predicting he'll go from strength to strength. Its argument is straightforward: Even if former U.N. ambassador Nikki Haley wins New Hampshire, which she could, the obstacles in her way are formidable. In the next major battleground, Haley's home state of South Carolina, Trump has a good lead. Haley's problems only got worse on Friday when Sen. Tim Scott (S.C.) announced his support for Trump.

Trump's victory in the Iowa caucuses created the feel of a party falling in behind him. Telling were endorsements from Sens. Ted Cruz (Tex.) and Marco Rubio (Fla.), two politicians the vindictive front-runner repeatedly mocked, humiliated and slandered. On Sunday, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, whom Trump routinely referred to as "Ron DeSantimonious," dropped out of the race and endorsed his tormentor. So much for self-respect.

But even if the punditry proves right, the GOP is in no way cohesive or coherent. Just look at the Republican majority in the House, which can't govern without Democratic help. Meanwhile, Senate and House



E.J. Dionne

Republicans are at odds on the most important foreign policy question of the moment: whether the United States will continue to stand up against Vladimir Putin's aggression in Ukraine.

In the House last week, Republicans were divided into almost perfect halves over whether to keep the federal government open until at least March: They voted 107-106 for a deal

between House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-La.) and Senate Majority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.). To get the supermajority he needed, Johnson required nearly unified Democratic support - 207 votes to 2.

In negotiations pairing help for Ukraine with enhanced border security, Democrats have given enormous ground on immigration, to the point at which Senate Republicans are reduced to begging their House comrades to accept a win.

Even Sen. Lindsey Graham (S.C.), one of Trump's most enthusiastic apologists, lectured his colleagues on reality: "To those who think that if President Trump wins, which I hope he does, that we can get a better deal - you won't."

If the Senate reaches a bipartisan deal and Johnson rejects it, he will be the reason Ukraine isn't funded and the United States loses credibility around the world.

Even Trump's big victory in Iowa belied the idea that Trump's army would walk through fire for him. Many were plainly unwilling to ignore the bitter cold and icy roads on caucus night. Only about 110,000 of the roughly 750,000 registered Republicans in the state participated, down more than 40 percent from the 187,000 who joined the last competitive caucuses in 2016.

The divisions among those hardy voters were deep, pointing to President Biden's opportunities to drive wedges into the GOP electorate. The entrance poll found that Trump

drew just 37 percent among college graduates, compared with 67 percent among non-graduates. Caucus-goers split down the middle as to whether they considered themselves part of the MAGA movement (46 percent) or not (50 percent.). Three-quarters of the non-MAGA voters opposed Trump.

And 31 percent said they would not consider Trump fit to be president if he were convicted of a crime - a significant number, considering the loyalty to the GOP of the small minority willing to brave the elements.

Sure, Democrats have their divisions, too. Party loyalists range from the center to the left, and some of their loud fights doomed parts of Biden's program in the last Congress. But what's remarkable is how much they did pass with narrow House and Senate margins - and, in the case of the infrastructure and technology investments, with bipartisan support.

The difference is that Democrats want to govern because they believe government has a chance to do good. This means even the party's most left-wing members will compromise to take a step or two forward even when they want to take four.

Republicans, on the other hand, are riven between those willing to govern - even, occasionally, with Democrats - and those who will be satisfied only if Trump is president. They presume this would allow them to roll over the left, the liberals and the moderates alike.

Failing to see the GOP as a party torn asunder allows Trump to seem stronger than he is. He uses this perceived supremacy to cow Republicans who hold the quaint view that governing in a reasonable and (small-d) democratic way is the point of getting elected. Is it just wish-casting to think New Hampshire might seize the opportunity to send them the message that it's their duty to fight back?

Follow E.J. Dionne @EJDionne on X (formerly Twitter).

Today in History

By The Associated Press

Today is Tuesday, Jan. 23, the 23rd day of 2024. There are 343 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Jan. 23, 1964, the 24th Amendment to the United States Constitution, eliminating the poll tax in federal elections, was ratified as South Dakota became the 38th state to

endorse it.

On this date:

In 1368, China's Ming dynasty, which lasted nearly three centuries, began as Zhu Yuanzhang was formally acclaimed emperor, following the collapse of the Yuan dynasty.

In 1789, Georgetown University was established in present-day Washington, D.C.

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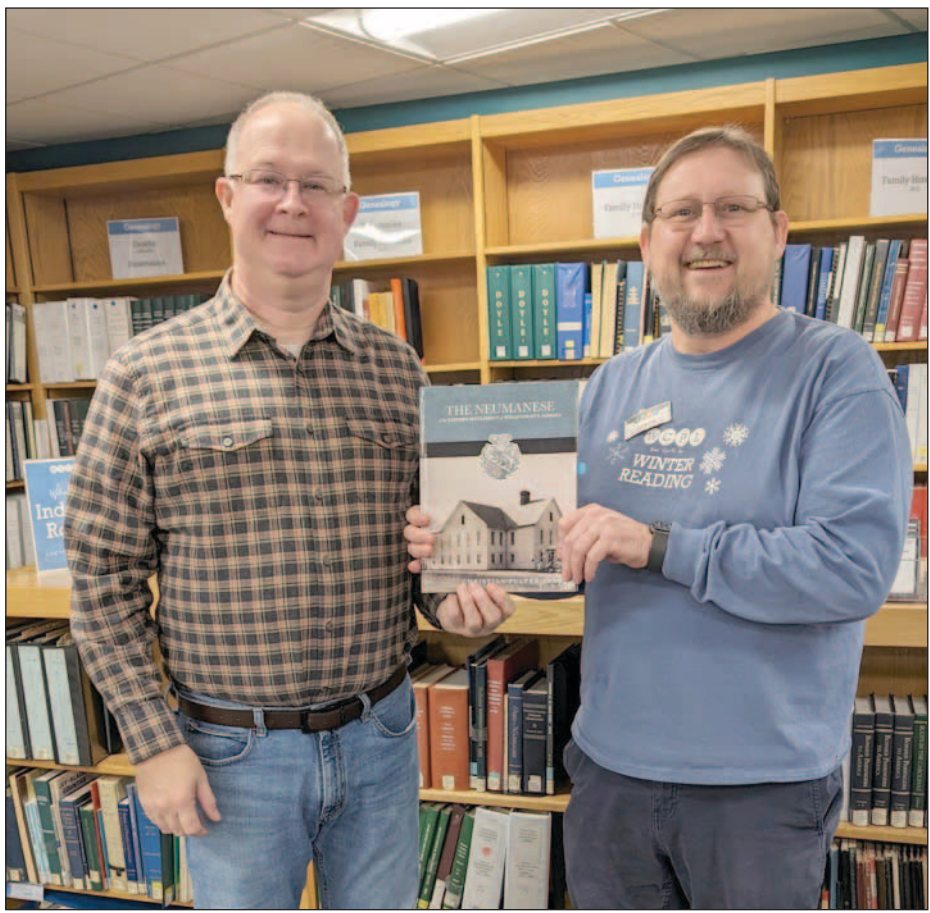
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Holly Gaskill, Editor

Mark Miller, Opinion Page Editor



Mr. Pulver is shown giving the donation to Jason Habegger, Adult Services Librarian, at the Wells County Public Library. The new book will be available to view in the library's Indiana Room. Anyone interested in purchasing a personal copy may contact Chris at cpulver@adamswells.com. (Photo submitted)

Library Receives Book Donation

Chris Pulver of Bluffton has donated a newly published book entitled *The Neumanese of the Eastern Settlement of Wells County, Indiana to the Wells County Public Library*. Mr. Pulver is the caretaker of the Apostolic Christian Church located on 800 East near Vera Cruz.

The Neumanese of the Eastern Settlement of Wells County, Indiana focuses on the old Apostolic Cemetery located on the south side of the church. It includes a brief history of the Wells County Apostolic Christian Church and obituaries of

the early settlers buried in the old cemetery. The term Neumanese was used in the nineteenth and early twentieth century to refer to the Apostolic Church congregation after it was established in 1858. The community around Vera Cruz was referred to as the Eastern Settlement by the residents of Bluffton. It was also known as the Emmmental Settlement because many of the early settlers that came to this area of Wells County in 1852 were from the Emmmental region of Switzerland.

The most effective ways to treat obesity

Also: Increasing healthspan

Question: What's the most effective way for me to battle my obesity and its complications? — Patricia F., Cleveland, Ohio

Answer: The poet William Wordsworth once declared: "Life is divided into three terms — that which was, which is, and which will be. Let us learn from the past to profit by the present, and from the present, to live better in the future." When it comes to treating obesity, we couldn't agree more.

Obesity is a disease that develops over time (the past) and gives you the opportunity to learn (in the present) about healthier choices. And when you do that, to profit from that knowledge so that you have a longer, healthier future.

According to a Pennington Biomedical Research Center study, losing five percent to 10 percent of your body weight can prevent or control diabetes. To reverse other obesity-associated health problems, such as nonalcoholic liver disease, and to reduce excess body fat associated with obstructive sleep apnea, knee pain and osteoarthritis, you need to lose around 15 percent of your body weight.

You have three ways to approach weight loss. They are most effective when they work together to banish obesity-related health problems.

Lifestyle choices: Beneficial choices include consistent physical activity, healthy nutrition (plant-based, with salmon) and eliminating inflammatory foods or beverages, good sleep habits, a great posse and sense of purpose, and not smoking. Generally, folks lose five percent to seven percent of their body weight using lifestyle changes.

Weight-loss medications: Recently approved weight-loss medications, such as Zepbound and Wegovy, help people lose about 15 percent to 20 percent of their body weight. But they must be combined with positive lifestyle choices.

Weight-loss surgery: Roux-en-Y gastric bypass creates a small stomach pouch and attaches it directly to the small intestine — leading to loss of up to 70 percent of excess weight. One study found that 12 years



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

after getting the procedure, folks kept the weight off and had experienced either remission or prevention of Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and elevated LDL cholesterol. It, too, should be combined with healthy lifestyle choices.

Question: I'm hearing a lot about breakthroughs in anti-aging. Can you explain how they might change my future (I'm 55) and my grandkids' future (they're three and six)? — Gregory T., Chicago

Answer: Since Dr. Mike launched RealAge (available for free at Sharecare.com) — and now ActualAge (free at LongevityPlaybook.com) — the fields of anti-aging and longevity have exploded, revealing more details about what it takes to have the healthiest and longest lifespan possible.

There's an ongoing push to discover new biological/biochemical elements that can be tracked and analyzed to assess aging in all bodily systems. We now know that the components that influence life/healthspan involve your stem cells, which create and refresh all

the cells in your body; DNA changes that can lead to mutations or stimulate repair of your cells and tissue; immune system reactions to threats to your well-being; what's going on in your gut's microbiome that influences your vulnerability to disease; and the vitality of your cells' energy factories, called mitochondria.

At the Buck Institute for Research on Aging, they've recently discovered a molecule called MIC that recycles damaged components of your mitochondria into new, more energy-producing mitochondria. Dr. Mike says, "Watch out, grandkids — I'm going to be able to catch you if MIC works in humans."

Such insights are exciting, but while we know a lot more about what goes on in your body that influences longevity, in our opinion, they haven't proved to be better predictors of death or disability than RealAge or ActualAge. We need a game changer ... and one might be coming. The newly announced X-Prize offers a \$101 million award between now and 2030 for the discovery of any therapy that increases human lifespan by 10 to 20 years as judged by immune, cognitive and muscle function.

In the meantime, you, your kids and your grandkids can do a lot to preserve youthfulness and reverse aging with steps outlined in "The Great Age Reboot" and on LongevityPlaybook.com.

Area Things to See and Do

ALLEN COUNTY WAR MEMORIAL COLISEUM

Shrine Circus: Jan 26-28; Camping Show: Feb. 1-4; Boat Show: Feb. 9-11; Show Me Reptike Show: Feb. 10; Disney on Ice: Feb. 22-25; Baby Fair & Family Expo: Feb. 24; Bryan Adams Tour: Feb. 28; Home & Garden Show: Feb. 29-March 3; www.memorialcoliseum.com

ARENA DINNER THEATER, FORT WAYNE

"*LMNOP," Through Jan. 28; "Funny Money," March 1-16; "A Delightful Quarantine," April 19-May 4; "The Drowsy Chaperone," June 14-29. www.arenadinnertheatre.org

CLYDE THEATRE, FORT WAYNE

Tribute to Elton John/ Billy Joel; Debutants & Friends: Jan. 20; Foy Vance, Jan. 28. ClydeTheatre.com or at 1-800-514-3849.

EMBASSY THEATER, FORT WAYNE

Tim Allen: Jan. 26; Joy Koy comedy: Feb. 4; <http://fwembassytheatre.org/events>

FIRE AND LIGHT PRODUCTIONS

"Finding Nemo Jr., April 11-13, Arts United enter, 303 E. Main St., Fort Wayne. Tickets at fireandlightproductions.com.

1ST PRESBYTERIAN THEATRE, FORT WAYNE

Almost Maine: Jan. 26-27; firstpresfortwayne.org/theater/

BOTANICAL CONSERVATORY

Botanical Speedway: through April 7; botanical-conservatory.org.

FORT WAYNE CIVIC THEATER

"The Color Purple," Feb. 9-18, 2024; "Six Degrees of Separation," March 15-24; "Jersey Boys," May 4-19; "Something Rotten," July 21-30. Arts United Center box office 260-424-5220; info at www.fwcivic.org.

FORT WAYNE MUSEUM OF ART

Open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (until 8 p.m. on Thursdays, noon to 5 p.m. Sunday. www.fwmoa.org

FURTH CENTER, ANGOLA

Don McLean: May 18; Hotel California: May 31; trine.edu/furth

HONEYWELL CENTER & EAGLES THEATRE, WABASH

Honeywell Center: Dinosaur World Live: Jan. 26; Little River Band, Feb. 2; 360 Allstars, Feb. 3; Princess Bride/Cary Elwes; 1954 The Tribute: March. 2; Tommy Jones/The Shondells: March 30; Etta May & Southern Fried Chicken: April 7; Killer Queen: July 12; Eagles Theatre: Sons of Mistro, Feb. 8; Tennessee Whiskey Chicago: Feb. 9; Michael Palascak: Feb. 14; Unspoken: Feb. 15; Step-crow Dance: Feb. 29; <https://www.boxofficeticketsales.com/honeywell-center>

ARTS UNITED CENTER, FORT WAYNE

Fort Wayne Ballet: fortwayneballet.org

PURDUE-FORT WAYNE THEATER

Productions at Williams Theatre on the Purdue-FW campus. www.pfw.edu/visual-performing-arts.

SCIENCE CENTRAL, FORT WAYNE

1950 N. Clinton St. in Fort Wayne. Hours 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday. Info at 260-424-2400 or at www.sciencecentral.org

SWEETWATER SOUND, Performance Pavilion

KennyWayne Shepherd, May 18; Tickets: 800-514-3849 or eTix

BAKER STREET CENTER, FORT WAYNE

www.bakerstreetcentre.com

PIERE'S ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE, FORT WAYNE

Etitx.com

FW'S PARKVIEW FIELD

ticketmaster.com

LERNER THEATRE, ELKHART

Colin Mochrie: Feb. 10; Rodney Carrington: Feb. 23; Saxon & Uriah Heep: Hell, Fire & Choas: May 12; The-Lerner.com

WAGON WHEEL WARSAW

wagonwheelcenter.org

ABCINEMA, DECATUR

130 W. Monroe St., Decatur. Information: www.abcinemainc.com or 260-724-SHOW

MARRIAGE TUNE UP

Marriage Tune-Up Weekend at Hope Missionary Church

"Who says working on your marriage has to feel like work?"

Marriage speakers Jeff & Debbie McElroy of Forever Families have a heart for ministering to couples and will be leading the 2024 Marriage Tune-Up Weekend at Hope Missionary Church in Bluffton on January 26-27. The cost for the event is \$79 per couple.

For more information and to register, go to www.hope4thefamily.com/events.

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Cocanower reflects on tenure as Indiana Teacher of the Year

Tara Cocanower, a world history teacher at Bluffton High School and the 2023 Indiana Teacher of the Year, is ready to mentor the next INTOY.

Cocanower's last major event with her 2023 Teachers of the Year cohort was the College Football Playoff National Championship game in Houston, Texas, on Jan. 8. The state teachers of the year were recognized on the field prior to kickoff.

During festivities leading up to the big game, Cocanower competed in a football toss competition. After receiving football throwing lessons from a few Bluffton Tigers, Cocanower was one of 18 teachers to make the throw — earning \$1,000 for the Bluffton-Harrison Metropolitan School District. She says she plans to use it in some way in each BHMSD building to give back to her fellow teachers.

Cocanower reflects on her year as an advocate for

public education in the January episode of The Roar Report: A BHMSD Podcast. Superintendent Brad Yates visited Mrs. Cocanower's classroom to chat about her INTOY tenure.

Mrs. Cocanower cited two experiences among the highlights of her year: Riding in the Indianapolis 500 Festival Parade to a crowd of people cheering her on, not because they knew her but because she was a teacher, and her time at Space Camp in July 2023.

"So often as a teacher, I challenge students at Bluffton to push outside of their comfort zones, to rise above their insecurities. I try to champion them to overcome their anxieties. And for me, Space Camp was that," she said. "I had to put my money where my mouth is and I had to overcome my own insecurities. I had to get over my own anxiety. And it was incredible. I thrived and I loved it. And I hadn't had many of those experiences as an adult

recently." Yates commended Cocanower for modeling her journey for BHMSD students as they pursue whatever comes next.

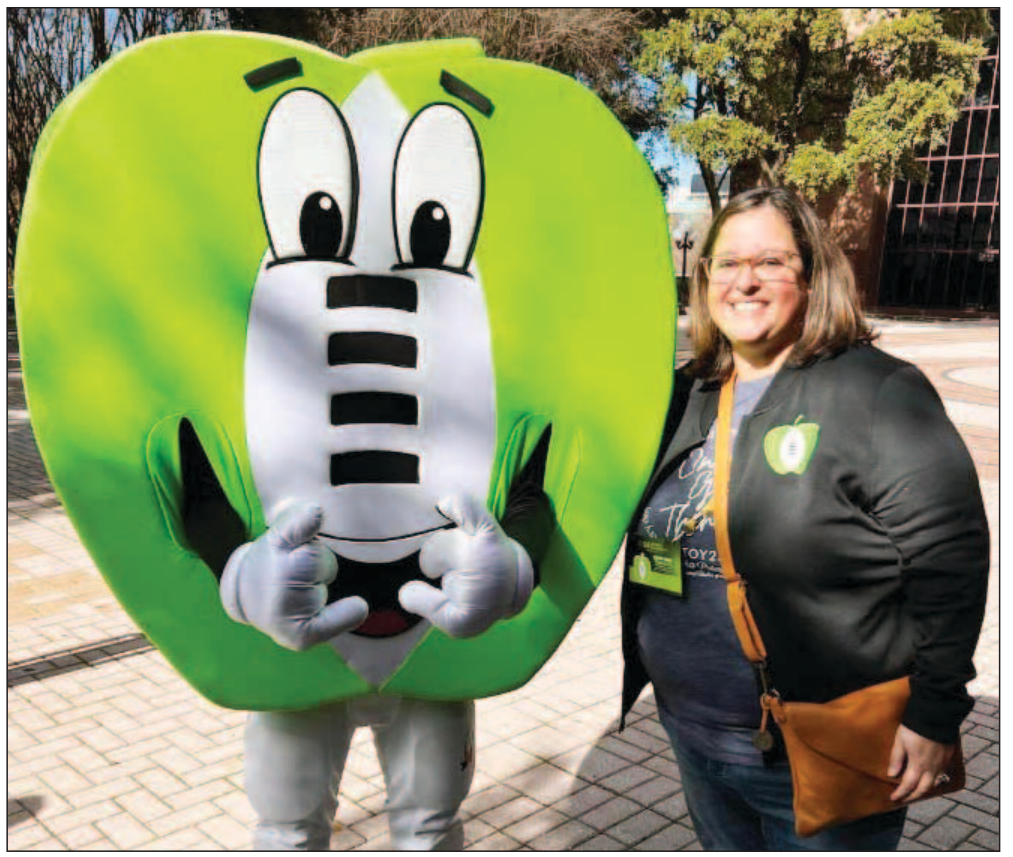
"For you to walk that, of what you talk about, is really important and powerful," Yates said.

Cocanower expressed her appreciation for the support from the BHMSD administration, her colleagues and the community. The appreciation has been mutual.

"Thank you so much for what you do everyday," Yates said, "but also for what you've done to lead education for our state and specifically for Bluffton-Harrison over the last year."

The 2024 Indiana Teacher of the Year is Eric Jenkins, an English teacher from Franklin Community High School. Cocanower served on the selection committee and will mentor him this year.

Cocanower says she has stopped saying she is "just going back to the class-



Tara Cocanower takes in the festivities in Texas before the College Football Playoff National Championship. (Photo provided)

room" after the busy year she's had.

"I'm not going backwards to anything," she said. "I've learned things. I've grown as a person. I've gained so much confidence that I'm going forward to the classroom. I'm going to have an adventure having learned new things to share with the students that I have this semester and beyond at Bluffton."

Dexter Scott King, son of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., dies of cancer at 62

ATLANTA (AP) — Dexter Scott King, who dedicated much of his life to shepherding the civil rights legacy of his parents, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King, died Monday after battling prostate cancer. He was 62.

The King Center in Atlanta, which Dexter King served as chairman, said the younger son of the civil rights icon died at his home in Malibu, California. His wife, Leah Weber King, said in a statement that he died "peacefully in his sleep."

"The sudden shock is devastating," Martin Luther King III, the older brother of Dexter King, said in a statement. "It is hard to have the right words at a moment like this. We ask for your prayers at this time for the entire King family."

The third of the Kings' four children, Dexter King was named for the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, where his father served as a pastor when the Montgomery bus boycott launched him to national prominence in the wake of the 1955 arrest of Rosa Parks.

Dexter King was just 7 years old when his father was assassinated in April 1968 while supporting striking sanitation workers in Memphis, Tennessee.

"He turned that pain into activism, however, and dedicated his life to advancing the dream Martin and Coretta Scott King had for their children" and others, the Rev. Al Sharpton said in a statement. He said Dexter King "left us far too soon."

U.S. Sen. Raphael Warnock, the senior pastor of Atlanta's Ebenezer Baptist Church where Martin Luther King Jr. preached, said he prayed with the King family Monday and extended "my deepest condolences, strength, and solidarity to them during this time of remembrance and grief."

Dexter King described the impact his father's killing had on his childhood, and the rest of his life, in a 2004 memoir, "Growing Up King."

"Ever since I was seven, I've felt I must be formal," he wrote, adding: "Formality, seriousness, certitude — all these are difficult poses to maintain, even if you're a person with perfect equilibrium, with all the drama life throws at you."

As an adult, Dexter King bore such a striking resemblance to his famous father that he was cast to portray him in a 2002 TV movie about Parks starring Angela Bassett.

He also worked to protect the King family's intellectual property. In addition to serving as chairman of the King Center, he was also president of the King estate.

Dexter King and his siblings, who shared control of the family estate, didn't always agree on how to uphold their parents' legacy.

In one particularly bitter disagreement, the siblings ended up in court after Dexter King and his brother in 2014 sought to sell the Nobel Peace Prize their father was awarded in 1964 along with the civil rights leader's traveling Bible used by President Barack Obama for his second inauguration. Bernice King said she found the notion unthinkable.

The King siblings settled the dispute in 2016 after former President Jimmy Carter served as a mediator. The items were turned over to the brothers, but other terms of the settlement were kept confidential.

Decades earlier, Dexter King made headlines when he publicly declared that he believed James Earl Ray, who pleaded guilty in 1969 to murdering his father, was innocent. They met in 1997 at a Nashville prison amid an unsuccessful push by King family members to have Ray stand trial, hoping the case would reveal evidence of a broader conspiracy.

NATIONAL DENTAL HYGIENE MONTH

Daily dental hygiene tips for optimal oral health

Dental health is an important component of daily life. Although clean teeth and gums make for a healthy mouth, oral health also is tied to general health throughout the body. Guardian Insurance indicates that, if left unaddressed, bacteria in the mouth can multiply and spread elsewhere through the bloodstream. Gum disease has been linked to diabetes, respiratory ailments, heart disease, and even Alzheimer's disease. As a result, it is essential to maintain proper dental hygiene.

Best practices for maintaining healthy teeth and gums involve various techniques. Here's how to brush up on maintaining a healthy mouth.

BRUSH AT LEAST TWICE PER DAY
Utilizing toothpaste and a soft-bristled toothbrush, be sure to brush teeth each morning and night. Be sure to brush all tooth surfaces, including the backs and the sides. Brushing after every meal also can be done to keep teeth even cleaner.

BRUSH CORRECTLY
Position the toothbrush at a 45-degree angle toward the gums. This will help sweep away plaque and bacteria at the gum line, according to the Cleveland Clinic. Do not use a medium- or hard-bristled brush, which can damage the gums and tooth enamel. Move the toothbrush in gentle, circular motions to remove plaque.

DON'T NEGLECT YOUR TONGUE
Bacteria also can build up on the tongue, leading to bad mouth odor and additional oral health problems. Gently brush the tongue along with the teeth.

USE TOOTHPASTE WITH FLUORIDE
Fluoride has come under scrutiny due to its

potential effects on overall health. However, fluoride is a leading defender against tooth decay. It fights the germs that can lead to decay and provides a barrier for the teeth.

USE AN ANTIBACTERIAL MOUTHWASH
Use an antibacterial mouthwash each day to help reduce oral bacteria. This helps wash away food and debris, and also can help reduce the buildup of plaque.

AVOID SMOKING AND TOBACCO
Smoking is a leading cause of gum disease and oral cancer. Quit smoking and do not use other tobacco products to improve mouth health.

Oral health is vital to overall health. Daily attention can improve tooth and gum health.

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Sports

TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2024 • The News-Banner • Page 1a

Titans hire Bengals OC Brian Callahan as head coach

By **TERESA M. WALKER**
and **ROB MAADDIAP**
Pro Football Writers

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — The Tennessee Titans have agreed to hire Cincinnati Bengals offensive coordinator Brian Callahan as their head coach, a person familiar with the decision told The Associated Press on Monday.

The person spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because the deal hadn't been finalized.

Callahan replaces Mike Vrabel, who was fired on Jan. 9 after six seasons and losing 18 of his final 24 games.

The 39-year-old Callahan had a virtual interview

with Tennessee on Jan. 12, the first of 10 candidates to speak to the team. The Titans interviewed Callahan in person on Monday and decided to hire him, the person said.

The Titans declined to comment Monday night.

The NFL had not allowed in-person interviews of current league employees until Monday, the day after the divisional playoff round.

Callahan becomes the third coach hired since the season ended Jan. 7. New England promoted Jerod Mayo to replace Bill Belichick, and the Raiders elevated their interim coach, Antonio Pierce. Carolina, the Los Angeles Chargers,

Atlanta, Seattle and Washington are still looking for coaches.

Callahan has 14 years of NFL experience. He has been the Bengals' offensive coordinator since 2019 and is credited with aiding in the development of quarterback Joe Burrow. He will get the chance now to work with Will Levis, the quarterback Tennessee took at No. 33 overall last April.

The Titans also have the seventh overall draft pick and currently have the third-most salary cap space in the NFL. They believe



Brian Callahan

they have their quarterback after Levis went 3-6 as a rookie. The 33rd pick overall out of Kentucky took over at the end of October after veteran Ryan Tannehill sprained his right ankle.

Callahan was with the Bengals when they stunned the Titans, who were the AFC's top seed, in the divisional round of the playoffs on Jan. 22, 2022. Cincinnati went on to reach the Super Bowl, where it lost to the Los Angeles Rams.

The son of former Raiders coach Bill Callahan has

been a popular target in head coaching searches. He interviewed with several teams last year before opting to stay in Cincinnati. Callahan also interviewed recently with the Chargers for their coaching vacancy.

This season, Callahan helped former practice squad quarterback Jake Browning go 4-3 as a starter after a season-ending injury to Burrow, keeping the Bengals in the playoff mix until the end. Browning completed 70.4 percent of his passes, throwing for 1,936 yards with 12 touchdowns and seven interceptions.

Callahan played quarterback at UCLA and began his NFL career as a coaching

assistant for the Broncos in 2010 before being promoted to offensive quality control coach in 2011, and then offensive assistant in 2013.

He was quarterbacks coach for the Lions in 2016-17 and then for the Raiders in 2018 before joining the Bengals.

The Titans also interviewed former Stanford head coach David Shaw, Pierce, a trio of defensive coordinators in Dallas' Dan Quinn, Detroit's Aaron Glenn and Mike Macdonald of Baltimore, and three other offensive coordinators in Carolina's Thomas Brown, the Giants' Mike Kafka and Brian Johnson of Philadelphia.

Lions hoping to make more history, seeking first road playoff win since 1957

By **LARRY LAGE**
AP Sports Writer

ALLEN PARK, Mich. (AP) — The Detroit Lions have taken strides toward

leaving their woeful history behind, pulling within a win of their first Super Bowl appearance.

The next step will be challenging.

Detroit plays at San Francisco on Sunday in the NFC championship game, aiming for the franchise's first road playoff win since 1957, when it beat the 49ers and went on to win the NFL title.

"We're just getting over mountains right now," defensive end Aidan Hutchinson said after help-

ing the Lions beat Tampa Bay to advance. "It's just one mountain after another."

The next one looms large.

The top-seeded 49ers are favored to win by a touchdown, according to FanDuel Sportsbook, in their third straight NFC title game. Detroit will be playing in the game for the first time in 32 years and the second time in franchise history.

The Lions, though, do not lack confidence after beating the Los Angeles Rams in a wild-card game and the Buccaneers in the divisional round to give them 22 wins in 29 games starting with their season-ending surge in 2022.

"I don't want to say this

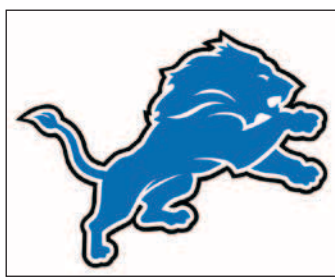
arrogantly, but we expected to win the first game, we expected to win this game," Jared Goff said after throwing for 287 yards and two touchdowns on Sunday. "We get to go to a game we expected to be in against a really good team at their place, and we're going to come into it expecting to win."

"It'll be a tough game, but it'll be fun."

Detroit's win over the Rams ended an NFL-record, nine-game postseason losing streak that spanned 32 years. The victory over the Bucs gave the franchise two playoff wins for the first time since its championship season six-plus decades ago.

Like much of the Lions' past, their NFC championship game experience isn't positive.

With Hall of Fame running Barry Sanders, Detroit went to Washington and lost 41-10 on Jan. 12, 1992.



Knights net 15 total swimmers on the all-NE8 awards list

The Northeast 8 released its selections for individual all-conference award winners, and Norwell was well represented.

The girls placed nine overall out of the 26 recipients, including six of them on the first team. The boys had six total.

First team

Girls: Ella Krug, Jillian Melcher, Emerson Meredith, Cassie Coyne, Mar-

lee Meredith and Olivia Daniel.

Boys: Rylan Heyerly and Kale Meredith.

Second team

Boys: Colten Strunk.

Honorable mention

Girls: Rilynn Ervin, Renee Frazee and Karrigan Melcher.

Boys: Ethan Williamson, Parker McCartney and Gage Reinhard.

UConn, Purdue remain atop jumbled AP Top 25

By **JOHN MARSHALL**
AP Basketball Writer

The AP Top 25 had another week of upheaval, with teams bouncing around like kernels in a popcorn maker.

The same two teams remained at the top amid the poll turmoil.

Reigning national champion Connecticut stayed No. 1 in The Associated Press men's college basketball poll released Monday, receiving 44 first-place votes from a 61-person media panel. No. 2 Purdue got 17 first-place votes.

A loss by Kansas jumbled the rest of the top five.

No. 3 North Carolina, No. 4 Houston and No. 5 Tennessee all moved up a spot by sweeping two games each last week.

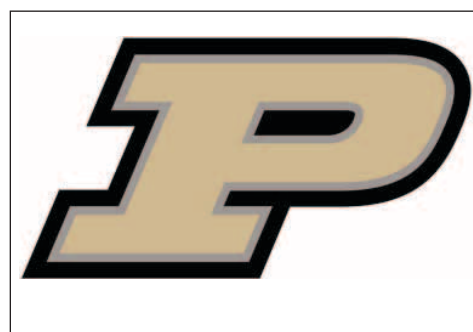
The Jayhawks dropped four spots to No. 7 following a 91-85 loss to West Virginia that ended their six-game winning streak in the series.

UConn moved to the top of the poll last week for the first time in 15 years.

The Huskies opened the week with a lopsided win over No. 17 Creighton in Donovan Clingan's return from a right foot injury. UConn then edged Villanova 66-65 in a physical game that had coach Dan Hurley talking about jujitsu, Muay Thai and UFC fighting.

"When you get ranked No. 1 — coach talked about it the entire week — it's like a temporary belt," UConn's Alex Karaban said. "You've got to continue to protect the belt, protect the heavyweight championship."

The Boilermakers opened their week with an 87-66 rout of rival Indiana and followed with a 14-point win over Iowa.



Purdue big man Zach Edey had another dominating week, finishing with 33 points and 14 rebounds against Indiana, and 30 points and 18 rebounds against Iowa.

"It's just different with him," Iowa coach Fran McCaffery said. "When he gets deep position, it's hard (to defend him)."

HEELS RISING

North Carolina had a precipitous fall from the poll last season, dropping out a month after being preseason No. 1.

The Tar Heels have moved in the opposite direction this season after missing the NCAA Tournament.

North Carolina opened at No. 19 in the preseason poll and, after bouncing around a bit, has steadily climbed to No. 3. The Tar Heels beat Louisville 86-70 last Wednesday and took down Boston College 76-66 on Saturday.

North Carolina (15-3) has won eight straight, including all seven of its Atlantic Coast Conference games, to lead the conference by two games over North Carolina State.

RIISING & FALLING

No. 19 Memphis had the biggest drop of the week, falling nine places after losing to South Florida and Tulane. Baylor tumbled six spots to No. 15 following losses to Kansas State and Texas.

No. 12 Duke's 80-76 loss to Pittsburgh dropped the Blue Devils five spots from last week's poll.

No. 16 Dayton made the biggest upward move, gaining six places after wins over Saint Louis and Rhode Island. No. 8 Auburn and No. 20 Texas Tech each climbed five places.

High School Calendar

TUESDAY, JAN 23

BOYS BASKETBALL: Bishop Luers at Norwell, 7:45 p.m.; Muncie Burris at Southern Wells, 7:30 p.m.

GIRLS BASKETBALL: Manchester at Bluffton, 7:30 p.m.;

SWIMMING & DIVING (CO-ED): Norwell at Delta, 6 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, JAN 24

GIRLS BASKETBALL: Cowan at Southern Wells, 7:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, JAN 25

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

FRIDAY, JAN 26

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

GIRLS BASKETBALL: East Noble at Norwell, 7:45 p.m.

SATURDAY, JAN 27

BOYS BASKETBALL: Norwell at East Noble, 1:30 p.m.; Bluffton at Madison-Grant, 7:30 p.m.; Lakeland Christian at Southern Wells, 7 p.m.

GIRLS BASKETBALL: Southern Wells at Southwood, 4 p.m. (JV 2 quarters).

WRESTLING: (sectional): Norwell, Bluffton, Southern Wells at Jay County, 8:30 a.m.

MONDAY, JAN 29

SWIMMING & DIVING (CO-ED): Norwell at Blackfoot, 6 p.m.

TUESDAY, JAN 30

GIRLS BASKETBALL: (Sectional) Bluffton vs. Manchester at South Adams High School, 6 p.m.

NFL Playoff Guide: How to watch the games and betting favorites

By **DAVID BRANDT**
AP Sports Writer

Three of the NFL's heavyweights have made it to the sport's championship weekend.

Then there are the Detroit Lions — who are one win away from their first Super Bowl appearance.

The Lions continued their feel-good run with Sunday's hard-fought win over the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, advancing to the NFC championship game. They'll travel to face the 49ers, who needed a rare fourth quarter comeback to beat the Packers.

The Chiefs — along with Patrick Mahomes, Taylor Swift and a bare-chested Jason Kelce — are back in the AFC championship game for an impressive sixth straight season after they earned a narrow victory over the Buffalo Bills. They'll travel to face the one team that didn't have much trouble last weekend — the Ravens and quarterback Lamar Jackson.

The winners of the AFC and NFC championships will play for the Vince Lombardi Trophy in Las Vegas during Super Bowl 58 on Feb. 11.

HOW TO WATCH SUNDAY

No. 3 Chiefs at No. 1 Ravens, 3 p.m. EST, CBS

No. 3 Lions at No. 1 49ers, 6:30 p.m. EST, Fox

BETTING FAVORITES

Odds makers are expecting two decent games this weekend but believe it'll be a Ravens-Niners Super Bowl.

The Ravens opened as a 3 1/2-point favorite over the defending Super Bowl champion Chiefs, according to FanDuel Sportsbook. The 49ers are a 6 1/2-point favorite over the Lions.

As for the Super Bowl winner, the odds makers still like the top seeds. The 49ers are +145 to win it all while the Ravens are

at +190.

Feel like betting on a longshot? The closest thing left is the Lions, who are at +700 odds to take home their first Super Bowl title.

And — as always — there are the prop bets. Among the options: If you feel like one of the coaches has some trickery up their sleeve, there's +8500 odds that a QB will catch a TD pass on championship weekend.

If any of the four quarterbacks has a mammoth afternoon and throws for more than 500 yards, those odds would pay +15000.

THE FORMAT

This is the fourth season of the current NFL playoff format. The field was expanded to 14 teams in 2020 when the league added a third wild-card qualifier from both the AFC and NFC.

Wild-card round: Jan. 13-15

Divisional round: Jan. 20-21

Conference championships: Jan. 28

Super Bowl 58 in Las Vegas at Allegiant Stadium: Feb. 11.

The four division winners in each conference automatically get the top four seeds, regardless of record, and then the top three teams with the best record that didn't win their division are the wild-card selections. That's why it's fairly common for a wild-card selection to have a better record — but worse playoff seeding — than a team that finished as a division winner.

The NFL has a re-seeding policy after each playoff round. That means that no matter how the bracket started, the lowest-seeded team will always travel to the higher-seeded team in the AFC and NFC.

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News-Banner Scoreboard

FOOTBALL

NFL

Divisional Round

Monday, Jan. 15
Buffalo 31, Pittsburgh 17
Tampa Bay 32, Philadelphia 9
Divisional Playoffs
Saturday, Jan. 20
Baltimore 34, Houston 10
San Francisco 24, Green Bay 21
Sunday, Jan. 21
Detroit 31, Tampa Bay 23
Kansas City 27, Buffalo 24
Conference Championships
Sunday, Jan. 28
AFC
Kansas City at Baltimore, 3 p.m.
(CBS)
NFC
Detroit at San Francisco, 6:30 p.m.
(FOX)

Super Bowl

Sunday, Feb. 11
At Las Vegas
TBD, 6:30 p.m. (CBS)

BASKETBALL

High School

Monday Girls' Scores
No Games.

Monday Girls' Scores

No Games.

College

Men's Basketball Scores
Monday, Jan. 22
Colgate 60, Lehigh 57
Md.-Eastern Shore 71, Queens
(NY) 61
North Carolina 85, Wake For-
est 64
SE Louisiana 71, Northwestern

St. 62
McNeese St. 62, Texas A&M-CC
61
Nicholls 78, Incarnate Word 74,
OT

Women's Basketball Scores

Monday, Jan. 22
Lehigh 79, Colgate 61
Seton Hall 74, St. John's 66, OT
Florida A&M 62, MVSU 55
Jackson St. 75, Texas Southern 50
Mississippi St. 89, Florida 77
Norfolk St. 99, Mary Washington 43
Prairie View 61, Alcorn St. 55
Bethune-Cookman 73, Ark.-Pine
Bluff 70
Montana 87, Weber St. 55
Saint Mary's (Cal) 73, Portland
67, OT
Utah 94, UCLA 81, OT

NBA

Sunday's Games

L.A. Clippers 125, Brooklyn 114
Denver 113, Washington 104
Orlando 105, Miami 87
Boston 116, Houston 107
Phoenix 117, Indiana 110
L.A. Lakers 134, Portland 110
Monday's Games
Cleveland 126, Orlando 99
Milwaukee 122, Detroit 113
Philadelphia 133, San Antonio 123
Memphis 108, Toronto 100
Charlotte 128, Minnesota 125
Boston at Dallas, 8:30 p.m.
Chicago at Phoenix, 9 p.m.
Atlanta at Sacramento, 10 p.m.
Tuesday's Games
Denver at Indiana, 7 p.m.
New York at Brooklyn, 7:30 p.m.
Portland at Oklahoma City, 8 p.m.
Utah at New Orleans, 8 p.m.
L.A. Lakers at L.A. Clippers, 10 p.m.
Wednesday's Games

Charlotte at Detroit, 7 p.m.
Minnesota at Washington, 7 p.m.
Memphis at Miami, 7:30 p.m.
Cleveland at Milwaukee, 8 p.m.
Portland at Houston, 8 p.m.
Phoenix at Dallas, 8:30 p.m.
Oklahoma City at San Antonio,
9:30 p.m.
Atlanta at Golden State, 10 p.m.

Thursday's Games

Philadelphia at Indiana, 7 p.m.
Utah at Washington, 7 p.m.
Boston at Miami, 7:30 p.m.
Denver at New York, 7:30 p.m.
Minnesota at Brooklyn, 7:30 p.m.
Sacramento at Golden State, 10
p.m.
Chicago at L.A. Lakers, 10:30 p.m.

HOCKEY

NHL

Sunday's Games

Ottawa 5, Philadelphia 3
Minnesota 5, Carolina 2
Detroit 2, Tampa Bay 1
N.Y. Islanders 3, Dallas 2, OT
N.Y. Rangers 5, Anaheim 2
Toronto 3, Seattle 1
Monday's Games
Boston 4, Winnipeg 1
New Jersey 6, Vegas 5, OT
Florida at Nashville, 8 p.m.
Pittsburgh at Arizona, 9 p.m.
Chicago at Vancouver, 10 p.m.
San Jose at Los Angeles, 10:30
p.m.

Tuesday's Games

Dallas at Detroit, 7 p.m.
Ottawa at Montreal, 7 p.m.
Tampa Bay at Philadelphia, 7 p.m.
Vegas at N.Y. Islanders, 7:30 p.m.
Washington at Minnesota, 8 p.m.
Columbus at Edmonton, 9 p.m.
St. Louis at Calgary, 9 p.m.
Buffalo at Anaheim, 10 p.m.

N.Y. Rangers at San Jose, 10:30
p.m.

Wednesday's Games

Arizona at Florida, 7 p.m.
Winnipeg at Toronto, 7 p.m.
Carolina at Boston, 7:30 p.m.
Washington at Colorado, 9:30 p.m.
Chicago at Seattle, 10 p.m.
St. Louis at Vancouver, 10 p.m.
Buffalo at Los Angeles, 10:30 p.m.

Thursday's Games

Arizona at Tampa Bay, 7 p.m.
Boston at Ottawa, 7 p.m.
N.Y. Islanders at Montreal, 7 p.m.
Philadelphia at Detroit, 7 p.m.
New Jersey at Carolina, 7:30 p.m.
Anaheim at Dallas, 8 p.m.
Nashville at Minnesota, 8 p.m.
Chicago at Edmonton, 9 p.m.
Columbus at Calgary, 9 p.m.

TRANSACTIONS

Monday's Transactions

BASEBALL
Major League Baseball
ST. LOUIS CARDINALS — Agreed to
terms with INF/OF Tommy Edman on a
two-year contract.

FOOTBALL

National Football League
DETROIT LIONS — Signed TE Zach
Ertz to the practice squad.

HOCKEY

National Hockey League
ANAHEIM DUCKS — Returned D
Robert Hagg to San Diego (AHL).
BUFFALO SABRES — Recalled D
Jacob Bryson from Rochester (AHL).
DETROIT RED WINGS — Reas-
signed D Brogan Rafferty to Grand
Rapids (AHL).
EDMONTON OILERS — Signed
RW Corey Perry to a one-year contract.
Placed LW Adam Erne on waivers.
LOS ANGELES KINGS — Recalled F
Samuel Fagemo from Ontario (AHL).

Ryne Sandberg says he has metastatic prostate cancer

CHICAGO (AP) — Hall of Fame second baseman Ryne Sandberg has been diagnosed with metastatic prostate cancer.

The 64-year-old Sandberg said Monday in a release put out by the Baseball Hall of Fame that he has started treatment.

"I am surrounded by my loving wife Margaret, our incredibly supportive family, the best medical care team, and our dear friends,"

Sandberg said. "We will continue to be positive, strong, and fight to beat this. Please keep us in your thoughts and prayers during this difficult time for me and my family."

Sandberg hit .285 with 282 homers, 1,061 RBIs and 344 steals in 16 seasons in the majors. He made his big league debut with Philadelphia in 1981.

He was inducted into Cooperstown in 2005.

Browns GM says he would 'absolutely love' to re-sign Flacco, even as Watson's backup

By TOM WITHERS
AP Sports Writer

BEREA, Ohio (AP) — Joe Flacco's short, surprising stint with the Browns could lead to a second season in Cleveland — maybe as Deshaun Watson's backup.

General manager Andrew Berry said Monday that he would "absolutely love" to re-sign the 39-year-old Flacco, who went 4-1 as a starter and helped the Browns make the playoffs after Watson suffered a season-ending shoulder injury.

Berry noted there could be financial limitations that prevent Flacco from returning, but said he's open to the possibility.

"He played winning football for us," Berry at his season-ending news conference. "I want to bring all of our good players back, but there are constraints to that. I'm really kind of both sides of the aisle but would have no problem having Joe back."

Flacco hasn't decided if he wants to continue playing or if he would settle for being a team's No. 2 QB. The former Super Bowl MVP was signed by the Browns out of desperation in November and resurrected his career by throwing for more than 300 yards in each of his last five games.

It's possible Flacco could get a better offer elsewhere. The Browns were in a similar situation last year with quarterback Jacoby Brissett, who made 11 starts when Watson was suspended, and signed as a free agent with Wash-

ington. While Watson is expected to make a full recovery and start for Cleveland next season, Flacco would give the Browns protection in case Watson got hurt again or struggled.

Berry said he has no doubt the two players could coexist and doesn't believe Flacco's potential presence behind Watson would cause any polarity.

"Zero considerations because of how both individuals are," Berry said. "It's not a concern internally at all."

As for Watson, Berry said the 28-year-old has made steady progress in his rehab and recovery from surgery to repair a fractured glenoid bone in his throwing shoulder.

Watson has played in only 12 of 34 possible regular-season games since the Browns acquired him in a controversial trade, but Berry is confident the three-time Pro Bowler will become the player the team hoped.

"We'd all love to have him on the field more often," Berry said. "Feel really good about him, happy with the progress that he's made within our organization, both on the field and off. We're looking forward to getting him back next year. We think he's going to have a really big year and have a ton of confidence in him as our starting quarterback."

Berry touched upon several other offseason topics during the 35-minute session with media members.

He made it clear the Browns intend

to keep star running back Nick Chubb, who suffered a gruesome, season-ending knee injury in Week 2 at Pittsburgh. Chubb underwent two separate surgeries to repair torn ligaments.

The 28-year-old Chubb's contract has no guaranteed money for next season and will need to be restructured. The four-time Pro Bowler has rushed for 6,511 yards and 48 touchdowns in six seasons with Cleveland.

"Nobody wants to see that carry in Pittsburgh be the last time he carries the ball for the Cleveland Browns," Berry said. "And obviously there are things that we'll have to work through, but that (moving on from Chubb) would not be our intention, as well. We obviously will work to keep him on the team."

Berry would not provide any clarity on the surprising departure last week of offensive coordinator Alex Van Pelt, one of three coaches not returning on Kevin Stefanski's staff. The Browns have interviewed two candidates to replace Van Pelt and have a meeting scheduled this week with Texans quarterback coach Jerrod Johnson.

As for Stefanski, Berry raved about the job he did this season in guiding the Browns to the playoffs despite numerous key injuries. Stefanski is in the running to win AP Coach of the Year for the second time and likely will receive an extension from the Browns.

"We're really happy with Kevin," Berry said.

Agriculture

John Deere partners with SpaceX in effort to enhance farmer connectivity

Deere & Company announced this week that it has entered into an agreement with SpaceX to provide cutting-edge satellite communications service to farmers.

Deere says it plans to use the Starlink network to provide a solution that will allow farmers facing rural connectivity challenges to leverage precision agriculture technologies fully.

This partnership, an industry first, will enable John Deere customers to be more productive, profitable, and sustainable as they continue providing food, fuel, and fiber for their communities and a growing global population.

"The value of connectivity to farmers is broader than any single task or action. Connectivity unlocks vast opportunities that were previously limited or unavailable," said Aaron Wetzel, Vice President of Production and Precision Ag Production Systems at John Deere. "For example, throughout the year, farmers must complete tasks within extremely short windows of time. This requires executing incredibly precise production steps while coordinating between machines and managing machine performance. Each of these areas are enhanced through connectivity, making the entire operation more efficient, effective, and profitable."

The SATCOM approach aims to connect new and existing machines through

satellite internet service and ruggedized satellite terminals. This will fully enable technologies such as autonomy, real-time data sharing, remote diagnostics, enhanced self-repair solutions, and machine-to-machine communication, all of which help farmers work more efficiently while minimizing downtime.

"John Deere has led the agriculture equipment industry for more than two decades with satellite-based precision guidance technology," said Jahmy Hindman, Senior Vice President & Chief Technology Officer at John Deere. "Now, we are bringing satellite communi-

cations service to the farm at scale so farmers with cellular coverage challenges can maximize the value of connectivity to their operations. The SATCOM solution unlocks the John Deere tech stack so every farmer can fully utilize their current precision agriculture technology in addition to the new innovative solutions they will deploy in the future. We initiated this process with a fierce focus on delivering value to our customers, and this partnership ensures we have a solution that meets their needs today and in the future."

John Deere's SATCOM will leverage SpaceX's

Starlink satellite internet constellation. To activate this solution, John Deere dealers will install a ruggedized Starlink terminal on compatible machines and a 4G LTE JDLINK modem to connect the machine to the John Deere Operations Center.

SATCOM will initially be available through a limited release in the United States and Brazil starting in the second half of 2024.

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Repairing family after a messy divorce

Dear Annie: I've been married to my husband for 16 years. He and his ex-wife did not end on good terms. We have never been invited to any holiday gatherings from his grown kids, who are married and have kids of their own. We are, of course, invited to all the grandkid's birthday parties.

In the past, I have tried to plan Christmas gatherings, but my texts were ignored. I delivered Christmas gifts every year after Christmas and sometimes into March. We didn't get to see the kids open presents.

So, last year, I decided I was not going to be Santa anymore since we are never extended an invite to join them for Christmas. My kids call me and ask what the plans are for Christmas. His kids, crickets. I feel bad for my husband because they never plan a birthday, holiday or even a visit. Father's Day is no different. Any other blended families have this problem? — Stepmom

Dear Stepmom: This has to be most difficult on your husband, but ultimately it is up to him to repair his relationship with his adult children and find out why they ignore you and your invitations for Christmas gatherings. It is nice that you go to the grandkids' birthday parties. This indicates that the relationship is not beyond repair. It sounds like there is a lot of anger about the divorce directed at your husband, and the best thing you can do is support your husband in taking the steps to repair any damage that was done. As your husband is mending his relationship, try not to point out to him all the terrible ways they have treated him (he knows that), but rather focus on his actions and what he can do to control himself.

Dear Annie: My parents divorced

when I was only 6, and my father went on to have three more marriages, the last of which produced a daughter.

Growing up, I felt the only time he had anything to do with my sister and me was if he needed something. He owned multiple businesses — a hotel, a cafe, a bar, a gas station and a steakhouse — and if he needed help running them during the summer when we were teenagers, he would reach out to us. But that was it.

He saw two of my daughters once but never had the pleasure of meeting my third.

When he was in the hospital, his wife reached out to me while I was in Europe. I made arrangements to use WhatsApp so we got to say our good-byes, and I know this meant a lot to him but meant nothing to me except closure. He passed within hours of talking to me. I feel I took the high road and moved on a very long time ago. — Took the High Road

Dear High Road: The real person you took the high road for was yourself. You will never forget the forgiveness that you gave your father by taking his call. A job well done!

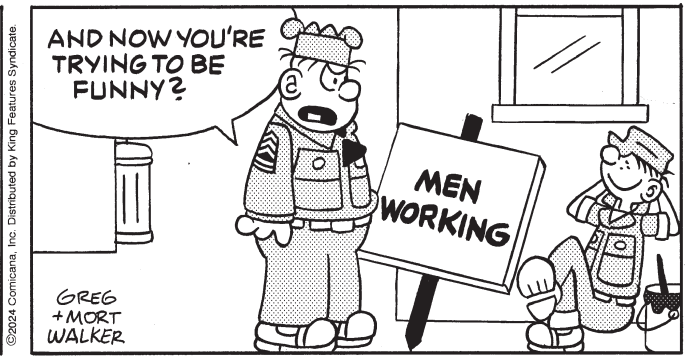
"How Can I Forgive My Cheating Partner?" features favorite columns on marriage, infidelity, communication and reconciliation. It is available as a paperback and e-book. Visit http://www.creatorspublishing.com for more information. Send your questions for Annie Lane to deannie@creators.com.

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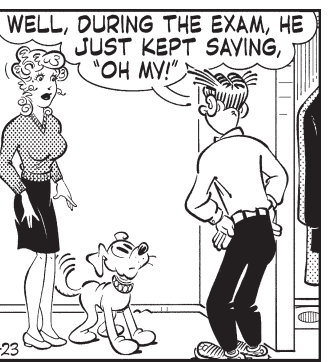


Dear Annie by Annie Lane

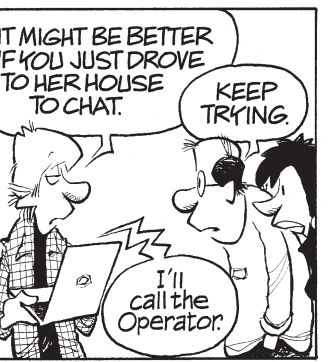
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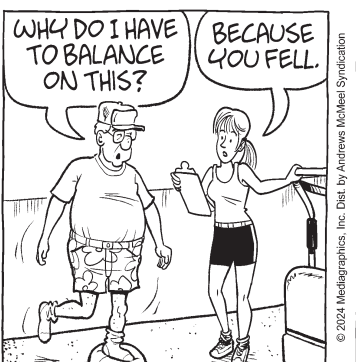
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My Answer

By Dr. Billy Graham



God ponders the heart of every person

Q: There's a prominent Christian man in my community and he does a lot of humanitarian work and gives a lot of money to various causes. He said that he hoped he was doing enough to get into Heaven when he dies. This is heartbreaking because he cannot get to Heaven that way. If I were to send him an email, what could I say that might help him understand that he must receive Jesus Christ as His Lord and Savior? — S.W.

A: The Bible tells the story of a young man known as the rich young ruler. He wanted to have assurance that he would go to Heaven someday and have eternal life, so he worked very hard to

meet spiritual criteria as he believed it. Many people today work hard to satisfy this self-inflicted expectation while forgetting the reason behind "doing good."

There are many people who spend their lives doing good deeds, believing that they are serving God, but they actually have little time for Him. They spend far more time watching television than reading the Bible. They spend far more time on social media than seeking wisdom from the Lord through prayer. There is no time for God and their hearts are a long way from Him.

The Bible says that the great God of Heaven searches our hearts. "I, the Lord, search the heart" (Jeremiah 17:10, NKJV). He's in there probing.

God ponders the heart of every person. "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the Lord [ponders] the hearts (Proverbs 21:2, KJV).

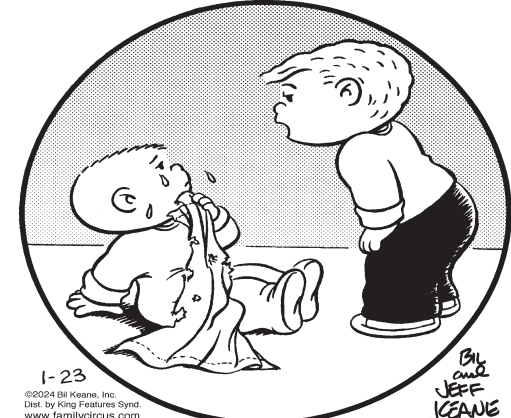
People rationalize that the way they're living is all right. Doing good doesn't buy our way into Heaven. God doesn't accept our evaluation of our lives. He weighs our spiritual lives. He also does a wonderful thing; He promises to give us a new heart if we will submit to Him and receive His salvation.

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

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By Bil Keane



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CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words.

Solution time: 22 mins. Yesterday's answer 1-23

Large crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-46.

Table with 24 columns (time slots) and 24 rows (channels) listing TV programming for Tuesday, January 23, 2024.

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

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

Difficulty: ★★

1/23

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

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Lottery Numbers

Monday's Drawings HOOSIER LOTTERY

Cash 5 — 01-15-16-30-38
Cash4Life — 26-28-43-50-56, Cash Ball: 03
Quick Draw Midday — 06-16-17-18-20-23-25-28-30-37-40-41-42-45-46-50-54-59-65-72, BE: 25
Daily Three-Midday — 07-02-03, SB: 07
Daily Three-Evening — 04-09-05, SB: 04
Daily Four-Midday — 07-00-01-07, SB: 07
Daily Four-Evening — 00-08-00-05, SB: 04
Quick Draw Evening — 02-03-10-12-15-16-21-25-29-37-38-41-52-53-54-55-67-69-71-76, BE: 03
Hoosier Lotto — Estimated jackpot (for Wednesday): \$3.4 million

MEGA MILLIONS

Estimated jackpot (for Tuesday): \$262 million

POWERBALL

24-25-43-52-63 Powerball: 21; Power Play: 2X

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.

Help Wanted

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

JANUARY 23 - 2-6 p.m. ET - Online - Farm: Susan Dunn Estate. Property Location: Three miles southeast of Markle, IN and Wells Co., Rockcreek Twp. 207.3+/- total acres, high quality farmland, mostly tillable. Tracts 1 & 2: Located on both sides of 200 N between 200 W and 300 W. Tract 3: Located at intersection of 300 N and 500 W. Tract 1: 19.83+/- acres. Tract 2: 110+/- acres. Tract 3: 77.47+/- acres. **Halderman Real Estate & Farm Management**, 800-424-2324, halderman.com, Rick Johnloz, 260-827-8181.

JANUARY 30 - 10 a.m. EDT - Stetzel Farm LLC. Farm machinery retirement auction. Tractors, planters, harvest equipment, tillage, miscellaneous and farm related, trucks and trailers. Timed online. No reserve. Inspection Jan. 29 from noon to 4 p.m., 7204 S 200 E, Warren. Contact Mike Stetzel, 260-450-2370, with equipment questions or to set up an inspection appointment. **Merit Auctions**, 833-273-9300, www.meritauctions.com, auction manager: Zach Hiner, 260-437-2771.

JANUARY 30 - 2 p.m.-6 p.m. ET - Online - Farm: Mann Farm. Property Location: Three miles northwest of Craigville, IN; 1/4 mile south of US 224 along 500 E in Lancaster Township, Wells County. 36.75+/- total acres, 34.5+/- tillable, 2.25+/- non-tillable, high quality farmland, Wells Co. Soil Types: Pewamo silty clay loam, Bount Del-Rey silt loam; WAPI: 140.6 bu. corn, 43.8 bu. soybeans. Additional information, drone flight, photos available at halderman.com. **Halderman Real Estate & Farm Management**, 800-424-2324, Rick Johnloz: 260-827-8181, Neal Wolhete: 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! **Krueckeberg Auction & Realty LLC**, 260-724-7402, Kjauction.com.

FEBRUARY 4 - 6 p.m. - Reida Zezula, owner. 2221 Lower Huntington Rd., Fort Wayne. Online only personal property auction. Furniture, vacuum, name brand purses, Sentry

safe, bedroom sets, vintage picnic baskets, costume jewelry, kitchen items, wicker swing, Star Wars collectibles, Fiesta ware, Barbies, household items, etc. Preview: Jan. 31, 5-6 p.m. **Krueckeberg 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, Salamonie 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 Company, 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: Feb. 3, 10 a.m.-noon. Auction manager Al Pfister, 260-760-8922, **Schrader Real Estate and Auction Company, Inc.**, 800-451-2709, schraderauction.com.

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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Public Notices

NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATION TO CREDITORS ESTATE NO. 90C01-2401-EU-000002
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF WELLS COUNTY

Notice is hereby given that **JOSHUA HARTMAN and HEATHER ABBOTT** were on the 16th day of January, 2024, appointed as Personal Representative of the **ESTATE OF BERTHA M. WYATT**, deceased, who died on the 3rd day of November, 2023.

All persons who have claims against this estate, whether or not now due, must file the claim in the Office of the Clerk of this Court within three (3) months from the date of the first publication of this notice, or within nine (9) months after decedent's death, whichever is earlier, or the claims will be forever barred.

DATED AT BLUFFTON, INDIANA, THIS 16th DAY OF January, 2024.

Beth Davis
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR WELLS COUNTY, INDIANA
nb 1/23, 1/30
hspaxlp

SUDOKU ANSWER

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

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