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Ossian man held here on Kentucky allegations

By SYDNEY KENT

A man from Ossian was arrested on charges related to a human trafficking case in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, last week.

According to a press release from Indiana State Police on Monday, Zavian Leon Jones, 23, was apprehended on one count of human trafficking, one count of the use of a minor under 16 in a sexual performance, and four counts of procuring a minor by electric means.



Zavian Leon Jones

Ossian Police Chief Kurt Jack explained that the ISP and the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force reached out to his department approximately three weeks ago to request information about Jones.

Aside from a few minor interactions, such as a vehicle lockout, Jack noted nothing of significance in Jones's interactions with the department.

Jack said that the warrant was executed during a traffic stop. Afterwards, Jones was taken to be interviewed by detectives at the Ossian Police Department before being booked at the Wells County Jail.

It is unclear if Jones has waived extradition at this time.

The Hopkinsville Police Department was identified as the lead agency on this case. Also assisting in the investigation was the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Investigations, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol/Protection, the Wells County Prosecutor's Office, and the Fort Wayne Police Department.

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Rising river

A combination of rain and melting snow has caused the Wabash River (measured at the Main Street bridge, pictured) to raise nearly two feet on Monday, starting at 4.75 feet deep in the early morning and ending at 6.5 feet deep in the evening. The river measured just over 3 feet deep early Sunday morning. More rain and snow are expected Tuesday, but no precipitation is expected the rest of the week. (Photo by Holly Gaskill)

Hoosiers are flocking to ACA coverage

By WHITNEY DOWNARD
 Indiana Capital Chronicle

Hundreds of thousands of Hoosiers recently transferred into the Affordable Care Act Health Insurance Marketplace, many of them first-time users of the program. Part of that growth is likely due to Indiana's unwinding of Medicaid coverage, or the review of millions of enrolled Hoosiers to redetermine benefits.

"It remains to be seen, but my hope is that the increased ACA enrollment rates reflect people successfully moving into the marketplace and maintaining or continuing coverage," said Tracey Hutchings-Goetz, the communications and policy director for Hoosier Action.

Nearly 300,000 Hoosiers secured health insurance coverage through the ACA Marketplace during the open enrollment period for 2024, part of the record 21.3 million consumers nationally utilizing the program for the upcoming year.

Indiana's enrollment increased by 60% — from 185,354 to 295,772 Hoosiers — between 2023 and 2024, the fourth-highest percent increase for signups in the nation, according to an analysis from KFF, an organization with a focus on health care policy.

According to data from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the 21.3 million Americans using the ACA Marketplace



The number of Hoosiers enrolled in an ACA Marketplace health insurance plan grew as the state unwinds Medicaid enrollment. (Getty Images)

included 5 million, or 24%, of people who were new to the process while the remaining 16.3 million were renewals. That data doesn't yet include a breakdown state-by-state and some states still have open enrollment.

But Hutchings-Goetz shared stories of confusion from enrollees about the process overseen by the Family and Social Services Administration and paperwork errors that terminated their insurance coverage. And the "handoff" between Medicaid and the ACA Marketplace

isn't always smooth. "We continue to be watching closely, the paperwork errors, system glitches and issues with notices and are continuing to work with FSSA to try to resolve as many of these issues as we can," Hutchings-Goetz said. "It is entirely incumbent upon the person to go and pursue that additional coverage... So we're cautiously hopeful that there is a higher number of people maintaining coverage."

(Continued on Page 2)

Inflation has slowed. Will the Fed cut its borrowing rates?

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER
 AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Chair Jerome Powell will enter this week's Federal Reserve meeting in a much more desirable position than he likely ever expected: Inflation is getting close to the Fed's target rate, the economy is still growing at a healthy pace, consumers keep spending and the

unemployment rate is near a half-century low.

A year ago, most economists had envisioned a much darker outlook. As the Fed raised interest rates at the fastest pace in four decades to fight high inflation, most economists warned of a recession, possibly a painful one, with waves of layoffs and rising unemployment. Even the Fed's own economists had projected that

the economy would sink into a recession in 2023.

The unexpectedly rosy picture — one that's sure to be subject to heated debate in the 2024 presidential race — may have left some Fed officials saddled by uncertainty. With their frameworks for assessing the economy upended by the pandemic and its aftermath, it's hard to know whether the economy's healthy conditions can

endure.

"It almost feels like what we saw in the second half of last year was too good to be true," said Nathan Sheets, chief global economist at Citi and a former Fed economist. "When things are too good to be true, you want to try to scratch the surface and say, how durable is this?"

Some Fed officials have raised similar questions and expressed

caution about their next moves. When they last met in December, the Fed's 19 policymakers who participate in interest-rate decisions said they expected to cut their benchmark rate three times this year. Yet the timing of those rate cuts, which would lead to lower borrowing costs for consumers and businesses, remains uncertain.

(Continued on Page 2)

State officials might carry guns at Capitol

By ISABELLA VOLMERT
 Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Some Indiana officials, including the attorney general and the secretary of state, could carry handguns in the state Capitol under a bill approved Monday by state lawmakers, who already can do so inside the complex.

The new bill authored by a Republican lawmaker would allow the state attorney general, secretary of state, treasurer

and comptroller and their staff members to carry a handgun if they are not otherwise barred by state or federal law.

The bill now advances to the House.

Guns are allowed in U.S. statehouses in some form in 21 states, according to a 2021 review by The Associated Press.

Indiana State Treasurer Daniel Elliott testified in favor of the bill this month.

"I believe it is something

and comptroller should be able to decide for their own staff," he told lawmakers.

The attorney general, secretary of state and comptroller support the bill, Elliott said. Representatives for Secretary of State Diego Morales and Attorney General Todd Rokita confirmed their support.

"Our office fully supports this legislation because we have a Constitutional right to keep and bear arms in this

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Death of girl brings house fire's toll to six siblings

SOUTH BEND, Ind. (AP) — An 11-year-old girl who was hospitalized for burns following a northern Indiana house fire has died, bringing the fire's death toll to six children, all of them siblings, authorities said Monday.

Angel Smith died Friday at Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis, the Marion County Coroner's Office said in a Monday update. Her death was confirmed one day after a vigil was held in South Bend for the six victims of the Jan. 21 fire.

Fire officials said the siblings were trapped by flames on the home's second floor in South Bend, a city of about 100,000 just south of the Michigan state line. Their father survived the blaze and is recovering from his injuries, said Suzie Krill, a spokesperson for the South Bend Fire Department.

He had told firefighters that he tried to rescue the children but was forced back by heavy smoke and wind-driven flames, South Bend

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Outside

Rain, snow likely today, but that's it for the week

Today	Wed.	Thursday
High 36	High 41	High 49
Low 32	Low 33	Low 33

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Online

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ACA coverage

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Unwinding COVID-19 Medicaid waivers

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the federal government directed states not to kick anyone off of their Medicaid rolls as millions lost their jobs and insurance coverage in exchange for enhanced federal funds. In Indiana, enrollment swelled from 1.5 million in February of 2020 to over 2.3 million in April of 2023, the last month of protections.

Since that time, the Family and Social Services Administration has reported that it reviewed more than one million Hoosiers' Medicaid coverage. Of those, just over half — 540,185, or 53% — have been renewed while another 25% — 255,561 — are maintaining their coverage while FSSA reviews their cases.

Indiana is among a handful of states that automatically enroll children in the Children's Health Insurance Program should they no longer qualify for Medicaid. Prior to the unwinding process, KFF ranked Indiana highly for having policies — such as the above — that encourage continuous coverage.

As of December, there are just over 2 million Hoosiers still enrolled in Medicaid and over 383,000 Hoosiers have fallen off of the Medicaid rolls.

A consistent concern for advocates in the early months of the unwinding process were the high rates of procedural disenrollments, so-called paperwork errors that could deny someone coverage who actually qualified.

"At the end of the day, the majority of our disenrollments continue to be procedural, which means that those people may still be eligible ... but due to some paperwork error — materials not getting in by the right deadline or materials getting lost in processing — they've been kicked off," Hutchings-Goetz said. "This can have some pretty devastating consequences for people. We've spoken to Medicaid members who, when they lose coverage, they have had to make decisions like rationing medication ... they've had to cancel doctor's appointments."

Nearly one in five Hoosiers previously on Medicaid, 190,834 or 19%, were terminated for procedural reasons. KFF reports that Indiana's disenrollment rate due to procedural reasons is higher than its peer states, at 81%

compared to the national average of 71%.

Members who lose coverage have the right to appeal that decision and Hutchings-Goetz recommended that Hoosiers going through the process utilize the state's health care navigators.

Of those disenrolled, another 32,910, or 3%, of enrollees were determined ineligible and some of those were transferred to the ACA Marketplace but the state's breakdown doesn't include how many.

Could more Hoosiers lose their coverage after the unwinding process?

Hutchings-Goetz flagged another post-pandemic change unrelated to the nationwide process that could impact Hoosier access to insurance: Indiana's re-introduction of premiums for some Medicaid beneficiaries.

"We're really concerned about this because everyone who has enrolled in (the) Healthy Indiana Plan since the pandemic protections has never had to pay premiums so there is a very significant amount of Medicaid HIP member education that needs to happen," Hutchings-Goetz said.

The Managed Care Entities contracted by the state offer several different types of insurance packages for members but, for those in HIP, certain Hoosiers can access HIP Plus by making a monthly POWER Account contribution.

Those who make between 100-133% of the Federal Poverty Level, or between \$31,200-41,496 for a family of four, are required to make these contributions in order to stay enrolled. This requirement, which impacts between 14-19% of HIP enrollees, was waived during the COVID-19 pandemic.

But FSSA told the CMS that it would bring those charges back sometime in 2024 — something the federal agency had concerns about.

"Evidence on the effects of premiums in Medicaid ... suggest that premiums beyond those authorized under Medicaid statute may reduce access to coverage and care among the population that Medicaid is designed to serve," read a December letter from CMS to FSSA's Medicaid Director Cora Steinmetz. "Beneficiaries who are subject to premiums appear to experience greater disruptions in Medicaid coverage and exhibit lower initial rates of enrollment."

CMS noted that between February 2015 and November 2016, over half of all beneficiaries, or 324,840 Hoosiers, required to make POWER contributions missed at least one payment, of which 88%, or 286,914, were put onto HIP Basic and 4%, or 13,550, were disenrolled. The remaining 14%, or 46,176, were those who applied for HIP Plus and were accepted but didn't make the initial payment.

Several states' worth of beneficiaries say the process of charging premiums is confusing in addition to the challenge of meeting that monthly payment. But Hutchings-Goetz noted another layer of confusion for Hoosier participants.

"HIP premiums have often been paid by charity organizations on behalf of individuals and that charity network is no longer intact," Hutchings-Goetz said.

Previously, those organizations included churches, housing advocacy groups, and even charitable hospital care programs, she said.

"I think it's an important part of the story to highlight because we've always been told that the reason to have HIP premium payments is that it teaches people to take responsibility for their own health care coverage. But if many of those payments are made by charity organizations on half of individuals because individuals are so confused by the program, then it seems like it is completely failing," Hutchings-Goetz said.

In the last few years, Congress increased subsidies and struck the premium requirement for individuals making up the 150% of the federal poverty level, or \$46,800 for a family of four, in the ACA Marketplace. That means that poorer Hoosiers will be paying premiums while their slightly wealthier peers pay nothing.

This rule also disproportionately cuts off Black Hoosiers, younger enrollees and those with lower incomes, CMS added.

"CMS continues to have concerns with premium requirements..." the CMS letter said.

The letter concluded by saying that CMS would not take action "act this time ... to minimize disruptions to the state's unwinding efforts" but didn't rule out future action.

Weather

Tuesday, Jan. 30, 2024

(24-hour observations at 10:32 p.m. Monday)
High: 36; **Low:** 32; **Precipitation:** None
Wabash River Level (at the Main Street bridge): 6.49 feet at 9 p.m. Monday

Wells County forecast

Tuesday: Rain and snow, mainly before 11 a.m. High near 36. South wind 5 to 15 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph. Chance of precipitation is 80%. New snow accumulation of less than a half inch possible.

Tuesday night: A slight chance of rain and snow before 10 p.m. Cloudy, with a low around 32. Northwest wind around 5 mph. Chance of precipitation is 20%.

Wednesday: Mostly cloudy, with a high near 41. Northwest wind 5 to 10 mph.

Wednesday night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 33. Southwest wind 10 to 15 mph, with gusts as high as 25 mph.

Thursday: Partly sunny, with a high near 49.

Thursday night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 33.

Friday: Partly sunny, with a high near 43.

Friday night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 27.

Saturday: Sunny, with a high near 44.

Saturday night: Mostly clear, with a low around 27.

Sunday: Sunny, with a high near 44.

Sunday night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 27.

Monday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 42.

State officials

(Continued from Page 1)

nation," Rokita's office said in a statement. "We believe this is a commonsense measure to promote safety that deserves quick passage."

Individual offices can write their own policies regarding carrying a handgun, the legislation says.

According to Indiana law, members of the general assembly and their staff who possess a valid license to carry a handgun may do so in the state Capitol and on the complex grounds.

Indiana in 2022 repealed a state law requiring a permit to carry a handgun in public. The new bill advanced Monday would also roll back the license requirement for members of the General Assembly and their staffs on Capitol grounds.

Metal detectors are in place at public entrances on Capitol grounds.

State employees with a valid access badge do not have to walk through the metal detectors to enter the buildings.

Death of girl

(Continued from Page 1)

Fire Chief Carl Buchanon said last week.

The five other children killed in the fire were previously identified as three boys — Demetris Smith, 10; Deontay Smith, 5; and D'Angelo Smith, 4; and two girls, Davida Smith, 9; and Faith Smith, 17 months.

Krill said Monday that the cause of the deadly fire remains under investigation by South Bend fire investigators and the Indiana Department of Homeland Security.

During a vigil held Sunday outside the burned home for the six children, white, pink and blue balloons were

released for the siblings, their names were recited and prayers were offered.

Lynn Coleman, a South Bend community leader, said the deadly fire was difficult to comprehend.

"You know, people say, 'What happened?' It doesn't matter. It won't bring those six babies back," Coleman told WNDU-TV.

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Inflation

(Continued from Page 1)

Most economists say they expect the first rate cut to occur in May or June, though a cut at the Fed's March meeting is not off the table. The timing of rate cuts will almost certainly be the top issue at the Fed's two-day meeting, which ends Wednesday. The Fed is all but sure to announce after the meeting that it's leaving its key rate unchanged at about 5.4%, where it's stood since July, its highest point in 22 years.

The Fed's consideration of rate cuts is taking place against an intensifying presidential campaign as President Joe Biden seeks reelection with the economy a polarizing issue. Rate cuts have the potential to provoke an attack from former President Donald Trump, who nominated Powell to be Fed chair but later publicly assailed him for raising rates during the Trump presidency and demanded that he lower them. Trump might view any Fed rate cuts carried out this year as aiding Biden's prospects in November.

At a news conference

last month, Powell said: "We don't think about politics. We think about what's the right thing to do for the economy."

On Wednesday, the Fed's policymakers could signal that they're close to cutting rates by adjusting the language in the statement they issue after each meeting. In December, the statement still suggested that the officials were willing to consider more rate increases. Removing or altering that language in this week's statement would signal that they're shifting to a new approach, focused on rate cuts.

The Fed's aggressive streak of 11 rate hikes, beginning in March 2022, was intended to tame inflation, which peaked in June 2022 — according to the central bank's preferred gauge — at 7.1%. But data released Friday showed that over the past six months, inflation has fallen all the way back to the Fed's 2% annual target level. In the past three months, year-over inflation that excludes volatile food and energy costs has dropped to

just 1.5%.

Yet Fed officials are expected to wait for at least a few months, to try to build confidence that inflation has been truly beaten, before they start reducing rates.

Christopher Waller, an influential member of the Fed's governing board, sounded a note of caution in a recent speech.

"Inflation of 2% is our goal," he said. "But that goal cannot be achieved for just a moment in time. It must be sustained."

Waller has previously referred to having been "head-faked" on inflation. On more than one occasion, when initial government reports had indicated that inflation was falling, subsequent revisions to the data showed that price increases actually remained high. In his speech, Waller mentioned the government's upcoming revisions of inflation data, to be released on Feb. 9, as a report he will be watching closely.

It's possible that inflation could stay undesirably high, especially if the economy remains strong, which could cause the Fed to leave rates

unchanged. Fed officials have said that as long as the economy stays healthy, they can take time before cutting rates.

Average paychecks are still increasing at about 4% to 4.5% annually, and apartment rental prices are still rising faster than they did before the pandemic.

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OBITUARIES

Harold Duane Arnold, 90

Harold Duane Arnold, 90, of Bluffton, passed Sunday morning, Jan. 28, 2024, at Christian Care Retirement Community.

Harold was born on Aug. 21, 1933, in Liberty Township, Wells County, the son of Luster Arnold and Gertrude (Reese) Arnold.

He graduated from Rockcreek High School in Wells County with the Class of 1951.

He entered service in the U.S. Army in 1954 and was later honorably discharged.

Harold married Marjorie A. Jennings on March 3, 1956, in Markle. He worked as a typesetter for the Bluffton News-Banner for 26 years, was a realtor with McBride Realty for many years and then finished his working career as a custodian for the Northern Wells Community Schools system.

Harold was a member of the Markle Church of Christ.

Survivors include his wife of 66 years, Marjorie, of Bluffton. They had two sons, Kent (Linda) Arnold of Decatur, and Steven Arnold of Bluffton; and two daughters, Kelli Arnold of Indianapolis, and



Jodi Arnold of Bluffton. They also had nine grandchildren, two step-grandchildren, and 21 great-grandchildren.

Harold was preceded in death by his parents, Luster and Gertrude Arnold; his brothers Dale Arnold, Bob Arnold, and Max Arnold; and his sister, Marjorie Spoolstra.

Visitation will take place from 6-8 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 1, 2024, at the Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home in Bluffton.

Funeral services will take place at 10:30 a.m. on Friday, Feb. 2, 2024, at the funeral home with calling after 10 a.m. Pastor Gerald Moreland will officiate. Burial will follow at Elm Grove Cemetery in Bluffton.

Memorials may be made in Harold's memory to the Markle Church of Christ or to the Golden Apple Unit at Christian Care Retirement Community and can be directed to the funeral home.

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

Willard F. Lechleitner, 86

Willard F. Lechleitner, 86, of Huntington, passed away on Thursday, Jan. 25, 2024, at Markle Health and Rehab.

Willie was born in Fort Wayne, on Jan. 7, 1938; he was a son of the late Willard August and Vera (Grabemeyer) Lechleitner.

Willie was a retired GTE/Verizon Lineman after 38 years of service. He loved country ballroom and ballroom dancing, NASCAR racing and fishing. Willie enjoyed going on road trips no matter where you went.

One of his greatest adventures was his trip to Japan in 2002. Willie was a dedicated volunteer for Drum and Bugle Corp competitions.

He was a fun-loving husband, father and grandfather, with a lot of joy in his heart. Willie laughed and shared his love with everyone he met. He was very much loved and will be deeply missed,



especially his smiles by his family and friends.

Willie is survived by his wife of 29 years, Joyce Lechleitner; daughters, Christine Hoover, Kimberly (Shane) Dafforn, Dawn (Scott) Studebaker, Laurie Elliott, Amber Johnson; sons, Kelly (Suthin) Carney, Jeremy and Joshua (Bethany) Carney; along with 19 grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren; and sister, Sandra Good.

He was also preceded in passing by his first wife, Lorain Lechleitner; and grandson, Darrian Carney.

A celebration of life will be held at noon on Saturday, Feb. 17, 2024, at the Living Faith Missionary Church, 17718 Bluffton Road in Yoder, with visitation one hour prior.

Contributions in Willie's memory may be made to Heart-to-Heart Hospice. Condolences may be left online at www.elzey-patterson-rodak.com

G. Allan Penrod, 85

G. Allan Penrod, 85, a longtime Bluffton resident, passed away Monday afternoon, Jan. 29, 2024, at Heritage Pointe in Warren.

Funeral arrangements are pending at this time with the Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home in Bluffton.

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.

Holcomb postpones requirement for remote meeting testimony

By NIKI KELLY
Indiana Capital Chronicle

Gov. Eric Holcomb on Monday issued an executive order postponing new technology requirements for public meetings or hearings on proposed executive branch rules.

The Indiana General Assembly last year required that all such hearings should be webcast on the state website. But it went further to say the technology must allow Hoosiers to attend and comment remotely during the hearings.

Lawmakers don't require their own branch of government to allow remote attendance and comments but they do livestream all committee hearings and session action.

Holcomb's order said the Indiana Office of Technology and Office of Management and Budget have been working to meet the new law but technical challenges remain. He specifically referenced a Dec. 4, 2023 hearing by the Family and Social Services



Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb postponed a requirement for public meeting comment Monday. (Indiana Capital Chronicle photo)

Administration.

"It has been appropriately demonstrated... that the webcasting and archiving of all the rulemaking hearings and public meetings are not yet technically feasible, but progress

is being made with the continuing goal to achieve compliance as soon as reasonably possible," the order said.

Holcomb delayed implementation until Sept. 1.

Police Notebook

CITY Incidents

Wednesday, 4:54 p.m., McDonald's. Caller reported someone went through drive-thru and intimidated her son with a gun on his lap the day before.

Wednesday, 5:07 p.m., Valley Park Apartments. Caller reported verbal altercation over parking space.

Wednesday, 8:28 p.m., 400 block of West Market Street. Caller reported possibly intoxicated man tried to get into their house. Unable to locate.

Wednesday, 8:31 p.m., Life Community Church. Report that a juvenile drove into tree on South Oak Street at Central Avenue intersection.

Wednesday, 10:35 p.m., 300 block of Capri Court. Caller reported they found pills in the hallway, unsure who they belong to or what they are.

Thursday, 9:32 a.m., Bluffton Harrison Middle School. Student found in possession of vape.

Thursday, 2:50 p.m., American Axle and Manufacturing. Officer requested to standby during shift change.

Thursday, 4:18 p.m., 200 block of East Market Street. Subject requested to speak to officer regarding potential fraud via Facebook Marketplace.

Thursday, 7:17 p.m., North Main Street and Capri Court. Vehicle stopped on roadway, pushed to Wendy's.

Thursday, 7:39 p.m., Advance Auto Parts. Report of someone doing donuts in parking lot. No one driving pastry style located, however, officer found about seven trucks and a limousine at Hope Church.

Thursday, 8:52 p.m., 200 block of Capri Court. Report of subject being loud and possibly intoxicated.

Thursday, 9:29 p.m., 200 block of South Jersey Street. Caller reported broken window in house.

Friday, 2:24 a.m., North Main Street and East 300 North. Driver cited for no valid license.

Friday, 12:26 p.m., 200 block of West Cherry Street. Report of a battery between juveniles.

Friday, 7:53 p.m., 4300 block of West 200 North. Report of banging on window. Unable to locate.

Friday, 11:49 p.m., East Wiley Avenue and South Bennett Street. Caller reported kids running on Main Street. Officer did not see anything.

Saturday, 7:14 a.m., 1300 block of West Washington Street. Caller reported someone keyed his car.

Saturday, 9:26 a.m., Dollar General South. Officer observed expired sticker on license plate, conducted traffic stop. Subject arrested for possession of marijuana.

Saturday, 12:35 p.m., 500 block of West Washington Street. Report of a civil issue over property.

Saturday, 12:55 p.m., 500 block of West Market Street. Report of a couple fighting outside.

Saturday, 1:49 p.m., South Morgan and West

Arnold Streets. Report of a male driver on a four wheeler with a small child, not stopping at intersections.

Saturday, 1:54 p.m., CVS. Report of man and woman in ski masks and puffy coats, possible theft.

Saturday, 2:27 p.m., 600 block of West Ohio Street. Caller advised his license was stolen in Indianapolis.

Saturday, 3:47 p.m., Pretzels. Caller reported a cigarette pack with "meth" on it.

Monday, 1:14 a.m., 1400 block of Lancaster Street. Caller reported vehicle at residence when no one should be there.

Monday, 9:55 a.m., South Wayne Street and Riverview Drive. Report of a sick raccoon meandering in roadway.

Monday, 10:36 a.m., Wells County Jail. Inmate Ron Petty advised his vehicle was stolen.

COUNTY Incidents

Wednesday, 2:13 p.m., 6600 South 1150 West, Warren. Caller reported a group of high school-age children advised they parked their vehicle in the woods due to an accident on Tuesday evening. Truck was located with significant damage from trees.

Wednesday, 2:31 p.m., Wells County Jail. Warrant served to Cameron Peck at the jail.

Wednesday, 3:47 p.m., Wells County Jail. Warrant served to Justin Neal at the jail.

Wednesday, 11:44 p.m., 40 block of Sunrise Way, Bluffton. Thomas Mossburg arrested for possession of child pornography.

Thursday, 12:50 a.m., 600 block of Millside Court, Ossian. Warrant served to Sydney Wells, taken to jail without incident.

Thursday, 3:57 a.m., Ind. 224 and North 450 East, Ossian. Report of a cow in the roadway that then disappeared into the fog.

Thursday, 8:36 a.m., 4500 East Ind. 224, Ossian. Cow emerged from the fog in an effort to trespass on random property. Unclear if it was removed.

Friday, 12:19 p.m., Wells County Courthouse. Woman

reported unpaid child support in the amount of \$60,309.97. Subject charged with two counts of nonsupport of a dependent child, both Level 6 felonies.

Friday, 3:31 p.m., Wells County Courthouse. Woman transported from Community Corrections the Wells County Jail.

Friday, 6:10 p.m., 900 South and South 1000 West, Marion. Car versus deer.

Friday, 7:32 p.m., East 1050 North and North 450 East, Ossian. Report of a speed sign down. Dispatch advised to notify county highway department.

Friday, 7:51 p.m., 4300 East 200 North, Bluffton. Caller reported daughter babysitting someone and heard knock on door.

Friday, 9:06 p.m., I-69 Southbound, Roanoke. Vehicle with flat tire requested assistance.

Saturday, 4:44 p.m., North 700 East and Ind. 224, Craigville. Subject stated his dog ran away and he located in a field. The dog would only answer to his wife, however. The dog was lounging a quarter mile into the field.

Saturday, 5:42 p.m., 7000 East Market Street, Craigville. Caller reported domestic issue.

Saturday, 9:43 p.m., South Meridian Road and 700 South, Poneto. Report of a telephone pole struck by vehicle, driver left truck and was picked up by alternative vehicle. Officer located ID badge belonging to Jordan Daily. Daily admitted to his involvement in the wreck earlier and was taken to Bluffton Regional Medical Center for a drug test. Daily was arrested for driving while under the influence.

Saturday, 11:53 p.m., 1500 East 350 North, Bluffton.

(Continued on Page 6)

Sue H. (Swartz) Cabbage
Calling: 2-7 p.m., Tues., Jan. 30 and one hour prior to the service.
Funeral: 10 a.m. Wed., Jan. 31 at the funeral home.

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Congress tests its own willingness to get things done

Back in mid-January, among people who pay attention to the state of American democracy, perhaps the most widely circulated quote from a news article had nothing to do with the presidential primaries or drama in Congress. Rather, it was from a European ambassador who likened the United States to “a fat buffalo trying to take a nap” while wolves circle.



Lee Hamilton

The point this ambassador was making — along with other diplomats to whom Politico foreign affairs correspondent Nahal Toosi spoke — is that as seen from abroad, the US is failing basic tests. “The diplomats are aghast that so many U.S. leaders let their zeal for partisan politics prevent the basic functions of government,” Toosi wrote.

Normally, I’d read something like that, think, “Huh, that’s interesting,” and move on. But I keep returning to it in my mind.

When I began work on this commentary, my plan was to praise the budget agreement that Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson and Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer reached in early January. It was a sign that maybe Congress was ready to avoid a government shutdown and get its most important work done.

The waters have gotten muddier since then, though both houses of Congress did agree to another continuing resolution that will allow them to keep the government operating into March. The truth is, with a closely divided electorate and a narrowly divided US House, this kind of brinksmanship may be the best we can expect. In our system, someone will always be unhappy. We make progress when political leaders who are willing to search for common ground and find people they can work with.

To some extent, the diplomats in Politico are just reacting to the messy way policy sometimes gets made in the US. Still, there’s no question that our ability to move forward as a country on key questions is hamstrung on Capitol Hill right now.

There are plenty of reasons for hopefulness, including a functioning Senate and a perception among Democrats that Johnson, as a Republican House speaker, has been willing to deal honestly with them. But the fact that there is so little predictability about Congress’s ability to get things done is worrisome. As long as congressional leaders on both sides can keep talking to one another and are willing to seek points of agreement, our system can function. If that stops, maybe we’re a fat buffalo after all.

Lee Hamilton is a distinguished scholar with the IU School of Global and International Studies. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

Submit your Letters to the Editor via: • Our website link (Submit your Letter) • E-Mail: email@news-banner.com • Fax: (260) 824-0700 • Mail: PO Box 436, Bluffton IN 46714 • Drop-off: 125 N. Johnson St., Bluffton. All letters must be signed and must include a phone number or address in case verification is desired. Letters are edited for brevity and clarity. **Letters must be no more than 500 words.** Please mark your correspondence as a “Letter to the Editor,” or if you wish to express an opinion to us but do not want it published, please mark as “Not for Publication.”

Today in History

By The Associated Press

Today is Tuesday, Jan. 30, the 30th day of 2024. There are 336 days left in the year.

Today’s Highlight in History: On Jan. 30, 1933, Adolf Hitler became chancellor of Germany.

On this date:

In 1649, England’s King Charles I was executed for high treason.

In 1911, James White, an intellectually disabled young Black man who had been convicted of rape for having sex with a 14-year-old white girl when he was 16, was publicly hanged in Bell County, Kentucky.

In 1945, during World War II, a Soviet submarine torpedoed the German ship MV Wilhelm Gustloff in the Baltic Sea, killing 9,000, most of them war refugees; roughly 1,000 people survived.

In 1948, Indian political and spiritual leader Mohandas K. Gandhi, 78, was shot and killed in New Delhi by Nathuram Godse, a Hindu extremist.

In 1968, the Tet Offensive began during the Vietnam War as Communist forces launched surprise attacks against South Vietnamese towns and cities.

In 1969, The Beatles

staged an impromptu concert atop Apple headquarters in London that would be their last public performance.

In 1972, 13 Roman Catholic civil rights marchers were shot and killed by British soldiers in Northern Ireland on what became known as “Bloody Sunday.”

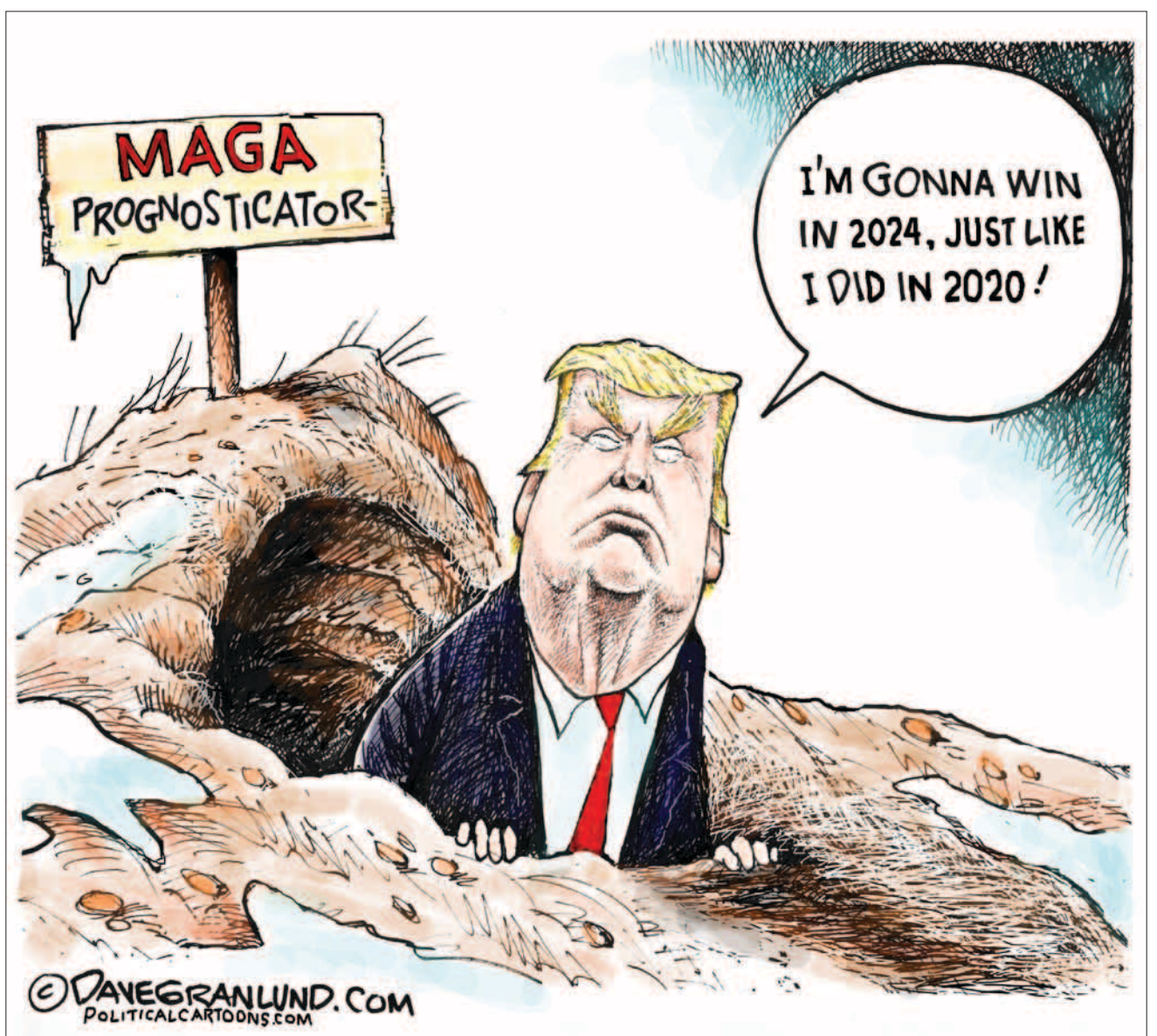
In 1993, Los Angeles inaugurated its Metro Red Line, the city’s first modern subway.

In 2005, Iraqis voted in their country’s first free election in a half-century; US President George W. Bush called the balloting a resounding success.

In 2006, Coretta Scott King, widow of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., died in Rosarito Beach, Mexico, at age 78.

In 2017, President Donald Trump fired Acting U.S. Attorney General Sally Yates after she publicly questioned the constitutionality of his controversial refugee and immigration ban and refused to defend it in court.

In 2020, health officials reported the first known case in which the new coronavirus was spread from one person to another in the United States.



DeSantis withdrawal paved the way for likely Trump-Biden rematch

What went wrong with Ron DeSantis’ presidential campaign? You can list many arguable mistakes, as you can with any campaign, and you can add, as some reporters have, that the candidate was not likable or good at retail campaigning — which mostly reflected reporters’ personal dislike of DeSantis or resentment at his refusal to schmooze what he considered unfriendly press.

But I think his campaign’s failure came down to two things. One is that Republican voters rallied to Donald Trump in the face of what they regarded (correctly, in my view) as politically motivated and legally unjustified indictments. I made that point in columns last November and December and once again in my column after DeSantis’ second-place finish in the Iowa caucuses last week.

You can say that Republican voters responded mindlessly to these indictments, or without prudent regard for the possibility that convictions on one or more charges would make Trump unelectable in the fall. You might add, with a chortle if you’re a Trump supporter, that Democratic prosecutors who thought they were disqualifying Trump were actually making him stronger.

But there is no question that there was a rallying around Trump, a rally that disregarded the plentiful evidence from 2021 and 2022 elections that his claims to have actually won in 2020 cost Republican candidates decisive votes. And a rally that put into the shade the strong arguments that DeSantis had shown in Florida the capacity to actually deliver on his promises, in stark contrast with Trump’s incapacity to do so on many issues — including the wall! — in his four years as president.

Which leads me to my second point, which is that it is hard to get a party’s voters to repudiate a party’s president. As National Review’s Dan McLaughlin has written, that hasn’t happened in the era in which primary voters started dominating the presidential nomination process in the 1972 cycle. Democratic national conventions did reject ex-President Martin Van Buren in 1844 and refused to renominate Franklin Pierce in 1856, and Republican national conventions rejected Ulysses S. Grant in 1880 and Theodore Roosevelt in 1912, and gave no serious consideration to Herbert Hoover in 1936 or 1940.

In contrast, Gerald Ford beat Ronald Reagan in 1976, Jimmy Carter beat Edward Kennedy in 1980, and George H.W. Bush dispatched Pat Buchanan in 1992 — although in each case the challenger got to deliver a convention speech that caused some ruckus and the incumbent lost in November. It turns out that it’s hard to ask voters who have already voted once for a president, and who have reflexively defended him against critics time and again, to turn and vote against him — as evidenced by the fact that the strongest of these challenges was Reagan’s against Gerald Ford, the one incumbent here who had not been elected president himself.

So perhaps DeSantis’ defeat was inevitable, at least after the indictments and maybe from the beginning, just as his decision to withdraw was overdetermined. Polls suggested he’d finish in single digits in Tuesday’s New Hampshire primary, his chances were dismal in the Feb. 8 caucuses in Nevada (Trump’s best early-contest state in 2016), and his chances seemed no better in the Feb. 24 primary in South Carolina, Nikki Haley’s home state and whose governor and two senators have endorsed Trump.

It would have been impossible for DeSantis to have maintained a semblance of a campaign, against such odds, over those 33 days. The difficulty of plugging on over a similar interval prompted the withdrawal of Democrat Bill Bradley after losing New Hampshire to Al Gore by only 4 points in 2000.

Writing about the presidency in Federalist 70, Alexander Hamilton asserted that “energy in the executive” is important. Thanks to the decisions of our two parties’ voters, the nation will have to rely on the energy of one of two executives who are or will be past 80 in the term they are seeking.

Michael Barone is a senior political analyst for the Washington Examiner, resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and longtime co-author of The Almanac of American Politics. His new book, “Mental Maps of the Founders: How Geographic Imagination Guided America’s Revolutionary Leaders,” is now available.

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Michael Barone

Social Security: A broken socialist dinosaur

It seems many still harbor, or want to perpetuate, the illusion that our Social Security system is not in trouble.

Let me quote here from a press release from the Social Security Administration released March 31, 2023:

“The Social Security Board of Trustees today released its annual report on the financial status of the Social Security Trust Funds. The combined asset reserves of the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance and Disability Insurance (OASI and DI) Trust Funds are projected to become depleted in 2034, one year earlier than projected last year, with 80% of benefits payable at that time.”

In 2034, per the report, “if Congress does not act before then ... there would be sufficient income coming in to pay 80% of scheduled benefits.”

It couldn’t be clearer. In 10 years, with no action from Congress, everyone will begin receiving 80% of what they are currently receiving, or promised, under the existing Social Security system.

Can anyone imagine getting a notice from a private retirement provider saying that in 10 years all beneficiaries will begin receiving 80% of what they were promised?

How did we get into this situation? It’s the wonders of government planning, of socialism.

Social Security is not a pension program based on investments. It is a government tax and spend program. The stipends of current retirees are



Star Parker

paid with the payroll tax of those currently working.

Because life spans have increased and population growth has decreased, there are far fewer working now to support each retiree than was the case years ago. Socialism is always mugged by reality.

The Committee to Unleash Prosperity estimates that over the last 40 years, the annual real return of Social Security for “the typical middle-class worker” has been about 1% per year.

Today, 30-year government bonds yield over 4%. The historic long-term return on stocks is 6%. Inflation adjusted.

The paltry returns on Social Security are going to turn out much worse. To close the 20% deficit between revenues and outlays 10 years from now, some combination of tax increases and benefit cuts will be necessary. This will make bad returns even worse.

Aside from the terrible economics of Social Security, how about the terrible politics?

Every young person entering the workforce today has no choice but pay the payroll tax into this bankrupt system.

With all our rhetoric about freedom, democracy and social justice, shouldn’t young people entering the workforce be given a choice whether they want to participate in this system? Why shouldn’t they be given the option — the freedom — to join

a private retirement plan rather than a socialist government system?

How about the injustice this causes low-income Americans under the guise that government socialism is good for them?

For a low-income earner, the Social Security payroll tax takes the only funds that they have available to invest.

Per the Federal Reserve Consumer Finance Survey, median wealth of Black families is 15% of the median wealth of white families. Wealth comes from investment, not income. The percentage of Black families owning stock is about 60% of white families.

Shouldn’t low-income families be given the option of getting out of the government system and investing privately over a 40-year working life and have the option to build wealth? Why should government be telling these free, private individuals how to manage their retirement savings?

Beyond what this broken system does to individuals, it also hurts the nation in the larger fiscal scheme of things. Social Security accounts for 19% of federal spending.

Social Security not only points to fiscal and economic bankruptcy but also to political bankruptcy, as politicians unwilling to tell the hard truths to citizens tell them everything is OK.

It’s time for leadership and truth. And it is time to give American citizens freedom to control their own property and their own lives in our free country.

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Recorders for county's kids

Thanks to funds from the Psi Iota Xi Sorority of Bluffton all kids in public schools in Wells County will be learning to play music on a brand new recorder this spring. Each elementary school will be receiving enough money to purchase the instruments for their students in those classrooms. Bluffton-Harrison Elementary music teacher Grace Sommerfeld, at right, is shown accepting a check for her students from Psi Ote member Rhonda Ryan, at left. Excited about the news were students Haylee Sanchez and Cayden Lynch. The Psi Otes are committed to supporting speech, hearing, art, literacy and music in Wells County. (Photo by Barbara Barbieri)

Senior's lunch at Ossian Lutheran Church Feb. 8th

A Senior Citizen's Lunch is being planned by the New Hope Lutheran Church for Thursday, Feb. 8, at 11:30 a.m. at the church at 8824 N St. Rd. 1 in Ossian.

Bob Walters from Soarin' Hawk will be speaking on the rescue of raptors and will bring live birds, including an eagle, to the program.

To reserve a spot call or text 260-415-1462 or 260-223-4830. A free will offering will defray the cost.

All seniors 50 and older are invited to attend.

Activities at Fort Wayne's riverfront areas

A variety of activities are planned at river side areas in downtown Fort Wayne.

On Feb. 11 the entertainment will be an Open Jam Session with folks bringing their own instruments.

"A Night at the Ballroom" will be featured tonight from 7 to 9:30 p.m. at the Promenade Park Pavilion.

A free "Sunday Sweat on the Riverfront" will take place the Sunday, Feb. 11 with Kickboxing with 9Round from 9 to 10 a.m. and Yoga on the Riverfronts from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

More info about the events at fortwayneparks.org.

Area Things to See and Do

ALL FOR ONE PRODUCTIONS, FORT WAYNE
www.allforonefw.org
ALLEN CO. WAR MEMORIAL COLISEUM
Camping Show: Feb. 1-4; Boat Show: Feb. 9-11; Show Me Reptile 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
"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
ClydeTheatre.com or at 1-800-514-3849.
EMBASSY THEATER, FORT WAYNE
Joy Koy comedy: Feb. 4; http://fwembassytheatre.org/events
FIRE AND LIGHT PRODUCTIONS
"Finding Nemo Jr.," April 11-13, Arts United Center, 303 E. Main St., Fort Wayne. Tickets at fireandlightproductions.com.
1ST PRESBYTERIAN THEATRE FORT WAYNE
firstpresfortwayne.org/theater/

BOTANICAL CONSERVATORY
Botanical Speedway: through April 7; botanicalconservatory.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:
Little River Band, Feb. 2; 360 All-stars, 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 Mystro, Feb. 8; Tennessee Whiskey Chicago: Feb. 9; Michael Palascak: Feb. 14; Unspoken: Feb. 15; Stepcrew Dance: Feb. 29; https://www.boxofficecickettsales.com/honeywell-center
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Fort Wayne Ballet: fortwayneballet.

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SWEETWATER SOUND, Performance Pavilion
KennyWayne Shepherd, May 18; Tickets: 800-514-3849 or eTix
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www.bakerstreetcentre.com
PIERE'S ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE, FORT WAYNE
Etix.com
FW'S PARKVIEW FIELD
ticketmaster.com
LERNER THEATRE, ELKHART
Colin Mochrie: Feb. 10; Rodney Carrington: Feb. 23; Saxon & Uriah Herr: Hell, Fire & Chaos: May 12; TheLerner.com
WAGON WHEEL, WARSAW
wagonwheelcenter.org
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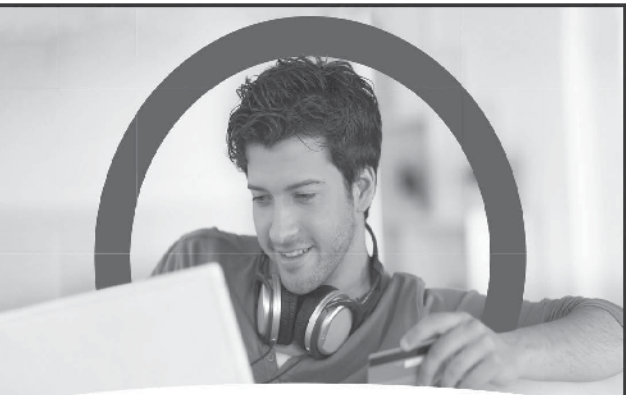


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Norwell Internship Spotlight award Madeline McCabe

Senior Madeline McCabe has been selected to receive the Norwell High School Internship Spotlight award. Madeline has been doing her experience at the Lutheran Hospital ENT (Ear, Nose, and Throat) Surgery Recovery Center. Her mentor is Nikki Zwick who is the director of nurses. Madeleine is the daughter of Bill and Melissa McCabe of Markle.



Madeline McCabe

Madeline has been a huge help with patient care as she assists with transporting clients to and from the recovery rooms, to the restroom facilities, and eventually to their cars. She has had the opportunity to observe surgeries and procedures such as ton-

sillectomies and septoplasties (the straightening of the nose bon).

Upon graduation, Madeline plans to attend Tennessee Chattanooga University to study pre-med and play volleyball. Her ultimate career goal is to become a pathologist.

Winter events at the Fort Wayne Museum of Art

The International Glass Invitational exhibit will be on view through Feb. 18th and the works by Brooklyn-born artist Robert Kipniss will be through Feb. 25th. The new Glass Wing will continue to showcase the Paul Stankard Paperweights from the Shaffer Collection.

A Curator's Tour will be held on Thursday, Feb. 1, beginning at 12:15 p.m., which is free with museum admission and an RSVP to fwmoa.org/events.

After Hours: Wine by the Glass get-togethers are planned for the Saturdays of Feb. 10 (American Southwest glass) and March 23 (Australian glass) and are free for museum members and \$20 for non-members. Wine tasting and a tour of

the Glass Studio will be led by Jeff Armstrong, FWoMA president and Charles Shepard, CEO from 5 to 6 p.m. RSVP to fwmoa.org/events.

Live music and sweet treats will be offered on Thursday, Feb. 11, from 5 to 7:30 p.m. at the 2nd Thursday's museum event. Admission is free and the Paradigm Gallery will be open for last minute Valentine's gifts.

Regular gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. (until 8 p.m. on Thursdays) and Sunday noon to 5 p.m. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$8 students (PreK-college) and seniors and \$25 for families. General admission is free on Thursdays from 5 to 8 p.m.

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NS will let workers use anonymous federal safety hotline

By **JOSH FUNK**
Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — About 1,000 engineers and conductors who work for Norfolk Southern will soon be able to report safety concerns anonymously through a federal system without any fear of discipline.

Norfolk Southern is the first of the six major freight railroads to follow through on promises made in the wake of last year's fiery eastern Ohio derailment to join the Federal Railroad Administration's program. The one-year pilot agreement is limited to members of just two unions who work in Atlanta, Georgia; Elkhart, Indiana; and Roanoke, Virginia.

But federal officials who urged the railroads to do more to improve safety touted the agreement Monday as a breakthrough coming just days before Saturday's one-year anniversary of the disastrous Norfolk Southern derailment in East Palestine, Ohio, that prompted temporary evacuations, a \$1 billion and counting cleanup and lingering questions about

long-term health consequences for residents in the area near the Ohio-Pennsylvania border.

"Norfolk Southern has taken a good first step, and it's time for the other Class I railroads to back up their talk with action and make good on their promises to join this close call reporting system and keep America's rail network safe," U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg said.

The major freight railroads have resisted joining the anonymous reporting system because they wanted the ability to discipline workers who use the hotline in certain circumstances. The Association of American Railroads trade group has said railroads were worried that the system could be abused by workers who try to avoid discipline by reporting situations a railroad already knows about.

Unions and workplace safety experts countered that the idea of disciplining workers who report safety concerns undermines the entire purpose of such a hotline because workers won't use it if

they fear retribution. Experts say programs like the one overseen by the Federal Railroad Administration are especially important in industries like railroads where there is a long history of workers being fired for reporting safety violations or injuries.

Norfolk Southern CEO Alan Shaw said he hopes his railroad's agreement to join the reporting system will set an example for the rest of the industry. Shaw has been focused on improving safety and service at Norfolk Southern ever since the East Palestine derailment.

"NS is proud to partner with our labor leaders and FRA to make another industry-leading advancement in safety," Shaw said.

Officials with the unions that signed onto the deal — the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen and the Transportation Division of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers — praised the agreement and urged the other major freight railroads to join.

"For far too long the large railroads and their trade association, The Association of American Railroads, have paid lip service to safety," BLET First Vice President Mark Wallace said. "The AAR prefers to spend millions of dollars on television commercials bragging about safety while backtracking on safety agreements."

Amtrak and several dozen small railroads use the government reporting program, but none of the big freight railroads have signed on to it so only about 32,000 rail workers are covered. The big freight railroads, which include Union Pacific, CSX, Canadian National, CPKC and BNSF, collectively employ more than 100,000.

The railroads have said part of why they resisted joining the federal program is because they believe their own internal reporting systems are sufficient. But railroad unions have consistently said workers are reluctant to use the railroads' own safety hotlines because they fear retribution.

The head of the SMART-TD conductors' union Jeremy Fergu-

son said this agreement at Norfolk Southern "will allow our members to speak up when they see unsafe conditions without fear of negative repercussions."

The railroad trade group has said that a similar safety hotline used in the aviation industry allows workers to be disciplined if they report the same safety violation more than once in a five-year period. The railroads have been pushing for a similar rule for their industry.

"Railroads have been clear about their commitment to enhance and join C3RS (the FRA's Confidential Close Call Reporting System)," AAR spokeswoman Jessica Kahanek said. "This commitment remains unchanged."

But FRA Administrator Amit Bose said it's time for the railroads to move beyond promises and take action to join the program.

"The occurrence of any preventable accident, injury, or death is unacceptable, and FRA will continue to fight for the right of rail workers to help improve rail safety without fear of discipline or enforcement," Bose said.

Shock, grief and mourning for 3 soldiers killed in drone strike

BY **RUSS BYNUM**

SAVANNAH, Ga. (AP) — Described by their parents as bubbly and constantly laughing, Spc. Kennedy Sanders and Spc. Breonna Moffett became close friends soon after enlisting in the Army Reserve five years ago. Sgt. William Jerome Rivers served a tour in Iraq before joining the same company of Army engineers.

The three citizen-soldiers from different corners of Georgia all died in a week-end drone strike on a U.S. base in Jordan near the Syrian border that also wounded more than 40 others.

Families of the slain reservists said they were shocked when uniformed

military officers came to their doors to deliver the news Sunday.

While President Joe Biden has promised the U.S. will respond, Moffett's parents said they hope there's no escalation in violence that kills more American troops. Their daughter celebrated her 23rd birthday overseas just nine days before she was killed.

"I just hope and pray no other family has to go through this," Francine Moffett, the young soldier's mother, said Monday through tears at the dining table of her Savannah home. "It takes your heart and your soul."

A native of Waycross, 100 miles southwest of

Savannah, 24-year-old Sanders had volunteered for the Middle East deployment, eager to see a new part of the world, her parents said.

At age 46, Rivers had far

more military experience than the two young women. The Defense Department said he joined the Army Reserve in New Jersey in 2011 and served a nine-month tour in Iraq in 2018.

Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp issued a statement mourning the "inexcusable loss of life" of the three soldiers, saying they "gave the last full measure of devotion in service to this country."

Army Brig. Gen. Todd Lazaroski, commander of the Army Reserve's 412th Theater Engineer Command, said in a statement: "They represent the best of America."

Police Notebook

(Continued from Page 3)

ton. Caller reported they heard a knock on the door multiple times, did not see anyone. Placed on house watch list.

Sunday, 6:35 a.m., 200 block of East Lafavey Street, Ossian. Caller reported all tires flat on vehicle, happened sometime after midnight. Tires were deflated at nearby residence as well.

Sunday, 11:58 a.m., 3300 block of South Main Street, Liberty Center. Domestic disagreement over doctors bills.

Sunday, 4:49 p.m., Ind. 124 and 600 West, Markle. Seth Dressler transported to Wells County Jail.

Sunday, 4:59 p.m., Ind. 116 and 200 North, Bluffton. Car versus deer.

Sunday, 6:17 p.m., 3300 South Main Street, Liberty Center. Caller reported young woman came to callers door to ask for cigarettes and phone.

Sunday, 7:07 p.m., 500 block of West Maplewood Drive, Ossian. Welfare check requested due to absence of lights. Subject was okay.

Sunday, 8:19 p.m., South 300 West and West 1200 South, Keystone. Report of

vehicle that ran into river. Monday, 11:23 a.m., 2500 East 200 South, Bluffton. Subject requested tag for deer.

ARRESTS

Thomas Steven Mossburg, 34, Bluffton, possession of child pornography, a Level 5 felony. Bond set at \$15,000.

Sydney Lillian Wells, 30, Ossian, theft, a Level 6 felony. Bond set at \$5,000.

Danielle Rae Sawyer, 36, Ossian, contributing to the delinquency of a minor, a Class A misdemeanor, possession of marijuana, a Class B misdemeanor, and possession of paraphernalia, a Class C misdemeanor. Bond set at \$3,000.

Milot Larose, 29, operating a vehicle with an ACE of .15 or more and operating a vehicle while intoxicated - endangerment, both Class A misdemeanors. Bond set at \$1,500.

Dawn Amber Smith, 40, Bluffton, harassment, a Class B misdemeanor. Bond set at \$1,000.

Cameron Ryan Peck, 24, Bluffton, leaving the scene of a crash - property damage, a Class B misdemeanor. Bond set at \$1,000.



The long-term effects of proper childhood dental care

Parents of young children are undoubtedly familiar with the morning and nighttime ritual of getting kids to brush their teeth. Kids may or may not embrace that routine no matter how hard parents try to relate the benefits of proper oral hygiene, but moms and dads can take solace in the knowledge that childhood dental care can have a positive and lasting effect on kids' overall health.

DENTAL CARE AND HEART DISEASE

Harvard Health Publishing notes that numerous studies have now shown that people with poor oral health exhibit higher rates of cardiovascular issues, including heart attack and stroke. The reason behind that remains something of a medical mystery, but some theorize that bacteria that infects gums and causes conditions such as gingivitis and periodontitis trigger an immune response, inflammation, that then contributes to vascular damage.

DENTAL CARE AND ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

The National Institute on Aging reports that a recent analysis published in the Journal of Alzheimer's Disease noted the bacteria that cause gum disease are also linked with the development of Alzheimer's disease. That analysis found that older adults with signs of periodontitis, a condition marked by inflammation of tissue around the teeth that can cause loosening of the teeth, were more likely to develop Alzheimer's disease. Additional research is necessary before more concrete conclusions about the link between dental care and Alzheimer's disease can be made, but dental care that protects the gums could very well reduce individuals' risk for dementia.

DENTAL CARE AND CANCER RISK

Cancer is among the leading causes of death across the globe, affecting people from all walks of life. Researchers at Harvard's T.H. Chan School of Public Health discovered a link between dental care and cancer risk. In a letter published in the journal Gut in 2020, researchers reported

that they found that people with a history of gum disease have a higher risk of stomach and esophageal cancers than people with no such history. And that risk was not exactly minimal, as researchers reported a 43 percent higher risk for esophageal cancer and a 52 percent higher risk for stomach cancer.

An emphasis on lifelong oral hygiene in childhood could pay lasting dividends, potentially reducing kids' risk for various diseases when they reach adulthood.



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Teagle, Curtis showing big improvements in Year 1

How Bluffton juggled three coaching searches for two positions

By RYAN WALKER

Around mid-June was supposed to be the perfect time of year for athletic directors in high school sports, especially at Bluffton High School.

Steve Thompson, the athletic director for the Tigers, and the rest of the staff could take a deep breath after the boys' golf season was the last sports domino to fall to finish the 2022-23 calendar year. But that all changed with one phone call that threw Thompson and many others into an unexpected whirlwind of events.

Adam Gray, the newly hired boys' basketball coach, dialed Thompson's phone number and informed him that he was under investigation for financial concerns. The following morning, Thompson along with Superintendent Brad Yates and Principal Steve Baker met in person with Gray as he said he was resigning from the position.

"I didn't think it was anything other than a basketball question," Thompson admitted when he answered the phone.

Gray, 32, was charged with theft on Aug. 25 from the Heritage boys' basketball team's credit card where he made personal purchases.

Luckily, the resignation happened in the summertime. They had recently hired Gray around the time Doug Curtis was hired as the girls' basketball coach, but the sudden change of events opened a third head coaching search in just a few months for the two positions.

In the time being, Assistant Athletic Director Robert Vanderkolk opened the gym doors for current basketball players to get shots up and work out. He and other

assistant basketball coaches had to fill in the spots to coach the summer program when Gray stepped down.

About a week and a half after Gray was gone, Thompson was sitting at the kitchen table at his home when he received a text from DeKalb's head boys' basketball coach Marty Beasley.

Beasley requested Thompson's phone number, he approved, and minutes later the phone rang.

Initially, Thompson picked up the phone and told him that there was no way he was leaving DeKalb for Bluffton without even greeting Beasley. Beasley replied and said it wasn't about him.

Thompson then followed with, "Well, I really appreciate what you're about to do, but I don't have time to hear about you give a plug for your 25-year-old JV coach."

"It's not about him either," said Beasley. "OK, what are you talking about?" Thompson asked.

Beasley then dropped the bomb, "Craig Teagle."

Understandably, Thompson didn't believe Beasley when he casually threw out the potential hall-of-fame head coach's name, especially after Teagle recently accepted the head coaching position at New Albany. But of the odd chance that he wasn't kidding, Thompson told him that Bluffton is interested if Teagle's interested.

Later that day, Thompson received a phone call while golfing at Timber Ridge in Bluffton, thinking this was all a fluke — but it was coach Teagle, and he was serious.

"The snowball started going, and the right snow came down the hill," Thompson



Bluffton head coach Craig Teagle (middle) instructs his Tigers during a timeout at Adams Central on Jan. 19. (Photo by Chad Kline)

said.

The next morning, Teagle met at the high school with a last-second search committee consisting of at least Thompson, Baker, and a board member for an official interview.

The board member was not aware of who was interviewing for the job, but his jaw dropped when he saw who walked in.

"The board member stands up and asks to leave early," Thompson said. "His kids have youth baseball or something and says, 'Whatever you do, Get this done.' And then we just rolled right into it. The way it happened, it's beyond me."

In between the short timeline between Gray's resignation and Teagle's emergence, a few coaches contacted Bluffton for inquiries about the head coaching vacancy. But the consensus in the room was that Teagle was their guy, and the two sides reached an agreement over the summer to make it official.

In a short background, Teagle left from Huntington North after eight seasons to join New Albany. When the Bluffton job opened, Thompson shared that Teagle would have been interested in the first place, but he already committed with New Albany.

The interest in the Tigers combined with the fact that his wife was still in Fort Wayne and his mother was getting sick — that was more than enough for him to take the job.

The Tigers have already reaped the benefits of the 450 career victory head coach. Teagle has brought a 7-8 season to Bluffton so far after the team went 2-20 the year prior. The 3-1 record to start the season was already more than its win total from last season.

The boys' team hasn't been the only basketball program in town that ended up with an uptick of success with new leadership. Curtis' girls have gained five wins more compared to last season before sectional play.

But even that hire had its twists and turns.

Once the girls' position opened at Bluffton, Thompson had a few ideas in mind for potential candidates. One day, his phone provider had issues with connection all day, and he decided to enjoy his screen time

away up in Fort Wayne.

As he was driving, one bar popped up and immediately a phone call from Tigers' junior varsity head coach and varsity assistant coach Jaci Moser's name appeared.

He thought it was odd, but he picked up the phone. She was calling to tell him that Curtis might be interested in the job.

Like Teagle, Thompson didn't think it would be a possibility because he had retired the season before from Adams Central, but Moser insisted.

As Thompson pulled over, his connection was completely restored, and he ran up Curtis' phone number and scheduled an interview. And not too long after, Curtis was the perfect fit and he took the job with the Tigers.

"It was really kind of a meant-to-be thing," Thompson said. "He likes it here. I love working with him, and I think he does a great job coaching and allowing our girls to learn through mistakes within the parameters, but to take risks and can coach beyond the risks."

Though both hires were different stories, both are admired for not only their coaching abilities but also for their traits as teachers and leaders.

When looking for coaches, the athletic department seeks someone who will teach the athlete's life lessons and inspire the next generation of people.

Thompson said that both Teagle and Curtis didn't emphasize their vision with the program, but how they wanted to grow each player and develop life skills.

That was one reason they hired Gray: his interview showed that he was a good communicator, held firm relationships with the players and taught life with them.

Of course, building a winning culture like the two coaches have in year one is a must, but both are teaching something more valuable than the game.

"Is a win for you the sectional, or is a win for you to get invited to their wedding?" Thompson said. "So that relationship part, the life skills part — they both gravitated towards that without ever me asking."

ryan@news-banner.com



Bluffton head coach Doug Curtis (right) shares a moment with junior Isabella Stout toward the end of the game with Heritage Jan. 20. (Photo by Glen Werling)

High School Calendar

TUESDAY, JAN 30

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

WEDNESDAY, JAN 30

No events scheduled.

THURSDAY, FEB 1

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

SWIMMING & DIVING (CO-ED): (sectional prelims, girls only) Norwell, Bluffton at Jay County, 5:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, FEB 2

GIRLS BASKETBALL: Southern Wells vs. Lakeland Christian at Northfield High School, 6 p.m.; Norwell vs. TBD at Maconaquah High School.

SATURDAY, FEB 3

BOYS BASKETBALL: Columbia City at Norwell, 1:30 p.m.; Heritage at Bluffton, 2:30 p.m.

WRESTLING: (regional): Norwell at Jay County, 8:30 a.m.

SWIMMING & DIVING (CO-ED): (sectional finals, girls only) Norwell, Bluffton at Jay County, 9 a.m.

MONDAY, FEB 5

SWIMMING & DIVING: (Boys only): Norwell at Adams Central, 6 p.m.

TUESDAY, FEB 6

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

SWIMMING & DIVING: (Boys only): Bluffton at Huntington North, 5:30 p.m.

The Super Bowl is set: Mahomes, Chiefs will face Purdy, 49ers

By ROB MAADDI

AP Pro Football Writer

Patrick Mahomes, Travis Kelce and the Kansas City Chiefs are heading to Las Vegas with a chance for a rare repeat while facing the San Francisco 49ers in a Super Bowl rematch from four years ago.

The Chiefs beat Lamar Jackson and the No. 1-seeded Baltimore Ravens 17-10 in the AFC championship game Sunday to advance to the Super Bowl for the fourth

time in five years. A few hours later, Brock Purdy rallied the No. 1-seeded 49ers to a 34-31 victory over the Detroit Lions in the NFC title game.

The Chiefs (14-6) are aiming to become the first back-to-back champions since Tom Brady and the New England Patriots did it following the 2003-04 seasons.

Purdy — who was still two years away from being the last pick of the 2022 NFL

(Continued on Page A2)



Bluffton's Miken Habegger continued his run at the semi-state bowling round over the weekend. This performance was good enough to move on to the state high school bowling round at Championship Lanes in Anderson. The finals will be taking place on Feb. 18. At the semi-state, Habegger completed his total series with a 617 score and placed sixth out of the 17 bowlers advancing to the finals. (Photo provided)

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TIME FOR ANY PLAN CHANGES?

Norwell girls win its regular season finale, boys sweep Bruins, Braves in swimming

Norwell defeated all three teams in the swimming pool at Blackford Monday night.

The boys' team won over Blackhawk 100-45 and 94-76 over Blackford. The girls defeated Blackford 125-46.

Event winners:

Boys

- Ethan Williamson, Colten Sturnk, Parker McCartney and Rylan Heyerly in the 200-yard medley relay.
- Kale Meredith in the 200-yard freestyle and in the 100-yard butterfly.
- Williamson, McCartney, Heyerly and Meredith in the 200-yard freestyle relay.
- Heyerly in the 100-yard backstroke.
- Williamson, Heyerly, Gage Reinhard and Meredith in the 400-yard freestyle relay.

Girls

- Alaina Barnhart, Marlee Meredith, Olivia Daniel and

Addyson Heyerly in the 200-yard medley relay.

- Ella Krug in the 200-yard freestyle.
- Jillian Melcher in the 200-yard IM.
- Cassie Coyne in the 50-yard freestyle.
- Emerson Meredith in the diving events and in the 100-yard breaststroke.
- Sawyer Peterson in the 100-yard butterfly.
- Renee Frazee in the 100-yard freestyle.
- Marlee Meredith in the 500-yard freestyle.
- Addilynn Page, Sawyer Peterson, Astrid Claussen and Melcher in the 200-yard freestyle relay.
- Heyerly in the 100-yard backstroke.
- Molly Threewits, Ryleigh Huffman, Rilynn Ervin and Melcher in the 400-yard freestyle relay.

Norwell will girls will be at the sectional prelims at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 1. The boys will be at Adams Central for their regular season finale starting at 6 p.m. Monday, Feb. 5.

Lions lament the one that got away after blowing big lead with Super Bowl on the line

By LARRY LAGE
AP Sports Writer

ALLEN PARK, Mich. (AP) — The Detroit Lions had their best season in generations.

Players, coaches and at least some fans are not ready to celebrate at the moment.

The Lions let an opportunity slip to play in the Super Bowl for the first time, becoming the first team to lose a 17-point halftime lead in a conference championship game with their 34-31 loss at San Francisco.

"We know we accomplished a lot this year, but our ultimate goal was the Super Bowl and we were within reaching distance and there's nothing worse than almost making it," Lions linebacker Alex Anzalone said Sunday night. "These are the losses that you'll remember forever."

Even though nothing can erase the pain for the Lions, there's no doubt they were the source of joy for millions in the Motor City and throughout the state of Michigan in a season that surpassed unusually high expectations. And their future seems promising.

"I think think what we built was hope," running back David Montgomery said.

Hopes were high for Detroit last summer as the favorite to win the NFC North, and the team lived up to the hype by ending a three-decade stretch without a division title and tying a franchise record with 12 regular-season wins.

The Lions had two home playoff games for the first time, earned two postseason victories for the first time

since winning the 1957 NFL championship and reached the conference title game for the first time in 32 years and second time in franchise history.

Once there, they led San Francisco 24-7 early in the third quarter before blowing it.

"That feeling that we all had walking off of that field, I don't think any one of us want to feel that again," receiver Amon-Ra St. Brown said. "I think the feeling that we have is enough to motivate us for next year."

"We had a good year as a whole, but it is all for nothing if you don't win the whole thing."

Even though the franchise fell short, owner Sheila Ford Hamp got it right when she hired general manager Brad Holmes and coach Dan Campbell three years ago after decades of poor leadership in the front office and on the sideline.

Holmes has hit much more than he's missed in three drafts, giving the franchise plenty of building blocks on both sides of the ball.

Campbell's gambles have led to a league-high 62 conversions on fourth down in his three seasons and 22 wins in his last 30 games, but his characteristically risky moves didn't go his way against the Niners.

Detroit had a chance to restore its 17-point lead midway through the third quarter, but Campbell chose to for it on fourth-and-2 from the 28 instead of having Michael Badgley kick a field goal. Josh Reynolds dropped a slightly errant throw from Jared Goff, making the move backfire.

Reynolds also dropped a pass on

third down later in the quarter.

"I definitely didn't help," he said Monday as he and his teammates cleared out their lockers.

Down three points midway through the fourth quarter, Campbell went for it again on fourth-and-3 from the 30 instead of attempting a field goal, and Goff threw incomplete under pressure.

"You want to make the most of every opportunity and we had an opportunity, and we just couldn't close it out," Goff said. "It stings."

Campbell stood by his choices, including running the ball on the team's final drive and being forced to use the first of three timeouts.

"I gambled and lost," he said softly at his season-ending news conference about 10 hours after the team arrived back in Detroit.

MAKING MOVES

The Lions start their offseason with \$60-plus million in salary cap space, ranking No. 7 in the league, and will have some decisions to make.

Goff has one year left on his contract, possibly making him a candidate for an extension.

Free agents include guards Jonah Jackson, who had a second straight injury-shortened season, and Graham Glasgow along with defensive back C.J. Gardner-Johnson, who was limited to three games due to injuries.

COVETED COACHES

Offensive coordinator Ben Johnson and defensive coordinator Aaron Glenn are among the candidates to be Washington's coach, potentially leaving Campbell with an important role to fill on his staff for next season.

News-Banner Scoreboard

FOOTBALL

NFL

- Conference Championships Sunday, Jan. 28
- Conference Championships Sunday, Jan. 28
- Kansas City 17, Baltimore 10
- San Francisco 34, Detroit 31
- Super Bowl Sunday, Feb. 11 At Las Vegas
- Kansas City vs. San Francisco, 6:30

p.m. (CBS)

BASKETBALL

High School

- Monday boys' Scores
- Riverside 51, Lutheran Northeast 48
- ECNC Conference Tournament
- Auburn 79, Palmyra 24
- Freeman 69, Falls City 21
- Johnson County Central 42, Weep- ing Water 40
- Mead 60, Elmwood-Murdock 44

Lewis & Clark Conference Tournament

- Clark Bracket
- Consolation
- Osmond-Randolph 59, Winside 55
- Lewis Bracket
- Ponca 49, Wakefield 33
- Wynot 70, Laurel-Concord/ Coleridge 50
- LouPlatte Conference Tournament
- Play-in
- Centura 66, Gibbon 31
- Pioneer Conference Tournament
- Southern 66, Humboldt/Table Rock-

Steinauer 47

- Southern Nebraska Conference Tournament
- Thayer Central 60, Superior 35

Monday Girls' Scores

- Bishop Neumann 56, Logan View-Scribner-Snyder 30
- Central Valley 40, Anselmo-Merna 37
- Columbus Lakeview 53, Aquinas 46
- Crofton 77, O'Neill 40
- Dorchester 40, East Butler 32
- Guardian Angels 59, Hartington

Agriculture

Economic tools to help with farm decisions

By JOHN E. WOODMANSEE

What is the right custom rate for field operations? What does a typical crop budget look like? Purdue Extension has resources that can help producers find answers to these and other important farm management questions at the Purdue Center for Commercial Agriculture website, <https://ag.purdue.edu/commercialag/>.

I get the question from farmers on custom rates several times each year. Farmers generally ask what the "going rate" is to perform custom field operations. Typically, I find that the farmer simply wants to charge a fair rate, and they need a place to start, or at least some data to get them in the ballpark for good-faith negotiations.

Dr. Michael Langemeier, associate director of the Purdue Center for Commercial Agriculture, periodically conducts state-wide surveys to determine average Indiana farm custom rates, reported at the Purdue Center for Commercial Agriculture website under the "Publications" tab. The direct link for 2023 rates is <https://ag.purdue.edu/commercialag/home/resource/2023/03/indiana-farm-custom-rates/>.

"Unless otherwise stated, the rates reported include payments made for fuel, operator labor, and machinery ownership costs," said Langemeier.

Langemeier said farm



Michael Langemeier is the associate director of the Purdue Center for Commercial Agriculture. (Purdue University photo)

custom rates may differ significantly from one area in the state to another based on the availability of custom operators and demand for their services. Therefore, the statewide averages reported might be quite different from the going rate in any given area. "Custom rates in a given area may vary significantly according to timeliness, operator skill, field size and shape, crop conditions, the performance characteristics of the machine being used, the relationship between the custom operator and the person needing custom work done, competitive pressures, and economic circumstances of the custom operator," he said. "The variation of reported rates was large for many of the operations and thus should only be used as a starting point for establishing a rate in any given situation."

Another question I get

from time to time revolves around what a "typical" or "average" budget for a particular crop might look like. As you might imagine, "typical" may not exist in reality. Much variability exists from field to field, farmer to farmer, and from among various management systems. But, again, we think about "getting in the ballpark."

Find the 2024 Crop Cost and Return Guide on the website. The guide is cooperatively authored by Langemeier and other Purdue specialists in multiple departments. If significant pricing structures change, the guide may be updated. The current version was based on December 2023 estimates.

The guide offers farmers crop budgets for three levels of soil productivity: low, average, and high productivity soil. Additionally, the

guide offers average budgets for continuous corn, rotation corn, rotation beans, wheat, and double-crop beans.

Find the guide under the "Publications" tab at the website, or via direct link at: <https://ag.purdue.edu/commercialag/home/resource/keyword/crop-cost-return-guide-archive/>. Multiple years are available on the page for multi-year comparisons.

Super Bowl is set

(Continued from Page A1)

draft the last time the teams played in the Super Bowl — will try to lead the 49ers (14-5) to a record-tying sixth title in their eighth appearance.

The teams meet at Allegiant Stadium on Feb. 11. The 49ers opened as 2 1/2-point favorites, according to FanDuel Sportsbook.

Mahomes and the Chiefs overcame a 20-10 fourth-quarter deficit and beat the 49ers 31-20 to give coach Andy Reid his first Super Bowl victory on Feb. 2, 2020. Brady and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers spoiled Kansas City's repeat bid for the following year.

The Chiefs will become just the third team to play in four Super Bowls over a five-year span. Only the Pittsburgh Steelers in the 1970s, the Dallas Cowboys in the 1990s and the Patriots in the 2000s and 2010s won three Super Bowls in a five-year span.

Mahomes rallied the Chiefs for a 38-35 comeback win over the Philadelphia Eagles in the Super Bowl last year. They beat Miami 26-7 in the wild-card round and defeated the Bills 27-24 in Buffalo last week in Mahomes' first career playoff game on the road besides Super Bowls.

The 49ers were dominated by the Eagles in the NFC title game last year in a game that saw Purdy suffer a significant elbow injury that required surgery. He returned for the season

opener and helped them earn a first-round bye. Purdy led a 24-21 comeback win over Green Bay last week and brought the Niners back from a 17-point deficit against the Lions.

Only New England and Pittsburgh have more Super Bowl wins the San Francisco, which last won it following the 1994 season.

Reid will lead a team in the Super Bowl for the fifth time, moving into a tie with Tom Landry for third most behind Bill Belichick's nine and Don Shula's six. Reid coached the Eagles when the Patriots beat them to repeat 19 years ago.

Niners coach Kyle Shanahan returns to the Super Bowl after losing to Reid in his first crack at it. Shanahan was Atlanta's offensive coordinator when the Falcons blew a 28-3 lead against Brady and the Patriots in Super Bowl 51.

Mahomes, a two-time NFL and Super Bowl MVP, will start in his fourth Super Bowl, tied with Joe Montana, Terry Bradshaw, Peyton Manning, Roger Staubach and Jim Kelly for third-most behind Brady's 10 and John Elway's five.

The biggest question is whether Taylor Swift will make it to Las Vegas to watch her boyfriend in the Super Bowl on Feb. 11. Swift, who celebrated with Kelce on the field after the victory over the Ravens, is scheduled to perform in Japan just 24 hours before kickoff.

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Poetry for snowy days

Dear Readers: Below are a few of my favorite poems about winter and snowy days. I hope you enjoy them while the days are shorter and the nights longer.

"Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" by Robert Frost

"Whose woods these are I think I know. His house is in the village though; He will not see me stopping here To watch his woods fill up with snow. My little horse must think it queer To stop without a farmhouse near Between the woods and frozen lake The darkest evening of the year. He gives his harness bells a shake To ask if there is some mistake. The only other sound's the sweep Of easy wind and downy flake. The woods are lovely, dark and deep, But I have promises to keep, And miles to go before I sleep, And miles to go before I sleep."

"A Winter Eden" by Robert Frost

"A winter Eden in an alder swamp Where conies now come out to sun and romp, As near a paradise as it can be And not melt snow or start a dormant tree. It lifts existence on a plane of snow One level higher than the earth below, One level nearer heaven overhead And last year's berries shining scarlet red. It lifts a gaunt luxuriating beast Where he can stretch and hold his highest feast On some wild apple tree's young tender bark, What well may prove the years' high girdle mark. Pairing in all known paradises ends: Here loveless birds now flock as winter friends, Content with bud inspecting. They pre-

sume To say which buds are leaf and which are bloom. A feather hammer gives a double knock. This Eden day is done at two o'clock. An hour of winter day might seem too short To make it worth life's while to wake and sport."

"Blow Blow Thou Winter Wind" by William Shakespeare

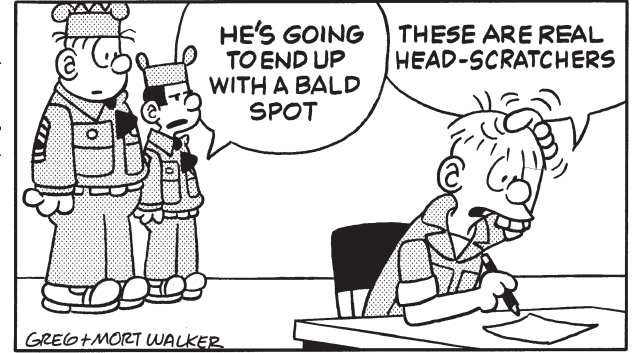
"Blow, blow, thou winter wind, Thou art not so unkind As man's ingratitude; Thy tooth is not so keen, Because thou art not seen, Although thy breath be rude. Heigh-ho! sing, heigh-ho! unto the green holly; Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly: Then, heigh-ho, the holly! This life is most jolly. Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky, That dost not bite so nigh As benefits forgot: Though thou the waters warp, Thy sting is not so sharp As friend remembered not. Heigh-ho! sing, heigh-ho! unto the green holly ... " Appears in "As You Like It," Act II, Scene VII.

Annie Lane's second anthology — "How Can I Forgive My Cheating Partner?" — is available as a paperback and e-book. Visit http://www.creator-publishing.com for more information. Send your questions for Annie Lane to dearannie@creators.com. © 2024 CREATORS.COM

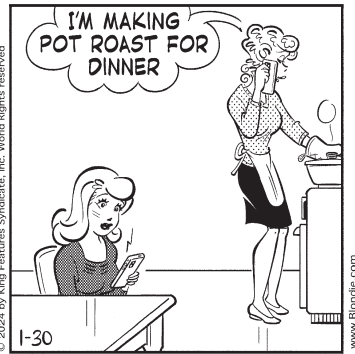
Dear Annie by Annie Lane



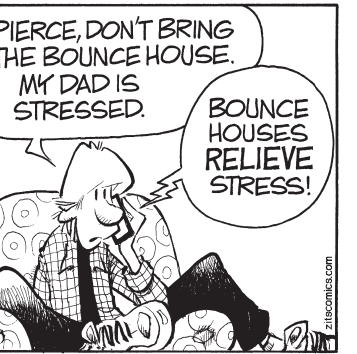
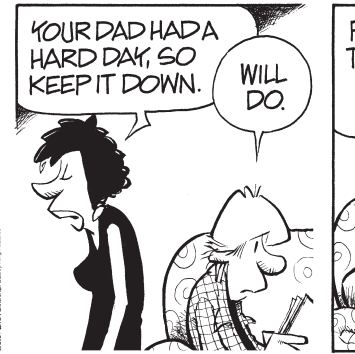
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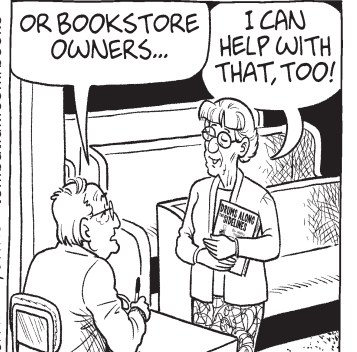
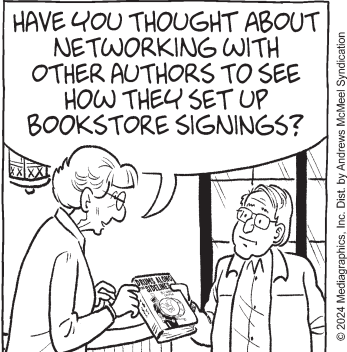
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My Answer

By Dr. Billy Graham



Be faithful in reading the Bible

Question: What does the Bible mean when it says we are to conform to Christ? Should we pray about this or does this happen naturally? - C.C.

Answer: When souls are saved, a desire to be nourished from God's Word is of utmost importance. We should bring every matter to God in prayer and watch how He answers through the reading of Scripture as we obey Him. This is how God's children have fellowship with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

Be faithful in reading the Bible, praying for God's guidance and strength each day, seeking the fellowship of other believers as part

of Christ's church, and sharing your new faith with those who are still wandering in darkness. The church is the Body of Christ on Earth, and it is important to join with other followers of Jesus Christ to learn from one another, to encourage one another, and to obey God's Word. This is how we grow in faith. Christ will work in us and through us and we can know that His hand is upon us.

Many struggle because they want Christ to walk with them, but believers are instructed to leave their own pathways and walk with Christ. He comes into a person's life with transformation, making forgiven sinners new creations in Christ. God will be busy con-

forming His children to the image of His Son. Salvation is the most important step anyone can take in life and is the only way to truth.

This is "the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery ... which is Christ in you, the hope of glory ... which works in me mightily" (Colossians 1:26-27, 29, NKJV).

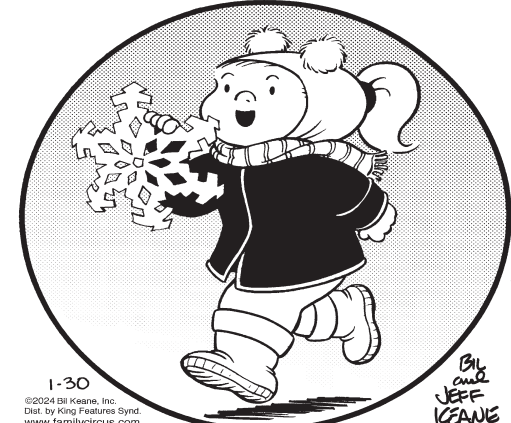
(This column is based on the words and writings of the late Rev. Billy Graham.)

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THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane

The LOCKHORNS



"Call me Mother Nature. I made a snowflake!"



"LEROY! YOU TOOK THE CAR KEYS!"

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CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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

Television schedule table with columns for time slots (5 PM to 12:30 AM) and rows for various channels (WINM, CBS, etc.).

Grid for yesterday's crossword puzzle answer, showing filled and empty squares.

