

### Plan Commission to hear from Paddlefish Solar Area Plan Commission as they

**By JONATHAN SNYDER** It was training day for the Wells County Area Plan Commission on Thursday, as it reviewed its rules of procedure, what zoning and overlay districts mean and what its March 7 meeting might look like. The reminders on procedure

announced a petition from Paddlefish Solar to add a power overlay district roughly southwest of Liberty Township. This comes after the Wells County Commissioners approved of decommissioning and road use documents on Dec. 4. come at a needed time for the This rezoning will be discussed in the APC's March 7 meeting, and a special meeting on Feb. 15 will hammer out some of the details regarding procedures on the seventh.

The March 7 meeting will be held in the 4-H Expo Hall to accommodate for an estimated increase in public visitation. PadRoudebush, who has worked on the project for about three years, stated that the public has been curious about the project itself. APC Executive Director Mike Lautzenheiser also reminded the board that the petition is purely about the property rezoning, and

dlefish Solar representative Trena that a development plan is yet to be created.

In a PowerPoint presentation, Lautzenheiser noted that the overlay district will simply layer rules onto an already existing plot of land, not rezone it entirely. He urged the APC to remember that (Continued on Page 2)



### Swearing in

Ossian Police Department welcomed their second new full-time officer. Josh Ware. Ware was sworn in (right) on Saturday, Jan. 27.

Above, Ossian Police Chief Kurt Jack and Ware shake hands. Jack said he is excited for the new recruits and believes they will both be highly effective officers.



# Lawmakers advance bill to lighten load on school counselors

#### **By CASEY SMITH** Indiana Capital Chronicle

Hoosier lawmakers want to guarantee school counselors have more time to provide services for students that are increaseingly in demand while spending less time filling in elsewhere, like as substitute teachers or on lunch and recess duty.

Senate Bill 141 is headed to the full chamber after the Senate education committee voted unanimously in its favor on Wednesday. Sen. Jean Leising, R-Oldenburg, who authored the bill, said it's part of a push to combat Indiana's school counselor "crisis."

"I do think it's an important bill because we have been putting off addressing the whole counselor issue ... this is a non-budget year, but this might be at least a way to give you some relief," Leising said. "The most important part for

me is that our counselors are doing what we all thought counselors did

 whether that's emotional counseling when kids have issues, or career counseling. ... I hope that this will entice and interest our schools into really looking at what our counselors are doing.

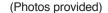
The American School Counselor Association recently reported that Indiana has a student-tocounselor ratio of 694 to 1 -well above the national average and currently the highest in the country.

As of 2023, schools employed just 1,494 counselors statewide for more than 1 million students.

With the needs of Hoosiers students growing more demanding, Indiana school counselors say they're experiencing their own crisis.

"We have a major problem in (Continued on Page 2)

# California pummeled by first of back-to-back atmospheric rivers



# **U.S. hints large response to** Iran-backed militias is imminent

#### By TARA COPP, LOLITA C. BALDOR and JON GAMBRELL **Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said Thursday it's time to further disable Iranbacked militias that have struck at U.S. forces and ships in the Middle East and the U.S. is preparing to take significant action in response to the deaths of three U.S. service members in Jordan.

For days the U.S. has hinted strikes are imminent. While the threat of retaliation for Sunday's deaths has driven some militant groups to say they were stopping hostilities, as late as Thursday Yemen's Houthi rebels were still attacking vessels and fired a ballistic missile at a Liberian-flagged container ship in the Red Sea.

"At this point, it's time to take away even more capability than we've taken in the past," Austin said

Thursday in his first press conference since he was hospitalized on Jan. 1 due to complications from prostate cancer treatment.

Previous U.S. strikes have not deterred the attacks. Since the war between Israel and Hamas broke out in October, Iranian-backed militant groups have struck U.S. bases in Iraq and Syria at least 166 times with rockets, missiles and one-way attack drones, drawing about a half-dozen U.S. counterstrikes on militant facilities in both countries. The U.S. military also has carried out airstrikes targeting the Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen.

The U.S. has attributed the attack on Tower 22 in Jordan to the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, an umbrella group of Iran-backed militias that includes the militant group Kataib Hezbollah.

(Continued on Page 2)

#### **By JOHN ANTCZAK Associated Press**

LOS ANGELES (AP) -Heavy rain flooded California roadways and much-needed snow piled up in the mountains as the first of back-to-back atmospheric rivers pummeled the state Thursday.

The storm focused its energy on the southern and eastern parts of the state after initially hitting the San Francisco Bay Area on Wednesday, where it halted cable car service. The downpours arrived Thursday in Southern California in time to snarl the morning commute.

An atmospheric river, which is a long band of moisture that forms over the Pacific, was fueling the storms dousing the Los Angeles and San Diego areas, said National Weather Service forecaster Bob Oravec.

Atmospheric rivers "typically

occur ahead of cold fronts across the Pacific," he said. "And when they interact with the West Coast topography, you often get some very heavy rain both along the coastal ranges and also inland through the Sierras."

As sheets of rain fell in San Diego, Ruben Gomez cleaned debris from storm drains in his parents' neighborhood Thursday.

He piled sandbags around what was left of their home, which was hit hard by flooding from an earlier deluge. Firefighters had to rescue his parents, both 82, from the home after the earlier storm, which filled with water reaching six feet high. His father was hospitalized for two days because of hypothermia and his mother for a week after she got water in one of her lungs.

"Every hole in the house, I've got plugged with plastic and paper (Continued on Page 2)

# Senate headed for test vote on border policies, Ukraine aid

#### By STEPHEN GROVES, MARY CLARE JALONICK and LISA MASCARO **Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) - The Senate will hold a crucial test vote next week on legislation that would pair new policies at the southern border with wartime

aid for Ukraine and other American allies, leaders pressing ahead despite heavy skepticism from Republicans and some Democrats.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said he will set in motion a test vote on the national security package for Wednesday. However, with some Republicans resisting

the timeline and many remaining uncommitted to supporting the border policy changes, the bill's future remained uncertain.

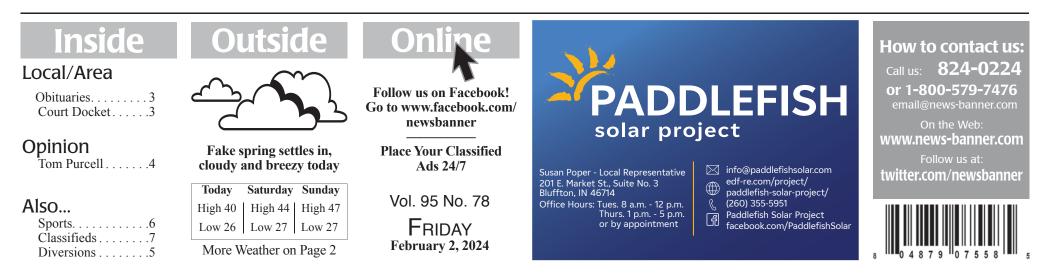
"Our southern border is in urgent need, in urgent need, of fixing," Schumer said in a floor speech.

Senate negotiators are expect-

ed in the coming days to release the text of a bill that would overhaul the U.S. asylum system with tougher and quicker enforcement as well as send tens of billions of dollars in military assistance to Ukraine, Israel and other allies in Asia. Negotiators, toiling for weeks to finish the deal, have kept

the bill's details a closely guarded secret, but have come under heavy pressure from Republicans who are both frustrated they have not seen the bill's contents and are wary of making any compromise on border security.

The Senate deal could be Presi-(Continued on Page 2)



### LOCAL/NATION

### **Plan Commission**

(Continued from Page 1)

they are to pay reasonable regard to current conditions, the most desirable use for the land and the best future use for this part of the community.

"Our job is to review the facts of the case," said Lautzenheiser.

Other than the review and preparation, the APC motioned for their attorney to get involved in a setback violation on 409 North Highland Ave. in Ossian. On Jan. 4, the APC gave a 30-day continuance for Gregory and Deborah Adams. They have a shed that, according to a survey, is only five feet away from the road, while the official plat says the shed is 10 feet away.

Lautzenheiser stated that he has

not heard anything from the Adams' since the 30-day continuance, which sparked a unanimously approved motion from the other members — John Schuhmacher, William Horan, Jarrod Hahn, Tim Rohr, Tyson Brooks, Jerome Markley, Chandler Gerber, Geoff Lance, Melissa Woodworth and John Potter.

While the board was troubled by the lack of progress on the setback violation, the junk violation for Cody Plagmann has seen some progress. Plagmann reported that his property on North Main Street in Uniondale only has a few items left to be cleared before it is compliant. The APC and Plagmann are expected to be in contact early next week for an inspection and a 30-day continuation was granted to Plagmann.

Because of the increased traffic in their March 7 meeting, the APC took time to reorganize their meeting schedule. In addition to the Feb. 15 discussion, a new meeting was created for March 21 to hear three other petitions. Furthermore, Lautzenheiser updated the commission that the updated zoning ordinance amendments have made it through all legislative bodies except for Vera Cruz's and Uniondale's. Lautzenheiser estimates that they will be passed on the third week of February.

jonathan@news-banner.com

Weather

Friday, February 2, 2024 (24-hour observations at 10:11 p.m. Thursday) High: 50; Low: 34; Precipitation: None Wabash River Level (at the Main Street bridge): 3.26 feet at 8:45 p.m. Thursday

### Wells County forecast

**Today:** Mostly cloudy, with a high near 40. Northeast wind around 10 mph.

**Tonight:** Partly cloudy, with a low around 26. East wind 5 to 10 mph.

**Saturday:** Sunny, with a high near 44. East wind 5 to 10 mph.

**Saturday Night:** Mostly clear, with a low around 27. East wind around 10 mph.

**Sunday:** Sunny, with a high near 47.

Sunday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 27.

Monday: Sunny, with a high near 45.

Monday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 27.

**Tuesday:** Mostly sunny, with a high near 43.

**Tuesday Night:** Mostly clear, with a low around 26. **Wednesday:** Mostly sunny, with a high near 47.

Wednesday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around

Thursday: Partly sunny, with a high near 51.

### Test vote

(Continued from Page 1) dent Joe Biden's best chance to enact policies to address a southern border that has been marked by historic numbers of migrants seeking asylum as well as deliver on one of his top foreign policy goals - buttressing Ukraine's defense against the Russian invasion. The Senate readied to proceed towards a vote next week, but widespread support from Republicans, especially House Speaker Mike Johnson, remained doubtful.

"We'll see. I will try," Biden told reporters Thursday morning as he entered a prayer breakfast at the Capitol with Johnson.

Many Senate Republicans have declined to offer support for the bill until they can dig into its details. They are also facing a headwind of criticism from Donald Trump, the likely Republican presidential nominee who has called the proposals insufficient to clamp down on illegal immigration.

The lead Republican negotiator, Sen. James Lankford of Oklahoma, has tried for weeks to convince his colleagues that the proposal represents Republican's best opportunity in decades to gain control of illegal immigration — an issue they have made central to their political campaigns. He hoped that releasing the being overwhelmed with asylum seekers and that any migrant seeking asylum will face both tougher standards in initial interviews to enter the asylum system and a fast-track system that either grants their asylum application or deports them.

If migrants apply for asylum at a port of entry, they would be placed in a "removal authority program" and have their asylum case decided within six months, Sinema said. Migrants who cross the border illegally would be put into detention and removed within 10 to 15 days if they fail initial interviews, known as credible fear screenings.

"The process is really set up to be able to process more people faster, make decisions faster, deport faster," Lankford said.

The overhaul of the asylum system, as well as Biden's promises to "shut down the border" if the bill is enacted, have alarmed immigration advocates who say it would deprive asylum seekers of the ability to have their claims fully considered by immigration courts and undermine the U.S.'s role as a safe haven for people fleeing violence.

"The Biden administration has shown itself to be completely consumed with border apprehension numbers rather than focusing

on what is happening at the

border with a humanitar-

ian lens," said Robyn Bar-

nard, who directs refugee

advocacy at Human Rights

border could become one of

his largest re-election vul-

nerabilities, and Democrats

in the Senate have mostly

warmed to the idea of pass-

ing a bill aimed at tamping

Biden's handling of the

First

### **School counselors**

(Continued from Page 1) Indiana," said Scott Carr, speaking on behalf of the Indiana School Counselor Association. We believe Senate Bill 141 is a tremendous step forward to help counselors today. It will allow counselors to spend more of their time on counseling-related activities, as opposed to non-counseling related activities, across the state. ... And it will also, hopefully, nudge some districts – where ratios are much, much more severe - to maybe try to find solutions internally to drive those ratios down.'

#### More time for counseling

The latest draft of Leising's bill requires that for the 2024-2025 academic year, schools must ensure that at least 60 percent of a school counselor's aggregate time on the clock is devoted to providing direct services to students. That increases to 85 percent beginning with the 2025-2026 school year.

Schools that have a ratio of fewer than 350 students per school counselor are exempt from the time requirement provisions, however.

Kendyl Weise, a school counselor and chair of the state association's advocacy committee, told lawmakers that counselors in elementary schools are often forced to take on supervisory roles outside the scope of their normal duties. At the secondary level, counselors are frequently tasked with overseeing assessments, such as Advanced Placement exams.

"For example, I was an assessment coordinator. I was the one who was in charge of all the assessments at the secondary level. I planned, I trained teachers, I put schedules together, I figured out rooms, I figured out proctors, I administered, I cleaned up after the test, I shipped materials back,' Weise said. "There was a lot of legwork, and probably, if I had to estimate, that was a good month to five weeks of my time was spent just planning for that test."

But when bogged down with those other duties, school counselors aren't able to actually counsel students, Weise said. And that's especially concerning, she continued, "given the mental health needs of our students."

The ASCA divides school counselors' roles into three domains: applying academic achievement strategies, managing emotions and applying interpersonal skills, and planning for postsecondary options.

The national association makes it clear that appropriate duties for school counselors include, academic planning advisement, providing short-term counseling to students, overseeing new student orientation, interpreting student records and cognitive/aptitude/achievement tests and consulting with teachers and school principals, including to resolve student issues.

But they should not be expected to provide longterm counseling to address psychological disorders, cover classes for teachers, supervise classrooms or common areas, or keep clerical records, among other tasks.

According to the latest annual Indiana School Counselor Survey released in November, Hoosier counselors reported spending 10 days per school year on proctoring or supervising testing. More time was spent on other noncounseling duties.

"We all know that we have mandated a lot of testing, but perhaps that mentoring or proctoring could be done more by a clerical person or someone of a lower salary, rather than a counselor," Leising said.

More work needed?

Still, Robert Taylor, executive director of the Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents, pleaded with legislators to allow schools to retain some flexibility to stretch staff.

'No question, counselors are overworked. No question, teachers are overworked. No question. School employees in general are putting in time, hours and talent sometimes outside of their expertise many times outside of their contract hours," Taylor said. "But by limiting the utilization of school counselors, we're limiting the flexibility and availability of a trained, committed educational professional to deal with some of the many aspects of school.

Taylor pointed to superintendents who drive school buses, principals who clean restrooms, and teachers who provide supervision outside instruction "on a daily basis."

He said, too, there are benefits to counselors assisting students "outside a structured counseling arrangement." The 85 percent figure, Taylor continued, "is arbitrary."

Weise agreed "it's a great opportunity for us to get to see students in different environments," but said "when it's prescribed to us on a regular basis, that's when it starts to erode the time that we can counsel students."

"There's no magic fix for everybody, but I think some of those duties - the test coordinating, taking those types of things off of their plates and protecting counselor time more stringently - that would increase our student outcomes ... but we also would see happier counselors," she said. "I think that's part of our shortage. A lot of our counselors are frustrated. They went in to help students and counsel students, and they're not getting that."

Weise recommended schools should hire additional teachers and seek out more volunteer opportunities, especially for parents, to help fill gaps.

She pushed back, however, against Leising's willingness to reduce the time requirement in a future amendment, emphasizing that 80 percent is what's recommended by the ASCA.

(Continued from Page 1) to make sure water doesn't go up so high again," he said.

**Atmospheric rivers** 

They have no insurance and are relying on donations from family, friends and neighbors. He said he is grateful still because his parents survived and are now safe at his home in an area less prone to flooding.

Last winter, California was battered by numerous drought-busting atmospheric rivers that unleashed extensive flooding, big waves that hammered shoreline communities and extraordinary snowfall that crushed buildings. More than 20 people died.

This week's "Pineapple Express" called that because its plume of moisture stretches back across the Pacific to near Hawaii — will be followed by an even more powerful storm on Sunday, forecasters said.

The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services activated its oper-

ations center and positioned personnel and equipment in areas most at risk.

Brian Ferguson, the office's deputy director of crisis communications, characterized the situation as "a significant threat to the safety of Californians." He said an area from the state's border with Oregon all the way south to San Diego and from the coast into the mountains could be affected over the next 10 to 14 days.

"This really is a broad sweep of California that's going to see threats over the coming week," Ferguson said.

A 100-foot redwood tree fell in the Silicon Valley city of Saratoga on Wednesday, crashing down onto a car and trapping a girl inside, according to KNTV. Freed by firefighters, she suffered only minor injuries.

"We were very lucky," Santa Clara County Fire Department Capt. Matt Mokhtarian told the TV station. "Just a matter of feet in this scenario." On Thursday, southern Los Angeles County was hit hard by flash flooding. Vehicles plowed through water on lowlying sections of freeways and at least one underpass beneath a rail crossing in Long Beach was inundated, submerging a car.

Seal Beach, south of Los Angeles, saw flooding along the Pacific Coast Highway on Thursday that closed parts of the freeway at times, with one white van stranded at an intersection.

In nearby Costa Mesa, a swift-water rescue team pulled someone from a flowing storm channel. The person was taken to hospital in stable condition, the Orange County Fire Authority said in a social media post.

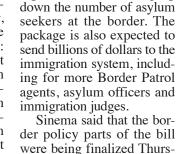
The fire authority also rescued a man who was trapped on a small island in the Santa Ana riverbed, surrounded by rushing water. A paramedic had to be lowered by a helicopter to hoist the man to safety. bill would counter the heavy criticism it has received from conservatives and activists.

"I've explained it a lot, but people just need to read the text," Lankford told reporters. "They hear it, but then they read the internet and try to make a decision — which one they believe the internet or me. And so they got to see the text."

Both Trump and Johnson, the House speaker, have derided one of the bill's main compromises: an expulsion authority that would automatically kick in on days when illegal crossings reached more than 5,000 over a five-day average across the Southern border. They both argue it amounts to greenlighting 5,000 migrants to cross the border daily.

But Lankford and Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, an Arizona independent who also crafted the bill, have pushed back hard on that claim. They said the expulsion authority is only meant to prevent authorities from

Right coverage. Right price. Right here in town.



Sinema said that the border policy parts of the bill were being finalized Thursday and she expected the funding aspects to wrap up soon after. The bill's release will likely set up a frenzied effort in the Senate to gain support. GOP senators have said that a strong showing of votes from their conference would give Johnson, the speaker, a reason to put the bill on the House floor.

### **Iran-backed** militias

(Continued from Page 1) While Iran has denied involvement, Austin said Thursday that "how much Iran knew or didn't know, we don't know. But it really doesn't matter because Iran sponsors these groups."

Austin said "without that facilitation, these kinds of things don't happen." He said the Pentagon is still looking at the forensics of the drone that struck Tower 22, a secretive base in northeastern Jordan that's been crucial to the American presence in neighboring Syria.

"I don't think the adversaries are of a 'one and done' mindset. And so they have a lot of capability. I have a lot more," Austin said. "We're going to do what's necessary to protect our troops."

In the Red Sea, the Houthis have fired on commercial and military ships almost 40 times since November. In the latest attack, they fired a ballistic missile at the M/V Koi, a Liberian-flagged container ship on Thursday, U.S. Central Command said. The ship's management could not immediately be reached for comment. The Houthis did not claim responsibility.

The attack happened west of Hodeida, a port city in Yemen long held by the rebels, said the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations, a British military group overseeing Mideast waterways.

Also on Thursday, Central Command said it had destroyed two more Houthifired drones. One overhead drone, fired at 5 a.m. in Yemen, was shot down in the Gulf of Aden. A few hours later, an uncrewed surface vehicle, a drone that travels through water, was "determined to be an imminent threat" and was struck in self defense in the Red Sea, Central Command said.

The Houthis say they are targeting ships over Israel's offensive in Gaza against Hamas. But they have frequently targeted vessels with tenuous or no clear links to Israel, imperiling shipping in a key route for global trade between Asia, the Mideast and Europe.

The Houthis hit a commercial vessel with a missile on Jan. 26, sparking a fire that burned for hours.

The Pentagon has the aircraft carrier Dwight D. Eisenhower in the region, along with at least a half dozen other major U.S. warships, U.S. Air Force fighter jets and radar aircraft. It has already been regularly using those assets to conduct strikes and defend ships.



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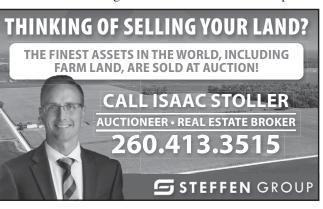
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### LOCAL/AREA

### Dennis Dwayne Bosworth, 68

Dennis Dwayne Bosworth, 68, passed away on Sunday, Jan. 28, 2024, at I.U. Health Ball Memorial Hospital.

He was born in Marion on May 24, 1955, to Cecil Bosworth and Wanda Rose (McHenry) Bosworth. Both parents preceded him in death.

Dennis graduated from Mississinewa High School in 1974. He married Sonna Marie (Decker) on May 9, 1981, in Gas City.

He retired from Almco Steel Products in Bluffton in 2019 after 30+ years of service. He had formerly worked for Glass Containers in Gas City before they closed their doors.

Dennis enjoyed being outside, he enjoyed fishing, hunting, golfing and bowling. He collected stamps, coins, baseball cards, basketball cards and football cards. He enjoyed antiquing and auctions and watching NASCAR. He loved his family and would easily win the best papaw award. He was an avid Minnesota Vikings Fan and loved flowers.

Dennis will be sadly missed by his wife, Sonna M. Bosworth of Hartford City; daughters, Dawn Marie Bosworth and Mandy Joy Burnette, both of Bluffton; grandchildren, Terrell "Bubby" Coleman, Taylor Cason, Savannah Bosworth, Juan Alvarez and Miguel Alverez; siblings, Carl Bosworth, Linda (Bill) Walters, Sharon (Bob) Hall, Jackie (Mike) Felver and Ralph (Michelle) Bosworth; and several nieces and nephews.

He is also preceded in death by two baby girl granddaughters who were born sleeping; siblings, infant Karen Bosworth, Paul Bosworth and Chris Bosworth.

Funeral service will be at 1 p.m. Friday, Feb. 2, 2024, at Keplinger Funeral Home, 509 N. High St. in Hartford City. Burial will be at Riverside Cemetery in Gas City.

Visitation will be from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Friday, Feb. 2, 2024, at Keplinger Funeral Home.

Memorials may be made to Alzheimer's Association, 322 Eighth Ave., 7th Floor, New York, NY 10001

Online condolences may be sent to www. keplingerfuneralhome.com or utilize our Keplinger Funeral Home Facebook Page.

### Melissa J. Newman, 65

Melissa J. Newman, 65, of rural Montpelier, (Wells County) passed away at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 30, 2024, at her home in Montpelier.

She was born on Monday, Jan. 12, 1959, in Detroit. She married Jerome K. Newman on Sunday, July 4, 1976, in Bluffton. Melissa had worked at different restaurants, including Starbucks and enjoyed doing census work. She could never pass up a good

She will be sadly missed by her husband, Jerome K. Newman of Montpelier; sons, Jerome (Rebecca) Newman of Bluffton, Chad (Shanna) Newman of Markle, Corey of Montpelier; brother, David Henning of Luther, Michigan; Newman, Jordan Szarenski, Devin Caudill, Kayda Newman, Kipton Newman, Olivia Newman, Collin Hormann, Kailey Dawson, Addison Hormann, Kynzlee Newman, Rhiley Newman, Rhett Newman, Claire Hormann; and greatgranddaughter, Charlotte Hair.

She was preceded in death by her father, Budd

### **INCIDENTS**

**County:** 

Wednesday, 1:59 p.m., Ind. 3 and West 1000 South, Warren. Driver pulled over for speeding 70 in a 55 mph zone. Driver gave officer ID card. Hailey Gallant charged with driving while suspended, operating without insurance, and speeding.

Wednesday, 4:46 p.m., 2500 West 1200 South, Keystone. Caller reported they were scammed out of \$8,500 in cash, unsure when it happened.

Thursday, 1:30 a.m., Poneto Volunteer Fire Department. Report of vehicle parked in alley for several minutes with dome light on. Officer located three

# **Police Notebook**

inside of the car. Kyla Mor-

116 and North Matthews Street, Bluffton. Officer removed a deer carcass from the road.

### **Ossian:**

Wednesday, 12:03 p.m., 6700 East 1000 North, Ossian. Report of a mailbox run over by semi truck driver from SuperEgo.

Thursday, 1:23 a.m., South Jefferson and West Young streets, Ossian. Driver pulled over for speeding 55 in a 45 mph zone. Officer smelled and observed marijuana, driver admitted to

cle. Driver also stated he last a Level 5 felony, theft from smoked after work before a building, a Level 6 felhe began the drive. Jaquane M. Smith charged with possession of marijuana, a class B misdemeanor, operating a vehicle with a schedule I or II substance in body, a Class C misdemeanor, and speeding

#### ARRESTS

Nicholas Aaron Brewster, 30, Bluffton, dealing methamphetamine, a Level 2 felony, and driving while suspended, a Class A misdemeanor. No bond set.

Terron Jamarr Wimes, 39, Fort Wayne, dealing cocaine, a Level 4 felony. Bond set at \$20,000.

Matthew Scott Beck, Bond set at \$1,500.

individuals and marijuana having a "blunt" in his vehi- 41, New Haven, burglary,

Amanda Mae Tarvin, 43, Fort Wayne, possession of cocaine, a Level 6 felony, and possession of paraphernalia, a Class A misdemeanor. Bond set at \$5,500.

Kyla Jean Morgan, 20,

Jaquane Martell Smith,

### Indiana school boards to have final say over 'human sexuality' lessons under GOP-backed bill

The proposal advanced to the full Senate Chamber despite pushback from critics over "ambiguous" language.

#### **By CASEY SMITH Indiana Capital Chronicle**

Hoosier school boards would have authority over "human sexuality" instruction under legislation moving through the Indiana Statehouse. But opponents say local leaders already have a say in sex education curricula, and call the bill "hostile" towards LGBTQ students.

The GOP-backed measure advanced 8-5 from the Senate education committee on Wednesday and now heads to the full chamber.

Sen. Gary Byrne, R-Byrneville, who authored Senate Bill 128, called it "a simple bill" that increases transparency for parents and gives school boards "direction" over learning materials they should be up on "but don't always know about.'

"This is a subject where teachers and parents have reached out to me with concerns. We all know conversations about sex ed are more sensitive than other subjects because families have different values and different ideals about what is appropriate to talk about, and when it's appropriate for their child to hear about it," Byrne said. "Publishing this information will just help parents better decide whether they want to opt out." But critics of the bill argued the bill's language is "ambiguous" and could prevent certain - or any aspects of human sexuality from being taught to Hoosier students. "Every person - not just straight, cisgender folks - need to see reflections of representations of themselves. To create a law which we know from other states can be easily misused and abused is dangerous," said Emma Vosicky, executive director of Indianapolisbased nonprofit GenderNexus. "As Hoosiers, we should not create roadblocks to understanding and welcoming other people - barriers leaving students and staff feeling stigmatized for their

differences."

Increasing 'transparency' Byrne's bill provides that, if a school provides students instruction on human sexuality, the school board or other governing authority must first approve any related curricular materials in a public meeting.

Specifically, the bill requires that — in districts where human sexuality is taught to kids in grades 4 through 12 - a school board must approve and publicly publish on its website an annual plan with:

Each grade level, course or class in which students will receive instruction on human sexuality.

The weeks during which instruction on human sexuality will be taught, if the instruction is provided by an instructor teaching multiple subjects to a single class.

Information about whether human sexuality will be taught to: (A) male and female students in a unified setting; or (B) male and female students in separate settings.

Indication if human sexuality instruction will be taught by a male or female instructor.

A short description of the topics that will be discussed during instruction on numan sexuality. All learning materials that will be used for instruction on human sexuality. The introduction of sex education usually starts in the fourth grade, according to state guidelines. But Indiana does not require the course in schools. Instead, it only mandates that schools teach lessons on HIV and AIDS. Schools that do teach sex education are expected to focus on abstinence.

parents so that they can consent to instruction on human sexuality.

But because Indiana doesn't have specific state standards for sex education, Byrne suggested that leaves Hoosier teachers void of "directions."

"I didn't want to force anything at the state level, but as a former school board member, I think putting the local school boards in the driver's seat - that makes good sense. They are elected by the voters, after all," he said

Terry Spradlin, executive director of the Indiana School Boards Association, said his group supports the legislation, given it's "an alignment" with existing procedure for most boards.

This is not new territory for boards to have the authority to do this," Spradlin said. "We're striving for transparency, local control. Certainly, that's protected in this bill, And, you know, supporting parental engagement, informing the parents what's taught and allowing them to make the decision to opt their child into the instruction to grant, and provide consent for instruction."

The bill is additionally supported by the American Family Association of Indiana and the Indiana Family Institute.

Representatives from the socially conservative advocacy groups said the legislation would ensure more "transparency" around sex education and help school boards "avoid controversy." **Contention over 'human** sexuality' Human sexuality isn't defined in state law. But Byrne noted the term has been used in the Indiana Code "for many, many years." "I didn't feel like it was necessary for it to be defined in this bill," he said, adding that the bill, as written, lets local school boards "define that locally." Chris Daley, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana, maintained that local school boards "already have the authority to do exactly what's in the bill." He additionally pointed

ony, and theft, a Class A misdemeanor. Bond set at \$10,000.

Poneto, possession of marijuana, a Class B misdemean-

38, Fort Wayne, possession of marijuana, a Class B misdemeanor, operating with controlled substance in body, a Class C misdemeanor.

to a 2023 Indiana Department of Education survey, in which 8 percent of respondents said they did not know what was being taught in their child's school. Only 7 percent said they had concerns over curricula.

This is not a local control bill," Daley said. "This is a bill that is requiring every school district in the state to now hold hearings on very volatile issues in which a small number of folks can come and take over those meetings. It also allows a small number of members to inject their own political beliefs into sex education at the local level."

Vosicky said the bill is "almost certainly a violation" of Titles IV and VI. She emphasized, too, that the proposal wrongly directs school boards "to evaluate layers of curriculum outside of their scope and expertise."

"This can be readily abused to harm, shame and erase the existence of LGBTQ children, families and school staff," Vosicky said, adding that - without a definition for 'human sexuality — the bill "chills speech" and "makes folks with slightly different experiences feel unseen an unwelcome."

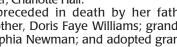
"Is every book about a boy kissing a girl or holding her hand about human sexuality, or does this apply only to LGBTQ kids? ... Is it instruction if a teacher posts a photo of their samegender spouse, or uses the students affirming pronouns?" she continued. "A hostile school environment is statistically shown to undermine academic success, especially in a world where school hate crimes are skyrocketing.'



bargain. Melissa enjoyed traveling to California, loved anything in purple, enjoyed taking pictures, and she loved her dogs. Melissa loved her family and enjoyed spending time with them.

Newman of Montpelier, daughter Shaya (Adam) Hormann sisters, Melody Reed of Lakewood, Washington, Esperanza "Espie" Martinez of California; grandchildren, Gavin

Henning; mother, Doris Faye Williams; granddaughter, Rhiannon Sophia Newman; and adopted grandparents, Wayne and Margaret Williams.



### gan charged with possession of marijuana, a Class B misdemeanor. Thursday, 5:37 a.m., Ind.

The family will have a Celebration of Life at a later date Arrangements are being handled by Walker & Glancy Funeral Home in Montpelier.

Online condolences may be made at www.glancyfuneralhomes.com.

### School operating, safety referenda amended out of Indiana election bill

#### **By LESLIE BONILLA MUÑIZ Indiana Capital Chronicle**

House lawmakers on Wednesday edited down a controversial proposal to restrict school operating and school safety referenda to general election years, in a major compromise for the legislation's backers.

"It makes sense for us to provide more flexibility," author Rep. Bob Behning, R-Indianapolis, said on the floor.

Current law lets school corporations hold referenda to impose levies that go above the state's property tax caps. They can make those asks during primary and general elections, and can even pay for referenda special elections.

But Republicans have increasingly moved to constrict those levies.

Even so, Indiana parents already have the right to remove their child from sex education classes.

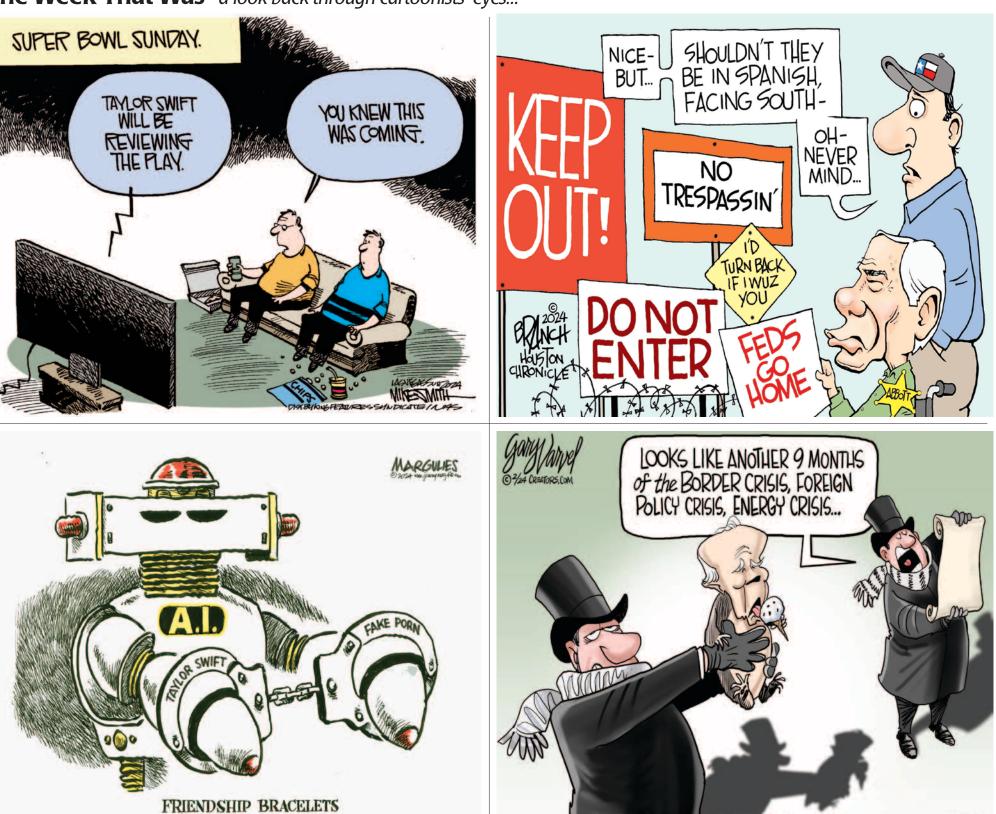
Currently, school boards also have the authority to review and approve curricular materials. State law further requires school corporations to make instructional materials available to





### The Week That Was - a look back through cartoonists' eyes ...

### ΟΡΙΝΙΟΝ



### When fun is against the law

The city of Toronto is in the news for outlawing sled and toboggan riding on 45 of its hillsides.

According to the Toronto Star, the ban has sparked a robust debate about how far government should go to protect people from themselves while they're having fun.

To be sure, tragic accidents do happen when frolicking kids and adults hit the sled slopes.

In a case a few years back, a 5-yearold girl in Nebraska hit a tree while sledding and became paralyzed.

In another case, in Iowa, a man suffered a spinal cord jury after slamming into a sign.



Тот Purcell

# **The Generational Divide**

PUNXUTAWNEY JOE

It is simply a fact of life that each generation rebels against its predecessors. I will leave it to the psychologists or sociologists to explain why that is and why historically these generations tend to get the rebellion worked out of their system in early adulthood. Maybe it's the children and the mortgage that cause a reevaluation of the perfect over against the practical. Reality will win out.

I wonder, though, if that generalization is no longer holding true. Many of my age believe that the current generational fissures are unbridgeable chasms capable of overturning our traditional American cultural norms. It's nearly impossible to trust that things will work out for the better when



for his children. I should be able to field test his opinion with my own married children. They read these columns occasionally so I'm sure I will hear from them if I am off base.

garyvarvel.com

The second interviewee, if I can call him that, was eager to talk about these things. He is a Millennial, a young father with substantial contact with the next generation. I believe these kids are called Generation Z, now moving through high school and college and into adulthood.

His observation is that the Generation Z Mark young people are reacting against the cultural and political excesses of the Millennials and Franke their fellow travelers in the cultural wars. He senses that this reaction is becoming more virulent as they rebel against the nihilistic philosophy of their older siblings. His insight reminded me of the pendulum on our grandfather clock, moving relentlessly from one extreme of its path to the other. At least that analogy is better than that of Poe's "The Pit and the Pendulum" and its impending doom. Now the above statements are all generalizations, and all generalizations are false including this one as Mark Twain quipped. Remember, though, that generalizations are not meant to be immutable natural laws but simply observations about what is most often true. Absolute certainty is hard to come by; we all have learned to live our lives using our best judgment of what we see and hear and then drawing the optimal conclusion. "You can observe a lot just by watching," as my favorite twentieth century philosopher Yogi Berra instructed us. So I will take my two friends' observations to heart and operate on their validity, if and until I see adequate evidence to the contrary. Both of my friends are serious students of the human condition, well read and disciplined thinkers, so I don't expect to be disabused of my trust in their perspectives. Since I tend toward the optimist side of the optimism/ pessimism continuum, I prefer to find reasons for hope rather than despair. I pray my Millennial friend is right in his prediction about the pendulum, but the curmudgeon in me would like to figure out how to stop the pendulum at that sweet spot my Generation X friend wants to relive for the benefit of his children and my grandchildren. Mark Franke, M.B.A., an adjunct scholar of the Indiana Policy Review and its book reviewer, is formerly an associate vice-chancellor at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne.

all we hear is doom and gloom.

Can it be as bad as all that? When in doubt about the truthfulness of a proposition, I look for people willing to discuss it with me. I choose friends with whom I have never talked about this particular issue before. I don't want to hear the same old, same old. The last place I want to find myself is in an echo chamber. So I sought out friends from different generations from each other's and from mine, in this case what are known as generations X and Y, the latter better known as the Millennials. The sample size for each generation was exactly one, hardly meeting even the most lackadaisical scientific standards but still not meaningless for my purposes. One friend is of my children's generation, Generation X if I understand the taxonomy correctly. He grew up in west central Indiana in a small city but now lives in Fort Wayne. He told me what he misses most are front porches and sidewalks. These two things represent to him the neighborliness of his childhood. It was a comfortable and secure space for him. As we talked, it occurred to me that he was describing the same kind of neighborhood I remembered from my childhood. And I am a Baby Boomer so we are crossing a generational divide that perhaps no longer exists. As I think back to the kind of home life my kids had, living in a suburban housing subdivision, it was similar to my own from way back in the Jurassic 1950's. If I am honest with myself, I must admit that this younger friend may be wearing the same rose-colored glasses that I do. Regardless, it is instructive that he sees a utopian childhood that is lost yet still one that he wants

The first case resulted in a \$2 million judgment and the second in a \$2.75 million judgment against municipal governments.

Few sledding accidents are that serious, thank God. But Newsweek cites statistics that show that every year they send more than 20,000 kids to the hospital -9percent of whom suffered a brain injury.

I hit the sled slopes dozens of times every winter as a kid, but I was careful.

I avoided toboggans, for instance, because I had so little control over those things — a concern that may have saved my life the day six of my daredevil friends rode a wooden toboggan down a steep hill on a golf course.

They had to be going better than 30 miles per hour when they hit a three-foot-wide culvert at the bottom of the hill.

It was magnificent to see them flailing their arms and legs as they sailed through the air and also very funny until each of them landed with a gigantic thud.

Their boots, gloves and scarves were scattered all over the snow. Nobody broke any bones, but they moaned the whole way home.

Being an individualist, I was always a Flexible Flyer sled guy because it offered me superior control as I lay on my belly and whipped around trees and other obstacles.

However, my friend Wes Walters wasn't so skilled. While speeding downhill on his belly, he tried to navigate between two large trees and broke both elbows.

It's easy to find fault with government busybodies, lawyers and nannies who eagerly ban sled riding and other recreational activities, such as skateboarding, to protect people from hurting themselves.

I understand why towns and municipalities might ban an activity that may cost them a sizable damage settlement.

At the same time, though, I lament the litigiousness and overprotectiveness that has become the hallmark of modern times - and decry governments that don't know when to stop butting into our private lives to tell us how to behave.

Did you know, for example, that the federal government has created "helpful tips" on how to survive winter weather?

"Stay off roads if at all possible," our government warns us. "If trapped in your car, then stay inside."

That's sound advice for winter, I guess.

They forgot to remind us to wear our wool mittens and earmuffs.

But I'm still grateful my tax dollars are paying some bureaucrat to determine that it's best that we stay inside a car that we are already trapped in.

In any event, the real problem with life is that living is risky — and having fun can be especially risky.

Take what precautions you can, but remember: Life goes by too fast, so avoid government bureaucrats and do something fun as often as you can.

But never get on a toboggan.

Tom Purcell is a Pittsburgh Tribune-Review humor columnist. tom@TomPurcell.com.



### Today in History

By The Associated Press

Today is Friday, Feb. 2, the 33rd day of 2024. There are 333 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 2, 2013, former Navy SEAL and "American Sniper" author Chris Kyle was fatally shot along with a friend, Chad Littlefield, at a gun range west of Glen Rose, Texas; suspect Eddie Ray Routh was later convicted and sentenced to life in prison without parole.

On this date: In 1536, present-day Buenos Aires, Argentina, was founded by Pedro de Mendoza of Spain.

In 1653, New Amsterdam – now New York City – was incorporated.

In 1887, Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, held its first

Groundhog Day festival. In 1913, New York's rebuilt Grand Central Terminal officially opened to the public at one minute past midnight.

In 1914, Charles Chaplin made his movie debut as the comedy short "Making a Living" was released by Keystone Film Co.

In 1925, the legendary Alaska Serum Run ended as the last of a series of dog mushers brought a lifesaving treatment to Nome, the scene of a diphtheria epidemic, six days after the drug left Nenana.

In 1943, the remainder of Nazi forces from the Battle of Stalingrad surrendered in a major victory for the Soviets in World War II.

In 1948, President Harry S. Truman sent a 10-point civil rights program to Congress, where the proposals ran into fierce opposition from Southern lawmakers.

In 1980, NBC News reported the FBI had conducted a sting operation targeting members of Congress using phony Arab businessmen in what became known as "Abscam," a codename protested by Arab Americans.

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### DIVERSIONS

# Staying healthy and saving time

Dear

Annie

by Annie Lane

Dear Annie: I'm knee-deep in a phone records demanding job, and I absolutely love it. The problem is, I can tell my health is slipping. I'm not getting a lot of sleep, I rarely have time to hit the gym, and my meals usually consist of fast or frozen food due to time constraints. My body is starting to feel the consequences, and I want to feel good again without sacrificing too much time. Any tips? -Healthy Hacks Seeker

Dear Healthy Hacks: If you don't take care of yourself, you'll burn out, and your body won't let you continue doing that demanding job you love so much.

There are a few ways to stay healthy without sacrificing convenience:

• Take some time every weekend to meal prep your food for the week. This doesn't have to be time-intensive; just throw a bunch of veggies in the oven, or cook a few chicken breasts. That way, you won't resort to fast food when you're in a pinch.

• Go on walks. Even if you don't have time for a full hour in the gym, squeezing in a couple of 10-minute walks per day can make a huge difference.

• Prioritize sleep. You'll be far more productive and efficient during your working hours if you make sleep a priority. Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day to keep yourself feeling energized.

Good luck!

Dear Annie: Recently, my husband's phone was sitting on the table, and even though I had never gone through it before, I did this time. To my surprise, he had several text messages from a co-worker. Some were about work, but a lot were not. Some were more like horseplay, or "Oh, do you want a coffee? Shhh, don't tell anyone else. I am just picking up for us." Another message that really upset me was this coworker telling him she knows he and others they work with like looking at one lady's large breasts who had come to their shop for business.

I called him on it. I looked at the

and got more mad because there were up to 15 texts in one day, but the phone records do not show the actual texts. He says he never did anything and is in no way interested in her, but he needs to communicate with her for work. He had told her not to text his phone because

I was upset and

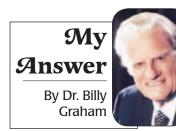
instead she should call him to chat on speaker about any questions. She texted him again a month later like she thought it was OK, and I had him block her number. Any advice? I feel hurt and keep thinking about everything. -Feeling Betrayed

Dear Betrayed: It sounds like your husband has been pretty receptive since you voiced your concerns and this coworker is the one who still doesn't get the message. So long as he works with this woman, it is your husband's responsibility to clearly communicate these boundaries and stick to them.

The fact that you had a hunch to check your husband's phone now for the first time in your marriage, though, signifies to me there may be cracks in your foundation that need attention. A couples counselor can help you two fully work through this incident, and any others, and renew your connection.

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

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Question: Are Christians responsible for their decisions in life or is God in complete control and things happen just the way He intends for them to play out? This is a troubling question for me and I can't get anyone to clearly answer it. -C.F.

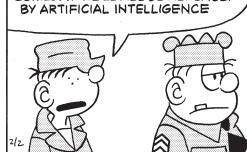
Answer: Theologians have debated for centuries about God's absolute control over everything versus mankind's freedom to act on its own. The question people long to have answered is whether everything that happens to us is already determined by God. Or do we have the ability to carry out plans on our own, regardless of what God hoped would happen?

### We draw comfort from the fact that God is at work

The Bible teaches both God's sovereignty and our human responsibility. To us, this sounds like a contradiction — and one I don't believe we'll fully understand until we get to Heaven. Until that day, we need to hold firmly to both truths: God is in control of everything, but we also are responsible for our actions. Why is this important? The Apostle Paul stresses that God is working behind the scenes to accomplish His purposes. "It is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose" (Philippians 2:13, NIV).

work - even if we can't fully understand it now. We must also realize that we are responsible for decisions we make. There are consequences we will experience when we go

### **BEETLE BAILEY**



### **BLONDIE**

ZITS





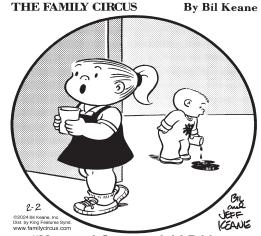


OKAY, CLOVER MEADOWS ASSISTED SENIOR LIVING AND RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITY, I HAVE ONE QUESTION FOR YOU!

### CRANKSHAFT

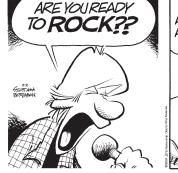


THE FAMILY CIRCUS



"Mommy! Come quick! PJ just had a disaster!"





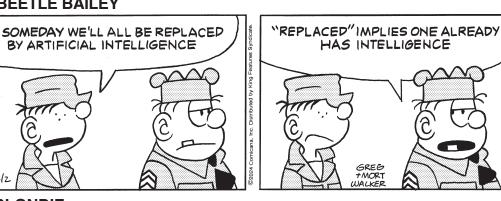




### The LOCKHORNS



"WILL YOU PLEASE ACCEPT MY HALF-HEARTED APOLOGY?"



We draw comfort from the fact that God is at

ereign over all things, and is at work concerning His creation.

against God's will. This is

the importance of asking

the Lord for His wisdom

and guidance, and thank-

ing Him that He indeed

knows all things, is sov-

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

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# **Raiders' late rally falls short against Patriots**

#### **By RYAN WALKER** JAY COUNTY - South-

ern Wells never went away, but did not come away with a victory over the ACAC's second-best team Jay County 53-39 Thursday night.

In fact, the Raiders (5-11, 1-5 ACAC) nine straight points to open the fourth quarter saw them down by four points. Chandler Oswalt and Landon Johnson swished both three-point attempts and Perrin Gates got an old-fashioned one in between them. That got the attention of the Patriots (7-9, 4-2 ACAC) enough to wake up and put the game to bed later.

Jay County tightened up its defense, as it had virtually all game, and allowed only eight points the rest of the 6:30 remaining in the contest. In the meantime, it poured 16 points to close things out.

What might have been the killer for the Raiders came in the third quarter. Oswalt, their leading scorer averaging 12.3 points per game and doubles secondplace in attempts, picked up his fourth foul not even three minutes into the second half.

That had the senior scorer sitting from the sidelines for the rest of the third quarter and watch his team go without a point for six minutes. Evan Pennington ended the drought in a 2-4 showing at the charity stripe, and Gates' two free throws and bucket underneath managed a 15-point deficit heading into the final period.

"What he brings whether he scores or not, is that defenses shade to him,'

Southern Wells head coach Joel Roush said after the game. "When that happens, people aren't under as much pressure. They're more open, and when that doesn't happen, it's tough."

Gates was just about the only saving grace for the Raiders at the time, helping his team with many offensive rebounds and recording a 12-point double-double.

Outside of that third quarter, Roush was pleased with his team's effort on the road.

The Raiders knocked back just about every time the Patriots scored. Oswalt cashed in on triples in each quarter while Gates went to work in the post.

The rest of the team, and even Oswalt and Gates at times, was dry from the floor. As a team, they shot 5-18 in the opening half with Andrew Aker making the only other shot outside of his two teammates.

Jay County's defense runs a 1-2-2, 3-2 zone style that suffocates teams and forces them to size them up and drain the clock. Their player's quickness and mix of size and length made it difficult to try and score.

Wesley Bihn, who had a team-high 11 points, is a 6'7" center, while Gradin Swoveland stands at the same hight as a guard. Trevin Dunnington and Ben Crouch are 6<sup>4</sup>, and had significant playing minutes. Southern Wells' tallest players that checked into the game were Gates and CJ Reber at 6'1".

Add that to the 19 turnovers compared to 13 by the Patriots, and it was a rough night.

"They're just so long," Roush said. "I'm certain that whatever defense they play, they'd be problematic because that length and that size and the foot quickness, they're just good.'

Oswalt led the field with a game-high 13 points.

Jay County also won the junior varsity game 40-10 in two quarters. Johnson led the way with six points and scored the same amount in the varsity game.

Southern Wells' next game will be at home against Southwood. Junior varsity starts at 6 p.m. and will be playing two quarters only for the rest of the season. Varsity will start 20 minutes following that game approximately at 6:45 p.m.

ryan@news-banner.com

### JAY COUNTY 53, SOUTHERN WELLS 39 At Jay County SOUTHERN WELLS (5-11, 1-5

ACAC): Chandler Oswalt 4-10 1-2 13, Perrin Gates 4-5 4-5 12, Landon Johnson 2-5 0-0 6, Andrew Aker 1-4 0-0 2, CJ Reber 0-2 2-2 2, Evan Pennington

CJ Reber 0-2 2-2 2, Evan Pennington 0-4 2-5 2, Caleb Johnson 0-1 0-0 0. TOTALS: 11-31 9-15 39. JAY COUNTY (7-9, 4-2 ACAC): Wes Bihn 5-9 1-1 11, Gradin Swove-land 4-7 1-5 9, Trevin Dunnington 4-11 1-2 9, Jayden Comer 2-3 3-4 8, Liam Garringer 2-8 1-2 7, Parker Nichols 1-5 3-3 5, Aiden Phillips 2-3 0-0 4, Levi Muhlenkamp 0-2 1-2 1, Ben Crouch 0-1 0-0 0, Jackson Edwards 0-0 0-0 0, Cole Forthofer 0-0 0-0 0. TOTALS: Cole Forthofer 0-0 0-0 0. TOTALS -49 11-19 53.

7 8 17 -S. Wells 7 . 39 Jay County 12 8 17 16 - 53 Three-point FG: Southern Wells 6-14 (Oswalt 4-9, L. Johnson 2-4, Reber 0-1), Jay County 3-14 (Garrin-ger 2-3, Comer 1-2, Dunnington 0-3, Bihn 0-1, Swoveland 0-1, Nichols 0-2, Muhlenkamp 0-2). Rebounds: South-ern Wells 21 (Gates 10, Pennington 4, Aker 3, Oswalt 2, Reber 1, L. Johnson 1), Jay County 21 (Phillips 7, Bihn 5, Dunnington 2, Garringer 2, Muhlen-kamp 1, Comer 1, Crouch 1, Nichols 1). Turnovers: Southern Wells 19, Jay County 13. Fouls: Southern Wells 18, Jay County 16. Fouled Out: None.

Technicals: None. JV: 40-10 Jay County (2 quarters).



Southern Wells 6'1" forward senior Perrin Gates (right) attempts to close out Jay County's 6'7" forward Gradin Swoveland Thursday night at the Patriots place. The Raiders fell 53-39. (Photo by Ryan Walker)

# **Tigers beat Panthers in all** three boys' basketball levels

Bluffton earned a road victory at Eastbrook 44-36 Thursday night.

The win puts the Tigers at .500 for the season, now 8-8.

Tucker Jenkins led the way with 25 points, followed by Kaleb Green (9), Cameron Williams (6) and Andrew Hunt (4).

The junior varsity team also got a win 42-29. Nolan Lambert led the way with 13 points, followed by Griffin Mogan (9), Jude Baumgartner and Eli Bertsch (6), Jared Moser (4), Ben Maggard (3) and Marshal Gerber (1).

SPORTS

Bluffton will host ACAC for Heritage at 2:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 3.



#### FRIDAY, FEB 2

GIRLS BASKETBALL: Southern Wells vs. Lakeland Christian at Northfield High School, 6 p.m.; Norwell vs. Maconaquah at Maconaguah High School; Bluffton vs. Bishop Luers at South Adams High School, 6 p.m. 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.





Top, Norwell's Ella Krug nears the final turn of her 100-yard butterfly event during the sectional preliminary round Thursday night at Jay County. Bottom, Bluffton's Zoey Schmidt takes a stroke during the 200-yard freestyle race. Both will be heading to the sectional final rounds, competing for seven total events for their respective teams. (Photos by Ryan Walker)

# Knights, Tigers splash multiple swimmers on sectional final list

Norwell and Bluffton swam in the preliminary sectional round Thursday night at Jay County.

There are no team scores for preliminaries, but the top 16 in each individual and relay team event will advance to Saturday's finals. The top eight will compete in the Heat 2 finals, while the rest are going for spots 9-16.

Norwell is seeking a sectional title after falling to Delta last season. The Knights sent their medley relay team and 200-yard freestyle event winner Emma Page to the state finals last season.

The winners of the finals events will head to the state meet on Feb. 9 at the Indiana University Natatorium. Non-top-finishers will need to hit a certain timed cutline to advance to the state meet.

Below are the Knights and Tigers that qualified for the sectional finals on Saturday:

### Norwell

• Jillian Melcher, Ella Krug, Marlee Meredith and Emerson Meredith third in the 200yard medley relay.

• Karrigan Melcher fifth, Olivia Daniel eighth and Ryleigh Huffman 15th in the 200yard freestyle.

• Krug third, Haleigh Reinhard fifth and Marlee Meredith ninth in the 200-yard IM

• Jillian Melcher second, Renee Fraze and Sawyer Peterson 10th in the 50-yard freestyle.

• Krug third, Rilynn Ervin eighth and Huffman ninth in the 100-yard butterfly.

· Emerson Meredith third, Peterson ninth and Addyson Heyerly 14th in the 100-yard freestyle.

 Cassie Coyne third, Karrigan Melcher fourth and Daniel fifth in the 500-yard freestyle.

• Fraze, Emerson Meredith, Marlee Meredith and Jillian Melcher second in the 200vard freestyle relay.

• Jillian Melcher third, Ervin fourth and Alaina Barnhart 12th in the 100-yard backstroke.

• Reinhard second, Meredith sixth in the 100-yard breaststroke.

 Heyerly, Daniel, Fraze and Krug second in the 400-yard freestyle relay.

### Bluffton

• Zoey Schmidt 16th in the 200-yard freestyle.

• Lucia Corkwell 15th in the 200-yard IM.

• Corkwell 13th in the 100-yard butterfly.

• Ellie Coyne sixth in the 100-yard freestyle.

· Zoey Schmidt 10th in the 500-yard freestyle

• Coyne, Corkwell, Anna Zurcher and Kierstynn Reed eighth in the 200-yard freestyle relay.

• Covne first in the 100-yard breaststroke. • Emily Hansen, Schmidt, Emma Fink and

Zurcher ninth in the 400-yard freestyle relay.

The sectional finals will start at 9:30 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 3.

### **Dreyer & Reinbold Racing hires Indy 500** winner Reay & Daly

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) - Ryan Hunter-Reay and Conor Daly will be competing in this year's Indianapolis 500 for Dreyer & Reinbold Racing, the team announced Thursday.

Hunter-Reay will drive the No. 23 Chevrolet as he attempts to qualify for his 16th start in the race. The 2014 Indy winner and 2012 series champion finished 11th on the Brickyard's 2.5-mile oval after qualifying 18th with DRR last May. He has six career top-10 finishes at Indy.

"I'm thrilled to be back and ready to build on where we left off last year," Hunter-Reay said in a statement. "We had a very strong showing at the '500' last year, and if it were not for a failed front wing adjuster early in the race, I truly feel we would have been fighting in the top five to the finish.'

Daly, a 32-year-old Indy native, will attempt to make his 11th start in the 500. This year's race is on May 26.

He finished sixth in 2022 and eighth last year. The son of former driver Derek Daly and stepson of Indianapolis Motor Speedway president Doug Boles will be driving the No. 24 Chevrolet after competing for Ed Carpenter Racing in each of the past four 500s.

Daly also drove in last year's Daytona 500 for Floyd Mayweather's team. He finished 29th.

'When Dennis first called me, he told me he believed I could win the Indy 500, and all he wanted going into 2024 was the best chance to win as a team," Daly said. "As a driver, what more could you want?"

The two were part of a midseason change last summer when Daly and ECR split up, and Hunter-Reay wound up replacing Daly in the No. 20 Chevrolet.

DRR also announced it will partner again with Cusick Motorsports, which fielded its first Indianapolis 500 entrant in 2021. Stefan Wilson of England drove last year for DRR/ Cusick and qualified 25th, but an injury forced the team to replace him with Graham Rahal.

Wilson has qualified for five Indy 500s, all since his brother, Justin, died from injuries sustained during an Indy-Car race in August 2015 at Pocono.

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### Miscellaneous

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### **EMPLOYMENT**

### Help Wanted

WELLS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE is currently seeking applicants for the position of Maintenance/Custodian. Applicants must have general knowledge of heating/cooling, plumbing, electrical with the ability to make minor repairs and/or adjustments. Additional responsibilities include building maintenance and ground keeping. 20-year matrix salary range for the position is \$43,682 - \$52,774. Years of service and experience will be honored for a starting salary up to five years in the pay ma-

trix. Apply www.wellscountysheriff.com at "Job Opportunities". under Deadline for Pre-application submission is no later than February 5, 2024. A full job description is also listed on the website for review.

### Help Wanted

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

HELOISE HINT: Before you apply for a job. Check your credit rating because companies might review this during the interview process. Have all of your financial matters in order. Email HELOISE@Heloise. com.

### Lottery Numbers

**Thursday's Drawings** HOOSIER LOTTERY **Cash 5** — 13-19-23-38-40

Cash4Life — 04-17-18-19-44, Cash Ball: 04

Quick Draw Midday -02-06-09-11-22-23-25-29-31-41-43-44-45-46-47-48-53-69-70-74, BE: 29

Daily Three-Midday — 04-03-09, SB:04

Daily Three-Evening — 00-07-04, SB: 06

Daily Four-Midday — 04-06-07-00, SB: 04 **Daily Four-Evening -**

04-03-00-06, SB: 06 **Quick Draw Evening** 

- 06-10-11-12-13-23-30-31-39-42-44-51-60-66-67-68-70-72-75-77, BE: 68

Hoosier Lotto — Estimated jackpot (for Saturday): \$4 million

#### **MEGA MILLIONS**

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### SUDOKU

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

King Classic Sudoku



**Public Sale Calendar** 

FEBRUARY 2 - 10 a.m. - Secured creditors & various consignors, owners. 815 Adams St., Decatur. Online only truck & equipment auction. Offering 500+ lots! 2012-2014 Freightliner M2106 box trucks, dump trucks, day cabs, sleepers, utility trucks, bucket trucks, utility & semi trailers, SUV's, pickup trucks, 250+ various skid steer attachments, various truck parts, fencing, work benches, tool boxes & much more! Accepting consignments! Krueckeberg Auction & Realty LLC, 260-724-7402, Kjauction. com

FEBRUARY 4 - 6 p.m. - Reida Zezula, owner. 2221 Lower Huntington Rd., Fort Wayne. Online only personal property auction. Furniture, vacuum, name brand purses, Sentry safe, bedroom sets, vintage picnic baskets, costume jewelry, kitchen items, wicker swing, Star Wars collectibles, Fiesta ware, Barbies, household items, etc. Krueckeberg Auction & Realty LLC, 260-724-7402, Kjauction.com.

**BIDDING NOW OPEN AND STARTS CLOS-**ING FEBRUARY 6 - 10 a.m. EST - Mac Sheet Metal LLC, Mark McClanahan, owner. Offering over 300+ lots! Caterpillar V40C 4,000 lb. forklift, Clark C301 5,500 lb. forklift, 2013 Chevrolet Silverado 3500 stake bed, 6.0L V8, automatic, 104, 072 miles, 12' stake bed, sheet metal equipment, tools, more. Preview Feb. 5, 10 a.m.-noon EST, 295 Industrial Blvd., Franklin, IN. Pick up Feb. 8, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Feb. 9, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. *Krueckeberg Auction & Realty LLC*, 260-724-7402, Kjauction.com.

have road access! Online bidding available. Inspection: Feb. 3, 10 a.m.-noon. Auction manager Al Pfister, 260-760-8922, Schrader Real Estate and Auction Company, Inc., 800-451-2709, schraderauction.com.

FEBRUARY 18 - 2 p.m. - Multiple consignors, owners. Online only consignment auction. Furniture, freezers, Pokemon items, sports cards, G.I. Joe figurines, china, 4 wheeler, riding mower, fishing lures, upholstery fabric, household items, vintage toys, light fixtures, etc. Pre-veiw Feb. 15, 3-5 p.m., 812 Elm Street, Decatur. Krueckeberg Auction & Realty LLC, 260-724-7402. Kiauction.com.

FEBRUARY 18-FEBRUARY 25 - (Online Only Auction) - Thomas and Mary Woodward and others, sellers. Outstanding collection of antique pickle casters and brides baskets, Victorian condiment sets, large glassware collection including Carnival, Fenton, cut and pressed glass, Indiana glass, sterling silver, antique and modern furniture, primitives, vintage toys, outstanding line of shop tools, much more. Open house: Feb. 15 and 22 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., 102 S. Jefferson St., Ossian, IN. The Steffen Group Inc., www.steffengrp.com, 260-824-3006. FEBRUARY 20 - 9 a.m. EST - Online Only -JW Jones, Co, owner. Quarry equipment, rock crushers, stackers, heavy trucks, trailers, light duty trucks, forklifts, excavators, wheel loaders, dozers, haul trucks, shop equipment, power units, & much, much more! Preview Feb. . 16, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Pick up Feb. 22-23, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. EST, Feb. 27, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Feb. 28, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Items located mostly in Parago, IN, and Gosport, IN, with some in Martinsville, IN. Krueckeberg Auction & Realty LLC, 260-724-7402, Kjauction.com. BIDDING NOW OPEN AND STARTS CLOS-ING FEBRUARY 21 - 6 p.m. EST - Dean Stop-penhagen, owner. 3877 E 900 N, Ossian, IN (located just east of Aviation Dr. on 900 N, north side of road). Online only land auction! 69.588 tillable acres! Zoned: agricultural, residential development potential!, Jefferson Township, Northern Wells School Corporation. Krueckeberg Auction & Realty LLC, 260-724-7402, Kiauction.com FEBRUARY 25-MARCH 3 - (Online Only Auction) - The Estate of Alan Johnson. 2021 Jeep Grand Cherokee with 3,600 miles, 2 completely restored 1967 and 1969 Vintage Triumph motorcycles, 2017 Grasshopper zero turn mower, 2018 Sur-Trac enclosed trailer, tools, modern furniture, household. Open house: Feb. 25 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. and Feb. 29 from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., 3651 E. 1000 N., Ossian, IN. *The Steffen* Group Inc., 260-824-3006, www.steffengrp.com. FEBRUARY 27-MARCH 5 - (Online Only Auction) - The Estate of Alan Johnson. Three bedroom ranch home on full finished basement located in prime Northern Wells location. This home sits on a half acre lot with mature trees and an asphalt driveway. Open houses: Feb. 25 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. and Feb. 29 from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., 3651 E. 1000 N., Ossian, IN. The Steffen Group Inc., www.steffengrp.com, 260-824-3006

### Public Notices

STATE OF INDIANA COUNTY OF WELLS IN THE WELLS SUPERIOR COURT CAUSE NUMBER:

90D01-2312-MF-000033 SPECIALIZED LOAN SERVICING

### LLC, Plaintiff,

UNKNOWN HEIRS, LEGA-TEES, DEVISEES, EXECU-TORS, ADMINISTRATORS AND ASSIGNS, IF ANY, OF ANITA F ROGERS CATHY MORSE

### Defendants

NOTICE OF SUIT SUMMONS - SERVICE BY PUBLICATION

The State of Indiana to the defendants above named, and any other person who may be concerned. You are notified that you have been sued in the Court above named. The nature of the suit against you is a foreclosure of the real estate mortgage, legally

described as: T H E THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBED REAL ESTATE LOCATED IN WELLS COUNTY,

INDIANA: PART OF THE SOUTHWEST (4), TOWNSHIP TWENTY SIX (26) NORTH, RANGE TWELVE (12) EAST, BOUNDED AND ŚCRIBED AS FOLLOWS, WIT: WII: COMMENCING AT A POINT WHERE THE EAST LINE OF OAK STREET INTERSECTS WITH THE NORTH LINE OF ARNOLD STREET, IN THE CITY OF BLUFFTON. THENCE NORTH ALONG THE EAST LINE OF OAK STREET 50 FEET, THENCE EAST PARALLEL WITH THE NORTH LINE OF ARNOLD STREET 140 THE NORTH LINE OF ARNOLD STREET, THENCE WEST ALONG THE NORTH LINE OF ARNOLD STREET 140 FEET TO THE PLACE OF BEGINNING, CON-TAINING 16/100 OF AN ACRE. This property is commonly known as 527 W Arnold, Bluffton, IN 46714 This summons by publication is specifically directed to the following Defendants whose addresses are known:

Estimated jackpot (for Friday): \$333 million POWERBALL

Estimated jackpot (for Saturday): \$206 million

Swiss Village Now Seeking: Part-Time Residential/Assisted Living Nurse Swiss Village, Inc. is now seeking a Part-Time Residential/Assisted Living Nurse to provide nursing services to residents in Assisted Residential, Residential Living, and Independent Living. This position will be every 3rd weekend, every 4th holiday, and varying weekdays. Candidates must be a graduate of an accredited School of Nursing and be currently licensed in the State of Indiana as a Registered Nurse or Licensed Practical Nurse. Candidates must exhibit a cooperative and positive attitude towards co-workers and residents.

Apply online at www.swissvillage.org or send Resume to: **Taylor Lehman, Vice President of HR** Swiss Village | 1350 W. Main St. | Berne, IN 46711 or email: careers@swissvillage.org FOF

Swiss Village Now Seeking: Certified Nursing Assistants Swiss Village, Inc. is now seeking Certified Nursing Assistants for Residential/Assisted Living! Opportunities available include: • Full-time, 2nd shift; 40 hours/week, 2pm-10pm with every other weekend and holiday required; Part-time, 2nd shift; 40 hours/pay period (every 2 weeks), 2pm-10pm with every other weekend and holiday required; Part-time, 3rd shift; 32 hours/pay period (every 2 weeks), 10pm-6am with every other weekend and holiday required; Part-time, 1st shift; 16 hours/pay period (every 2 weeks),

6am-2pm with every other weekend and holiday required. These positions will assist residents in the Assisted Residential, Residential Living, and Independent Living areas of Swiss Village with Activities of Daily Living. Candidates must have an active Indiana Certified Nursing Assistant license and must exhibit a cooperative and positive attitude towards co-workers and residents. Full-time position eligible for benefits, including health, dental, vision, and life insurance, Paid Time Off (PTO), and 403(b) **Retirement Plan participation.** 

Apply in person, online at www.swissvillage.org, or send Resume to: Kayla Reilly, HR Specialist Swiss Village | 1350 W. Main St. | Berne, IN 46711 or email: careers@swissvillage.org EOE

FEBRUARY 12 - 6 p.m. - Daniel E. Schloss, Elizabeth L. Burchfield (f/k/a Elizabeth L. Schloss), Estate of Meshell L. Schloss. Wells County 4-H Community Center, Bluffton. Online bidding available. 164+/-A offered in 8 Tracts or combination. Productive tillable land, professionally designed and stocked pond, recreational woods, newer tree plantings w/conservation grasses, potential country building sites, Huntington County, Salamonie Township. Inspection Feb. 5, 3-5p.m., call for private showing. Auction managers: Jerry Ehle, 260-410-1996, Steven C. Coil, 260-446-2037, Schrader Real Estate and Auction Company, Inc., schraderauction.com,

BIDDING NOW OPEN AND STARTS CLOS-ING FEBRUARY 13 - 10 a.m. EST - Creative Industries, Inc., Mark Clark, president. Toyota 424FGC25 forklift, band, chop & table saws, SSC sheet board saw, multiple Delta drill press, 4 Delta dust collectors, hand & power tools. work benches & shop carts, large amount of aluminum channeling & much more! Preview Feb. 5, 1:30-3 p.m. EST, 1024 Western Dr., India-napolis, IN. Pick up Feb. 15, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. EST. Krueckeberg Auction & Realty LLC, 260-724-7402, Kjauction.com.

FEBRUARY 13 - 6 p.m. - Keith L. Gilbert estate. Markle Volunteer Fire Department, 150 W. Sparks St., Markle. Property: From Town of Markle, travel northeast on Marzane Road 4 miles. 67.5+/-A offered in 4 tracts or any combination, Wells County, Union Township. Tract 1: 18+/-A w/16.44+/-A tillable. Tract 2: 9.5+/-A w/7.26+/-A tillable. Tract 3: 20+/-A, mostly tillable. Tract 4: 20+/-A, mostly tillable. All tracts

- Cathy Morse 527 W Arnold
- Bluffton, IN 46714

And to the following defendant whose addresses are unknown: Unknown Heirs, Legatees, Devisees, Executors, Administrators and Assigns, if any, of Anita F Rog-ers, Address Unknown

In addition to the above named Defendants, being served by this summons there may be other Defendants who have an interest in this lawsuit. If you have a claim for relief against the Plaintiff arising from the same transaction or occurrence, you must assert it in your written answer. You must answer the Complaint in writing by your attorney, on or before the 3rd day of March 3, 2024, (the same being within thirty (30) days after the Third Notice of Suit), and if you fail to do so a judgment will be entered against you for what the Plaintiff has demanded.

Matthew C. Gladwell (30493-49)

- Christopher J. Arlinghaus (31680-15)
- Aaron Rodgers (28418-84) Attorney's for Plaintiff Reisenfeld & Associates LLC 3962 Red Bank Road Cincinnati, OH 45227 Voice: (513) 322-7000 Facsimile: (513) 322-7099

ATTEST:

Clerk of the Wells County Circuit/Superior Court nb 1/19, 1/26, 2/2

hspaxlp

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Nottingham Township, Wells County, Indiana	
Cash & Investments Combined Statement - 2023	

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Local Fund Number	Local Fund Name	Beg Cash & Inv Bal Jan. 1, 2023	Receipts	Disbursements	End Cash & Inv Bal Dec. 31, 2023	
Governme	ental Activities					
00006	Township Park	\$0.00	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$0.00	
10001	Fire Equipment Debt	\$2,374.08	\$12,197.83	\$12,540.82	\$2,031.09	
12345	Cumulative Fire Fund	\$75,942.62	\$18,241.81	\$0.00	\$94,184.43	
3	Fire Fighting	\$28,196.65	\$18,345.56	\$7,963.78	\$38,578.43	
4	Township	\$12,038.25	\$40,143.66	\$34,634.08	\$17,547.83	
5	Township Assistance	\$13,431.01	\$0.00	\$1,018.61	\$12,412.40	
	Total All Funds	\$131,982.61	\$88,929.86	\$56,158.29	\$164,754.18	
	FICATION of Indiana					

Wells County I, Mark Shaffer, Trustee of NOTTINGHAM TOWNSHIP, Wells County, Indiana, do solemnly affirm under the penalty of perjury that the preceding report contains the information required by Indiana code 36-6-4-13, and is, true and correct; that the amounts with which I am charged in this report are all of the amounts received by me; and that the various items of expenditures credited have been fully paid in the amounts stated; that such pay-ments were made without express or implied agreement that any portion thereof shall be retained by or repaid to me or to any other person. A complete abstract that contains the statements required under Indiana Code 36-6-4 13(a)(6) and (a)(6) is available for inspection in the county auditor; office 4-13(a)(5) and (a)(6) is available for inspection in the county auditor's office.

I further affirm that a complete and detailed annual report, together with all accompanying vouchers showing the names of persons having been paid money by the township, have been filed as required by law in the office of the County Auditor, and that copies of such annual report are in custody of the Township Board and the State Board of Accounts. Said report is subject to inspection by any taxpayer of the township.

- Mark W. Shaffer
- NOTTINGHAM TOWNSHIP Trustee
- Telephone: 260-827-8104

Subscribed and sworn (or affirmed) to before me, the Chairman of the Township Board of NOTTINGHAM TOWNSHIP at its annual meeting, this 30 day of January, 2024.

Michael D. Pursifull

Nottingham Township Board Chairman

This report was received, accepted, and approved by the Township Board at its annual meeting, this 30 day of January, 2024.

- Nottingham Township Board: Michael D. Pursifull
- Edward R. Herman

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# **Biden sanctions Israeli settlers accused of attacking Palestinians**

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden on Thursday issued an executive order that targets Israeli settlers in the West Bank who have been accused of attacking Palestinians and Israeli peace activists in the occupied territory, imposing financial sanctions and visa bans in an initial round against four individuals.

Those settlers were involved in acts of violence, as well as threats and attempts to destroy or seize Palestinian property, according to the order. The penalties aim to block the four from using the U.S. financial system and bar American citizens from dealing with them. U.S. officials said they were evaluating whether to punish others involved in attacks that have intensified during the Israel-Hamas war.

Biden's order is a rare step against America's closest ally in the Mideast who, Biden says, has the right to defend itself. But the Democratic president has pressed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government to show greater restraint in its military operations aimed at rooting out Hamas. Netanyahu denounced the U.S. penalties, which his government was notified in advance, U.S. officials said.

Palestinian authorities say some Palestinians have been killed, and rights groups say settlers have torched cars and attacked several small Bedouin communities, forcing evacuations.

"This violence poses a grave threat to peace, security, and stability in the West Bank, Israel, and the Middle East region, and threatens the national security and foreign policy interests of the United States," White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan said in a statement.

Biden is facing growing criticism for his administration's strong support of Israel as casualties mount in the conflict, which began when Hamas, the militant group that rules Gaza, attacked Israel on Oct. 7.

The order notes that the violence by settlers undermines U.S. foreign policy objectives, "including the viability of a two-state solution and ensuring Israelis and Palestinians can attain equal measures of security, prosperity, and freedom." Biden has reinvigorated calls for an independent Palestinian state that would exist alongside Israel, a goal that has eluded American presidents and Middle East diplomats for decades. Biden has said that finding a way to achieve Palestinian sovereignty once the Israel-Hamas war ends is essential to building a durable peace.

Netanyahu has rejected such an idea throughout his political career and has told U.S. officials he remains opposed to any postwar plan that includes establishment of a Palestinian state.

The Israeli leader quickly denounced the sanctions. "The vast majority of settlers," he said in a statement, "are law-abiding citizens, many of them these days are fighting as conscripts and reservists for the defense of Israel."

The State Department, in a statement, identified the four settlers and described the accusations against them:

-David Chai Chasdai allegedly led a riot in Huwara in which a Palestinian civilian was killed.

-Einan Tanjil is accused of assaulting Palestinian farmers and Israeli activists.

-Shalom Zicherman was reportedly filmed assaulting Israeli activists in the West Bank.

— Yinon Levi regularly led a group of settlers from the Meitarim Farm outpost who assaulted Palestinian and Bedouin civilians and threatened them with more violence if they did not leave their homes.

Biden has spoken out against retaliatory attacks by Israeli settlers and pledged that those those responsible for the violence will be held accountable. He said in late October that the violence by "extremist settlers" amounted to "pouring gasoline" on the already burning fires in the Middle East. "It has to stop. They have to be held accountable. It has to stop now," Biden said.

Israel Defense Forces stepped up raids across the West Bank after the war began. Hamas militants are present in the West Bank, but largely operate underground because of Israel's tight grip on the territory. Palestinians have accused the Israeli military of not preventing attacks by settlers.

## Federal judge dismisses case seeking to force U.S. to pressure Israel to stop bombing Gaza

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) - A U.S.district judge in California dismissed a lawsuit Wednesday that sought to force the Biden administration to do all it could to make Israel stop bombing Gaza.

U.S. District Judge Jeffrey White said he didn't have jurisdiction over the matter, but he still offered harsh criticism of the administration and said Israel's actions may amount to genocide.

White heard testimony last Friday in federal court in Oakland in the unusual lawsuit filed in November on behalf of Palestinian human rights organizations and people whose family members are among the more than 26,000 people killed by Israeli forces following the Oct. 7 assault by the militant group Hamas.

The complaint sought an order requiring that President Joe Biden, Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin "adhere to their duty to prevent, and not further, the unfolding genocide of Palestinian people in Gaza."

White declined to issue a preliminary injunction and dismissed the case. But he was critical of the administration, writing, "There are rare cases in which the preferred outcome is inaccessible to the Court. This is one of those cases."

He conceded the plaintiffs' point that "it is plausible that Israel's conduct amounts to genocide," and he implored the White House "to examine the results of their unflagging support of the military siege against the Palestinians in Gaza."

The lawsuit asked the court to declare that the defendants have violated their

duties to prevent genocide and to not be complicit in the commission of genocide. It sought immediate relief, including ordering the president and other U.S. officials to exert their influence over Israel to stop its bombing and to lift the siege in Gaza and to stop providing or facilitating the sales of weapons and arms to Israel.

It also asked the court to order defendants to stop obstructing attempts by the international community to call for a cease-fire in Gaza. The United States vetoed in December a United Nations resolution calling for an immediate humanitarian cease-fire.

Plaintiffs included Defence for Children International, based in Ramallah, West Bank, and Palestinians in Gaza and in the U.S., including Waeil Elbhassi, a U.S. citizen of Palestinian origin who lives in San Ramon, about 30 miles from Oakland.

Last week's hearing came the same day as the top court of the United Nations rebuked Israel's wartime conduct and ordered its government to do all it can to prevent death, destruction and any acts of genocide but stopped short of ordering an end to the military offensive.

The political branches of the U.S. government have wide authority over foreign policy, as the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled when the family of U.S. college student Rachel Corrie tried to sue U.S. bulldozer maker Caterpillar of aiding Israel in war crimes. Corrie was run over and killed in 2003 while trying to stop the demolition of a house in Gaza.

# Tearful relatives of Maine mass shooting victims plead for change to prevent future tragedies

AUGUSTA, Maine (AP) — Tearfully relaying scenes of blood, chaos and panic, family members of the victims of Maine's deadliest shooting described their unfathomable losses on Thursday as they implored an independent commission to make sure others never have to experience the same thing.

One by one, relatives of some of the 18 people killed by an Army reservist described their heartbreak, with several expressing frustration that neither law enforcement nor the military intervened to take weapons from the shooter despite his deteriorating mental health.

"The system failed, and we can't allow this to happen again," said Kathleen Walker, whose husband, Jason, was killed while rushing at the gunman to try to stop him. chair of the independent commission, said he agreed with Seal. "The word access has taken on new meaning both for me and the entire state of Maine," Wathen said.

The commission was established by Democratic Gov. Janet Mills and state Attorney General Aaron Frey to review events leading up to the shootings and make factual findings that can inform policy changes to prevent similar tragedies from happening again.

The gunman, Robert Card, 40, was experiencing a mental health breakdown before the shooting, and police and the Army were aware of his deteriorating mental health.

His son and ex-wife told police in May that Card was becoming paranoid and hearing voices, and a fellow reservist explicitly warned in September that he was going to commit a mass killing. In between, Card was hospitalized for two weeks for erratic behavior while his Maine-based Army Reserve unit was training in West Point, New York. More than a month before the shootings, police went to Card's home for a face-toface assessment required under the state's yellow flag law, which allows a judge to order the removal of guns from someone who is experiencing a psychiatric emergency. But Card refused to answer the door, and police said they couldn't legally force the issue. Tens of thousands of residents in Lewiston and neighboring communities were under a lockdown order after the shootings. Card's body was found two days later. The medical examiner ruled that he died by suicide. "This could have and should have been prevented," Cyr told the panel. "Warning signs were ignored." Democratic Gov. Janet Mills made the shootings the focus of her annual State of the State address, using her speech to propose background checks for some private gun sales, expanded mental health treatment and a change to the yellow flag law.



Along with Walker, speakers included Stacy Cyr, whose partner Michael Deslauriers also died charging at the gunman; Elizabeth Seal, who is caring for four children after the death of her husband, Joshua; and Megan Vozzella, whose husband, Steve, died two weeks shy of their one-year wedding anniversary. Deslauriers and Jason Walker were childhood friends.

Also testifying were members of the tightknit deaf community in Lewiston, which lost four people in the Oct. 25 shooting at a bowling alley and at a bar, which was hosting a deaf cornhole league. In addition to the deaths, 13 people were injured.

Witnesses said the flow of information to the deaf community was stymied by a lack of American Sign Language interpreters at the crime scene, in hospitals and at a location where relatives gathered. They also said translations of the earliest public briefings were spotty.

"We need to do something about this," said Seal, who is deaf and whose husband was an ASL interpreter and advocate.

Daniel Wathen, former chief justice of the Maine Supreme Judicial Court and

