

The News - Banner

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Study: Affordable housing needed for Wells County to grow

By HOLLY GASKILL
The lack of affordable, available housing is a national conversation, but what does that look like in Wells County? Wells County Economic Development recently completed a study with The Veridus Group out of Indianapolis to discover just this. The Veridus Group looked at housing data, worked directly with a housing task force of local individuals, and surveyed approximately 550 people who live or work in Wells County. The group hosted a presentation of its findings Thursday night at the Wells County Commerce and Visitors Centre.

The study ultimately confirmed a significant need for more affordable housing, specifically homes less than \$250,000 and rental options less than \$1,000 monthly. The majority of new housing developments were

found to exceed these price points. "The county's housing could be classified as missing middle housing, but it's really not middle, it's all that (more affordable) end of the spectrum," said Jack Woods, Veridus project manager. According to the survey, 40% of renters were burdened by costs.

Just 1.5% of homes were vacant in 2023, suggesting a housing shortage consistent with state and national vacancy rates. However, the county's rental vacancy rates fell below the state's and national average, potentially further limiting options to those desiring a more affordable option or unable to find a home at their price point.

Simultaneously, Wells County shows the fourth lowest population growth in the region. Woods suggested this may be because people are physically or financially



Jack Woods, project manager for The Veridus Group, discussed a recent housing study's findings at the Wells County Commerce and Visitors Centre Thursday. (Photo by Holly Gaskill)

unable to find a place. Since 2000, Wells County has experienced just 2% population growth. In contrast, neighboring Adams County has grown 7% in the same period. The study attributed this to a growth in nearly 2,000 Amish residents.

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County approaching 'settlement package' with health officer

By HOLLY GASKILL
The Wells County Health Board unanimously approved a motion to authorize board president Christ Esterling to approve an impending "settlement package" regarding the removal of the local health officer.

The motion, made during the board's regular meeting Thursday morning, included similar stipulations to a motion approved by the County Commissioners on Feb. 5. Both Esterling and Commissioner President Jeff Stringer were

authorized by their respective boards to approve an agreement between the parties outside of a public meeting. Auditor Lisa McCormick and County Attorney Ted Storer were also authorized to attest to the signing of any documents.

"The county and Board of Health have been working diligently to attempt to resolve the dispute in an amicable and fair manner," Esterling read from a statement. "It appears that we are close to resolving this dispute, which

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Health Department prepares for potential participation in Health First Indiana in 2025

By HOLLY GASKILL
The Wells County Health Board will hold an additional meeting in April to discuss a proposed budget for Health First Indiana.

After a discussion about HFI during the board's meeting Thursday, board member Molly Hoag recommended the board do so to ensure proper time for communication with the County Commissioners. The meeting may also take place in the evening, as opposed to their usual 6:30 a.m. meeting time, to allow for more public participation.

While the Health Board will discuss and approve a proposed budget, the County Commissioners will ultimately decide on the county's participation. The opt-in deadline is in June.

HFI could bring Wells County \$549,510 or more for health services in 2025, according to the HFI website. With the program, the state requires some additional paperwork and a financial commitment from the county, in addition to outlining what proportions of the money should go toward general purposes. The minimum financial commitment from the county in 2025 would be \$137,377.50.

The commissioners voted against joining HFI in its first year, citing worries about the county's plan for the money, the local health department's under-staffing and skepticism about the new program as a whole. As an example of this, Commis-

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BHS football, track upgrades expected to finish this summer

By HOLLY GASKILL
Bluffton-Harrison school administration expects improvements to the football and track field at Bluffton High School to be completed before the fall 2024 season.

In an update to the school board Monday, Superintendent Brad Yates stated construction crews intend to begin work directly following the school's last track meet on May 14 and, if all goes according to plan, they will wrap up work before the first football practice on Aug. 5.

As outlined in their projected plan, crews will begin removing the turf from May 15-30, mill the track's surface from May 31-June 5, install turf from June 6-July 4, and install the track from July 5 to Aug. 5. Yates added a brief contingency that work may conclude on Aug. 10.

The school board previously agreed to work with A-Turf Inc. for \$550,500 for the project.

Also during the meeting, the board:

- Learned the district near to awarding for the OurTown Safety Village project.
- Discussed board member Mike Murray's attendance at Legislative Day on behalf of the district. Related to this, Yates said he met with a local task force regarding chronic absenteeism.
- Learned 1,685 students were recorded on the spring court day, down by 13 students from the fall.
- Approved the transfer of \$40,000 from the Athletic Investment Fund to a four-month Certificate of Deposit, yielding a higher interest rate.
- Voted 4-0 to raise the board member per diem rate

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Wells County agriculture awards
Pictured above are students taking honors for creating conservation posters. They are left to right, fifth graders Claire Groven (2nd) and Shaelyn Reinhard (3rd), and fourth graders Madison Maxwell (2nd), Adrian Boxell (3rd) and Trace Tucker (1st). Top poster in the 4th-6th grade category went to Findley Oakleaf, who was not present for the award ceremony held at the Wells County's Soil & Water Conservation District's 68th Annual Meeting Thursday evening at the Wells County Community Center.

At left, Randy McMillan, is shown accepting the River Friendly Farmer Award from SWCD Supervisor Eric Johnson. McMillan and his wife Janice are third generation farmers in the Salamonie watershed in Jackson Township, using a variety of conservation practices on their farm that produces corn, soybeans and wheat in addition to raising pullets for a local layer industry. **More photos on Page 3.** (Photos by Barbara Barbieri)

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Outside

Second winter is upon us; snow today and tonight

Today	Saturday	Sunday
High 32	High 27	High 40
Low 21	Low 21	Low 23

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Online

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Vol. 95 No. 90
FRIDAY
February 16, 2024

PADDLEFISH solar project

Susan Poper - Local Representative
201 E. Market St., Suite No. 3
Bluffton, IN 46714
Office Hours: Tues. 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Thurs. 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.
or by appointment

info@paddlefishsolar.com
edf-re.com/project/
paddlefish-solar-project/
(260) 355-5951
Paddlefish Solar Project
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Affordable housing

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Woods recognized that there's not one easy solution to something like this, as multiple factors are considered. For example, roughly 60% of homeowners moved into their units before 2009, and just over 10% moved into their homes before 1989. Coinciding with an aging average population, Woods said this indicates a lack of housing opportunities for younger people, who leave the area or are unable to move to the county.

Pete Olson, director of government services at Veridus, emphasized that while there are attractors for individuals to settle within the area, the county also needs to attract developers. Citing his background as a town manager in Yorktown, Olson said the county needs to demonstrate a willingness to invest in the area and partner with developers.

However, Wells County may also have to become more comfortable with a higher price point. Woods stated that a portion of those surveyed paid less

for housing than their income could allow, suggesting there may need to be a redefining of "affordable."

"There is a lag between growth that the county could experience and the amount of new housing products come onto the market that allows that growth to happen," added Alex Oleson, Veridus project manager.

Olson advised that it's often a juggling act between government investments, trying to identify which are local needs, regional considerations, ways to attract developers and residents, quality of life — and the list continued. He found the best-case scenario to be a "holistic" approach to creating sustainable growth and development.

Chad Kline, Economic Development executive director, then referenced how Wabash County has invested in the area but has had a consistent population decline since 2000. According to the study, Wabash County had a

nearly 15% population decline in 2023.

Bluffton Common Council member Scott Mentzer expressed exasperation with this process, which Wells County Council member Brandon Harnish echoed. "There's no silver bullet," Harnish summarized.

The important thing, Kline emphasized, was that a study like this presents a starting point. Additionally, Kline said the study will also allow the county to apply for different grants and funding available for development.

He concluded, "We have to start thinking proactively, and I think it's important to study to have it on a shelf if it makes sense to put it on the shelf as long as you know you're going to pull it off when they're funding available. But at the same time, don't study just to put it on a shelf and never look at it again."

Kline stated a summary of the housing study would soon be available on Economic Development's website,

'Settlement package'

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will require the preparation and execution of various documents to effectuate the same."

Esterling made the motion, Dr. Mary Donley seconded, and it passed 6-0. In addition to Esterling and Donley, board members present were Steven Bales, Molly Hoag, Ann McNabb

and Tamara Troutt. Board member Dr. Bart Hott was absent.

There was no time for public comment following the vote.

The Health Board initiated the removal of Dr. Kay Johnson from her position as health officer in December. They then held a 4.5-hour public

hearing on the matter in January, wherein approximately 40 people attended. The Health Board then held an additional executive session and brief special session prior to the commissioners' announcement that the county was nearing an agreement.

County Attorney Ted Storer advised he was

unable to provide additional context for the agreement or a projected timeline at the time. Esterling echoed a similar statement on Thursday.

The commissioners will meet at 5 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 20., and the health board will meet next at 6:30 a.m. Thursday, April 18.

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Health First Indiana

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sioner Blake Gerber, who was present Thursday, stated he had been trying to meet with the previous department administrator about the program the same day she had submitted her sudden resignation.

Wells was one of six counties that decided not to participate in 2024.

In preparing a proposed budget including HFI funding, Public Health Nurse Lynn Blevins stated he's talked with the Allen County Department of Health administrator, Mindy Waldron. From their conversations, Blevins expressed interest

in using HFI to support local grant opportunities. The commissioners previously shared hesitancy in becoming dependent on funds that may not always be available, and Blevins believed grants would help support local opportunities without creating that drawback.

Health Officer Dr. Kay Johnson supported this endeavor, adding that the department could reinstate its health fair and other free service and community education opportunities. Board member Dr. Mary Donley expressed particular interest in finding ways to serve the elderly population

needing community.

Blevins plans to meet with several county auditors and administrators in March. Although a specific date was not determined, Esterling suggested a meeting in the first week of April would allow the Wells County Health Department time to create a proposed budget after hearing from the counties.

The budgets of every county participating in the program and other information are available on the HFI website: in.gov/healthfirstindiana/your-community-info.

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Football and track upgrades

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to the maximum permitted by Indiana Code. Board members Julie Thompson, Bruce Holland, Trent White and Angie Sheets voted in favor, and Murray was absent.

• Approved the following donations: \$200 from

the Bluffton Volunteer Fire Department to the wrestling program, \$317.34 from Living Water United Church and \$4,000 from Park Community Church for unpaid lunch accounts, \$250 from the Bluffton Elks Lodge to the football program, \$630 from Alpha Beta Chap-

ter of Psi Iota Xi for fourth grade students' music class, 288 boxes of crayons from Family Centered Services to the elementary school, \$250 from Four Star Services, \$1,000 from Indiana Physical Therapy, \$250 from Stoller Dental Laboratory, and \$500 from the First

Bank of Berne to boys' basketball shootout, and \$2,000 from BAE Systems, Inc., for the middle school's robotics club.

• Voided outstanding checks older than two years. This amount totaled \$630.60.

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Dispute may have led to the mass shooting after the Chiefs' Super Bowl parade, police say

By HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH, SCOTT McFETRIDGE and JOSH FUNK
Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — The mass shooting that unfolded amid throngs of people at the Kansas City Chiefs' Super Bowl celebration, killing one person and wounding almost two dozen others, appeared to stem from a dispute between several people, authorities said Thursday.

Police Chief Stacey Graves said the 22 people injured Wednesday ranged between 8 and 47 years old, with half under 16. A mother of two was killed.

Police said they detained three juveniles but released one who they determined wasn't involved in the shooting, leaving two in custody. No charges have been filed. Police are looking for others who may have been involved and are calling for witnesses, victims and people with cellphone video of the violence to call a dedicated hotline.

"We are working to determine the involvement of others. And it should be noted we have recovered several firearms. This incident is still a very active investigation," Graves said at a news conference.

The shooting outside Union Station occurred despite the presence of more than 800 police officers who were in the building and area, including on top of nearby structures, said Mayor Quinton Lucas, who attended with his wife and mother and ran for safety when the shots were fired. But he doesn't expect to cancel the upcoming St. Patrick's Day parade.

"We have parades all the time. I don't think they'll end. Certainly we recognized the public safety challenges and issues that relate to them," Lucas said.

Wednesday's celebration was the third such parade since 2020, and the others had no violence.

People packed the parade route, with fans climbing trees and street poles for a better view. Players rolled through on double-decker buses as DJs and drummers heralded their arrival.

Video taken from a building overlooking the celebration shows thousands of fans clad in red Chiefs gear milling about in a park in front of Union Station. As shots ring out and repeat, they suddenly scatter amid screams.

Some of those who flee return to help people on a street, sidewalk and grassy area. People nearby continue to scatter frantically even after the gunfire stops, but fans farther away remain, apparently not sure of what has happened.

The police chief said 1 million people likely attended the parade, which occurred in a city of about 470,000 people and a metropolitan area of about 2 million, but stressed that the violence was wrought by just a handful of people.

"The law enforcement response was exemplary. Those in attendance also responded," Graves added.

Among them was Trey Filter, who was walking to the car with his family when he heard yells of "get him."

Filter, 40, saw a fleeing person, prompting him and another bystander to try to tackle him. Filter eventually jumped on top of the person.

"I don't know what the hell I was thinking," the owner of an asphalt and concrete company recalled. "We was like, 'We got him.' I'll always remember that. And then they started screaming, 'There's a gun!'"

The gun fell near his wife, Casey Filter, who picked it up. At that point the fleeing person was under a dogpile about 10 feet (3 meters) away.

Trey Filter, who lives outside Wichita, Kansas, was still processing the melee Thursday. But he was glad there wasn't more carnage.

"I'm sure there were a thousand other men there that would have done it," he said.

Police didn't identify Filter as a man who intervened or specifically say whether the person he tackled was a suspect.

Wednesday's rally had just ended and music was still blaring when the shots erupted. Many people initially thought they were hearing fireworks.

But then chaos ensued. Some in the crowd hit the ground while others leapt over barriers and sprinted, some carrying children in their arms.

The crowd was so massive that normalcy returned quickly, with some unsure what had happened. But then ambulances arrived, and officers rushed in with guns drawn. Some of the less seriously injured were driven away on golf carts.

The stunned crowd — some in tears — slowly gathered their belongings, trying to figure out how to get home. Strangers comforted each other as police put up crime scene tape where moments earlier there had been a joyous celebration.

Hank Hunter, a Kansas high school sophomore, said he heard shots in the distance while watching the rally with a friend. Initially, they didn't know what it was, but then, "like a chain reaction," people started hitting the ground.

They ran to jump over a barricade, and his friend slammed his head into the concrete, Hunter said. A security guard ushered his friend into Union Station, which was closed to the general public, as the Chiefs players and coaches prepared to leave on buses. There, coach Andy Reid consoled his friend and "just tried to comfort him and calm him down."

One video of the shooting's aftermath that was posted on social media showed someone apparently performing chest compressions on a victim as another, seemingly writhing in pain, lay on the ground nearby. People screamed in the background.

The slain woman was identified by radio station KKKF-FM as Lisa Lopez-Galvan, host of "Taste of DeJano."

Lopez-Galvan, whose DJ name was "Lisa G," was an extrovert and devoted mother from a prominent Latino family in the area, said Rosa Izurieta and Martha Ramirez, two childhood friends who worked with her at a staffing company.

"She's the type of person who would jump in front of a bullet for anybody — that would be Lisa," Izurieta said.

Weather

Friday, February 16, 2024

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

High: 45; Low: 30; Precipitation: 0.02 inches of rain
Wabash River Level (at the Main Street bridge): 1.46 feet at 9:45 p.m. Thursday

Wells County forecast

Today: Snow, mainly after 9 a.m. High near 32. Northwest wind around 5 mph. Chance of precipitation is 90%. New snow accumulation of 1 to 2 inches possible.

Tonight: Snow likely before 7 p.m., then a slight chance of snow showers between 7 p.m. and 1 a.m. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 21. Northwest wind around 10 mph. Chance of precipitation is 60%. New snow accumulation of less than a half inch possible.

Saturday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 27. West wind around 15 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

Saturday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 21. Southwest wind 15 to 20 mph, with gusts as high as 35 mph.

Sunday: Sunny, with a high near 40. Breezy.

Sunday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 23.

Washington's Birthday: Sunny, with a high near 45.

Monday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 30.

Tuesday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 50.

Tuesday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 36.

Wells APC tackles a rezoning issue and gameplans March 7

By JONATHAN SNYDER

In a special meeting Thursday, the Wells County Area Plan Commission gave a do-pass recommendation to rezone 711 West Cherry St. from a business to a residential area.

Doug and Amy Dunwiddie are looking to take a loan out to purchase the property next to the railroad. Loans, however, cannot be taken out for use on commercial properties, so the Dunwiddie's need the area reclassified.

Area Plan Commission Executive Director Mike Lautzenheiser stated that the property was a business zone because of the railroad west of the area. Surrounding 711 W Cherry St. are two other business zones on South Jersey Street that could be reclassified, should people wish to use them as residential homes.

Lautzenheiser stated that these business areas have been used as single family dwellings for a long time, which was a major factor in the APC's decision. Other residential zones are located to the east and southeast of the property.

"Any business in those areas has long since passed," said Lautzenheiser.

After the reclassification issue, the APC took time to go over the format of their March 7 meeting in the 4-H Expo Hall. The APC stated that their attorney, Colin Andrews, will be present to help the commission with any legal necessities should they arise. A packet was also given to the APC members so they can review the Paddlefish Solar petition in detail on their own time.

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Israeli forces storm main hospital in southern Gaza

By WAFSA SHURAF, BASSEM MROUE and MELANIE LIDMAN
Associated Press

RAFAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israeli forces stormed the main hospital in southern Gaza on Thursday, hours after Israeli fire killed a patient and wounded six others inside the complex. The Israeli army said it was seeking the remains of hostages taken by Hamas.

The raid on Nasser Hospital came after troops had besieged the facility for nearly a week, with hundreds of staff, patients and others inside struggling under heavy fire and dwindling supplies, including food and water. A day earlier, the army ordered thousands of displaced people who had taken shelter there to leave the hospital in the city of Khan Younis, the focus of Israel's offensive against Hamas in recent weeks.

The war shows no sign of ending, and the risk of a broader conflict grew as Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group stepped up attacks after a particularly deadly exchange on Wednesday.

The military said it had "credible intelligence" that Hamas had held hostages at Nasser Hospital and that the hostages' remains might still be inside. Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, the chief military spokesperson, said forces were conducting a "precise and limited" operation there and would not forcibly evacuate medics or patients. Israel accuses Hamas of using hospitals and other civilian structures to shield its fighters.

A released hostage told The Associated Press last month that she and over two dozen other captives had been held in Nasser Hospital. International law prohibits the targeting of medical facilities; they can lose those protections if they are used for military purposes, though operations against them still must be proportional to any threat.

As troops searched hospital buildings, they ordered the more than 460 staff, patients and their relatives to move into an older building in the compound that isn't equipped to treat patients, the Gaza Health Ministry said. They were "in harsh conditions with no food or baby formula" and severe water shortages, it said.

Six patients were left in intensive care, along with three infants in incubators with no staff to attend to them. The ministry said fuel for generators would soon run out, endangering their lives.

Separately, Israel launched airstrikes into southern Lebanon for a second day after killing 10 civilians and three Hezbollah fighters on Wednesday in response to a rocket attack that killed an Israeli soldier and wounded several others.

It was the deadliest exchange of fire along the border since the start of the Israel-Hamas war. Israel and Hezbollah — an ally of Hamas — have traded fire daily, raising the risks of a broader conflict.

Hezbollah has not claimed responsibility for Wednesday's rocket attack. Sheikh Nabil Kaouk, a senior member of the group, said it is "prepared for the possibility of expanding the war" and would meet "escalation with escalation, displacement with displacement, and destruction with destruction."

Negotiations over a cease-fire in Gaza, meanwhile, appear to have stalled, and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to continue the offensive and expand it to the Gaza city of Rafah, near Egypt, until Hamas is destroyed and scores of hostages taken during the militants' Oct. 7 attack are freed.

Legislative 'Third House' meeting set for Feb. 24

The Wells County Chamber of Commerce annual "Third House" legislative town hall meeting has been set for Saturday, Feb. 24 at a new venue. State Sen. Travis Holdman, along with State Representatives Matt Lehman and Lorissa Sweet will provide updates on the current session in Indianapolis at Dash-90 Wines, located at 6750 W 900 South in Jackson Township. The event will begin at 10:30 a.m. and is open to the public.

Agriculture awards



FFA students from Southern Wells were recognized for their high scores in a tri-county soil judging contest. Jonathan McMillan, at right, took 1st and Kammy Miller was 4th. (Not pictured were Karlee Warner, 2nd place, and Joshua Aulbach, 3rd place. (Photos by Barbara Barbieri)



Beth Davis, at right, gave the oath of office to Soil & Water Conservation District appointed supervisor Andy Evans, at left, and elected supervisor Jarin Tucker, center, at the group's annual dinner.



Dr. Fred Whitford, a professor at Purdue University, was the speaker for the joint meeting of the Soil & Water Conservation District, Rock Creek Conservancy District and Purdue Extension Services Thursday evening at the Wells Community Center. He spoke about farming in Wells County in the "good old days," specifically how electricity changed farming in the 1930s and '40s.

Obituary Policy

The News-Banner and Ossian Journal publishes "basic" obituaries free of charge for "local" deaths. "Basic" obituaries will include the deceased's name, age, community of record, date and place of death, basic genealogical information, the date, time and location of calling hours and services and the name of the funeral home handling arrangements. If additional information and/or a photo is desired to be included, or if the deceased does not meet the definitions of a "local" person, there is a charge. Area funeral homes will provide details on the policy and will coordinate obituary publication.

Police Notebook

INCIDENTS

County:
Wednesday, 12:06 p.m., Wells County Jail. Subject charged with two counts of invasion of privacy, a Level 6 felony and a Class A misdemeanor. Man charged after he made 13 calls to subject with whom there is a no contact order in place.
Wednesday, 3:20 p.m., Wells County Jail. Caller reported he believed he was being extorted. Likely a scam.
Wednesday, 4:49 p.m., North Main and East Market streets. Report that someone backed into patrol car from

parking stall.
Wednesday, 6:37 p.m., Ind. 1 and East 800 South, Bluffton. Report of car partially on roadway. Car was towed due to risk of passing vehicles hitting it.
Wednesday, 9:24 p.m., 5900 North Main Street, Uniondale. Report of a stolen Xbox.
Thursday, 2:15 a.m., North Main and East Monroe streets, Bluffton. Woman arrested for driving without a license.
Thursday, 7:59 a.m., Denvers Garage, Petroleum. Car vs. deer.
Thursday, 8:56 a.m.,

1800 North Timberidge Road, Bluffton. Report of a white powder around a door frame.
Thursday, 10:37 a.m., 2200 North Oak Drive, Bluffton. Report of continued harassment.
Ossian:
Thursday, 1:08 a.m., 300 block of West Lafavey Street, Ossian. Officer attempted to serve warrant, unable to locate.
ARRESTS
Kati Rae Curtis, 33, Montpelier; fraud, a Level 6 felony. Bond set at \$5,000.
Jacon Aaron Stout, 39, Swayzee; operating while

intoxicated, a Class C misdemeanor. Bond set at \$500.
Thomas Keith Johnson, 32, Fort Wayne; possession of marijuana, a Class B misdemeanor, possession of paraphernalia, a Class A misdemeanor, and operating without ever obtaining license, a Class C misdemeanor.
Jerome Jay Dudgeon, 70, Ossian; operating without ever obtaining a license, a Class C misdemeanor.
Johanna Pinilla Murillo, 37, Fort Wayne; operating without ever obtaining a license, a Class C misdemeanor.

College faculty overwhelmingly opposed to bill seeking to end "viewpoint discrimination"

By CASEY SMITH
Indiana Capital Chronicle

Faculty from higher education institutions across Indiana descended on the Statehouse Wednesday to speak out against a contentious bill that would increase lawmaker oversight of state colleges and universities and push speech in the classroom toward "intellectual diversity."

Sen. Spencer Deery, R-West Lafayette, has called his Senate Bill 202 a "reform" effort intended to reverse "declining views" of higher education. But dozens of opponents argued the proposed changes could harm students and professors, or would overly burden public institutions.

Testimony was heard on the bill in the House Education Committee on Wednesday. Committee chairman Rep. Bob Behning, R-Indianapolis, said a vote on the measure is expected next week.

"At the end of the day, there is an elephant in the room that we need to address, and that's the increasing number of students who just don't feel like higher ed is a place for them," Deery said. He pointed to a 2023 Gallup survey which found the percent of Republicans "with confidence in higher education" declined from 56% in 2015 to 19% in 2023.

"Addressing this issue will both improve the quantity of Hoosiers that we can get enrolled in higher education," Deery continued. "I also believe it will improve the quality of education they receive, because we all benefit — no matter your political beliefs — from being challenged and exposed to new scholarly ideas."

Faculty, students and other campus representatives from Ball State University, Indiana University, Indiana State University, Purdue University, University of Southern Indiana and Vincennes University disagreed, however. They argued the bill "would severely constrain academic freedom" and threaten schools' ability to recruit and retain top faculty.

Separately, Ivy Tech Community College expressed concerns about the complaint process and Vincennes University about changes to its trustee board.

"SB 202 will put the state at odds with specialty accreditors and risk programs' specialized accreditation, resulting in even greater shortages fundamental to the needs of Indiana citizens," said Lindsey Eberman, a professor at Indiana State University. "I encourage and welcome intellectual and ideological diversity in my classroom and throughout my scholarship. I work to educate students to also welcome diversity in the way they think."

"Effective practitioners have to embrace diversity of thought, and it is a misconception that one cannot both believe in diversity, equity and inclusion, and also offer an opportunity for free expression of faith and political ideology," she continued. "A college classroom is meant for this kind of dia-

logue. And everyone — faculty and students together — grow in their critical thinking from this kind of exchange. Instead of encouraging free expression, as the bill hopes to do, the ambiguity of SB 202 will only stifle those activities that encourage critical thinking."

Preventing faculty from imposing their views

Deery and other Republican lawmakers contend that conservative students and faculty members are increasingly ostracized at progressively liberal college and university settings — or at least perceive such shunning.

As an attempted remedy, Deery's bill would change up institution boards of trustees by removing appointment power from alumni councils and pass it off to House and Senate Republican majority leaders — "with advice" from Democrat minority leaders. It would require boards' existing diversity committees to consider "intellectual diversity" alongside cultural diversity in employment policies and faculty complaints.

The legislation would additionally require the committees to make recommendations promoting recruitment and retention of "underrepresented" students rather than the "minority students" specified in current law.

The measure re-shapes tenure and promotion policies, too.

Boards of trustees would be required to prevent a faculty member from getting tenure or a promotion if the board thinks the member is "unlikely to foster a culture of free inquiry, free expression and intellectual diversity" and unlikely to offer students scholarly works from a range of "political or ideological frameworks." Boards would also dock members considered likely to bring up personal political views unrelated to their specific field or class.

Boards would get wide latitude in making those policies. The bill says decisions would be based on past performance "or other determination by the board."

The bill also mandates that boards conduct reviews of tenured professors every five years based on the above, as well as if faculty members "adequately" carry out academic duties and more. A fiscal analysis by the nonpartisan Legislative Services Agency notes IU's flagship campus at Bloomington alone has over 1,000 tenured faculty, meaning its board would have to conduct 200-plus reviews annually.

"One of the fundamental things that ought to happen to you as a young person in college is to be challenged by thoughts you're not familiar with — thought you're not comfortable with, thought you don't agree with," Democrat Rep. Ed DeLaney told Deery during committee discussion, adding that his bill "will cut that down."

"You're requiring the professors — for example, in sociology or political science — to give a range of opinions and to be neutral," DeLaney continued. "In effect, you are neutering your fac-

ulty. That's what you're trying to do."

Deery opposed that description of his proposal and maintained that he wants to protect tenured faculty by codifying things the board can't consider in reviews, like expressing dissent or engaging in research and public commentary, as well as criticizing institutional leadership and engaging in political activity outside teaching or mentoring duties.

Still, institutions would be required to adopt policies establishing disciplinary actions — termination, demotion, salary cuts and more — for tenured faculty members who fail those reviews.

Deery said the bill does not "mandate that any particular content be taught," nor does it require students be exposed to "every scholarly idea" or "pseudoscience."

"If you believe that it's unreasonable for faculty to answer, occasionally, how they expose students to competing scholarly views, or if you believe that doing so will somehow 'threaten' the stature of your university, or the economic and cultural vitality of our state, or weaken the intellectual rigor of your students ... then you and I have a very different definition of what it actually means to be higher in higher education," Deery said.

"If you believe that we should not include in our definition of diversity the importance of competing ideas, along with the traditional goals of creating equal opportunity for all, then you and I also have a very different view on what diversity is, and I stand by that policy difference."

University faculty speak out

A joint statement released Monday by the Purdue-West Lafayette and Indiana University-Bloomington chapters of the American Association of University Professors said adoption of the Senate bill "would severely damage the ability" of the two public research universities "to recruit and retain outstanding faculty, erasing the State of Indiana's uniquely prominent national profile in higher education."

"In its attempt to ensure that all students and faculty at state universities feel confident they can express their political and intellectual views freely — an aspiration the AAUP shares — SB 202 mandates a system of surveillance and political scrutiny that will instead stifle the free flow of ideas," the statement said. "It requires that hiring, tenure, and promotion become subject to reviews that judge faculty based on political criteria, and that post-tenure employment be contingent on further periodic reviews. These measures would severely constrain academic freedom at our university."

That sentiment was echoed by multiple other faculty members from public universities across Indiana who testified against the bill on Wednesday.

Mary Dankoski, who has served as faculty at IU's medical school for 24 years, said Senate Bill 202 "is unprecedented" and will have "an enormous impact."

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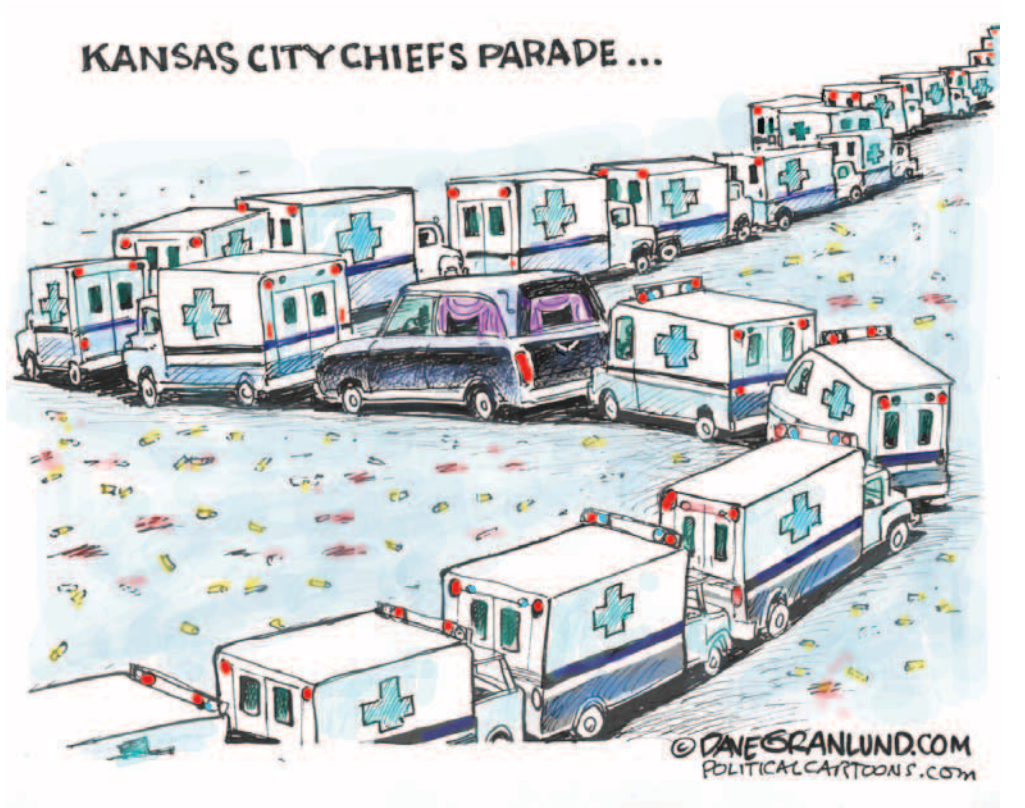
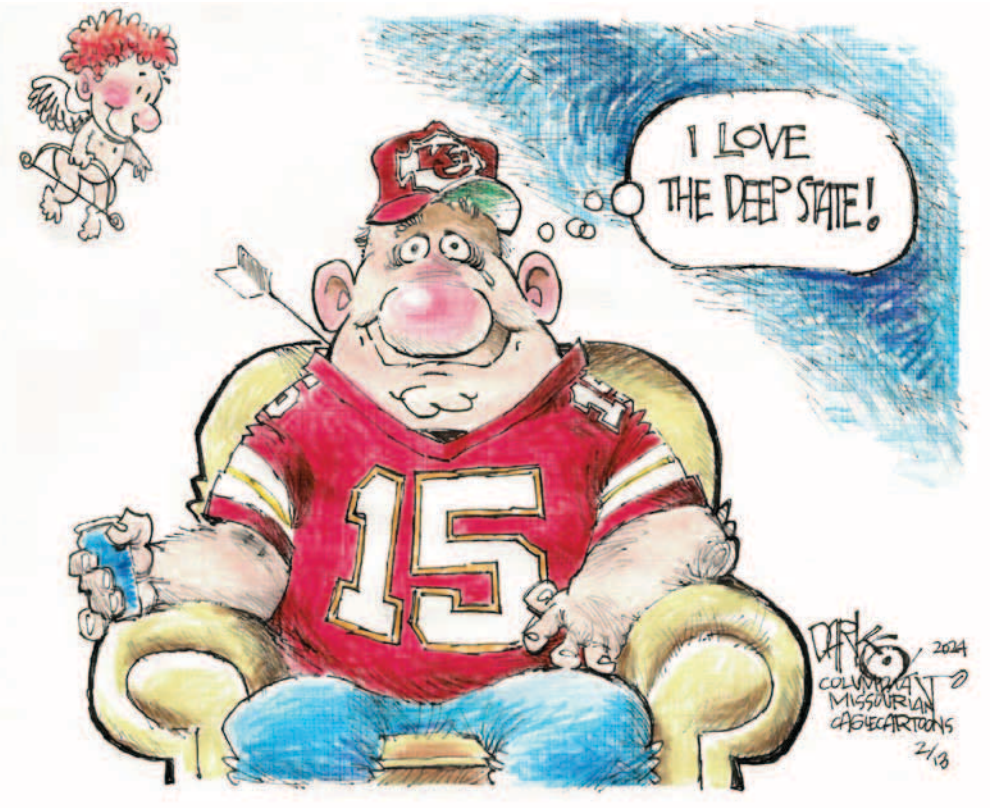
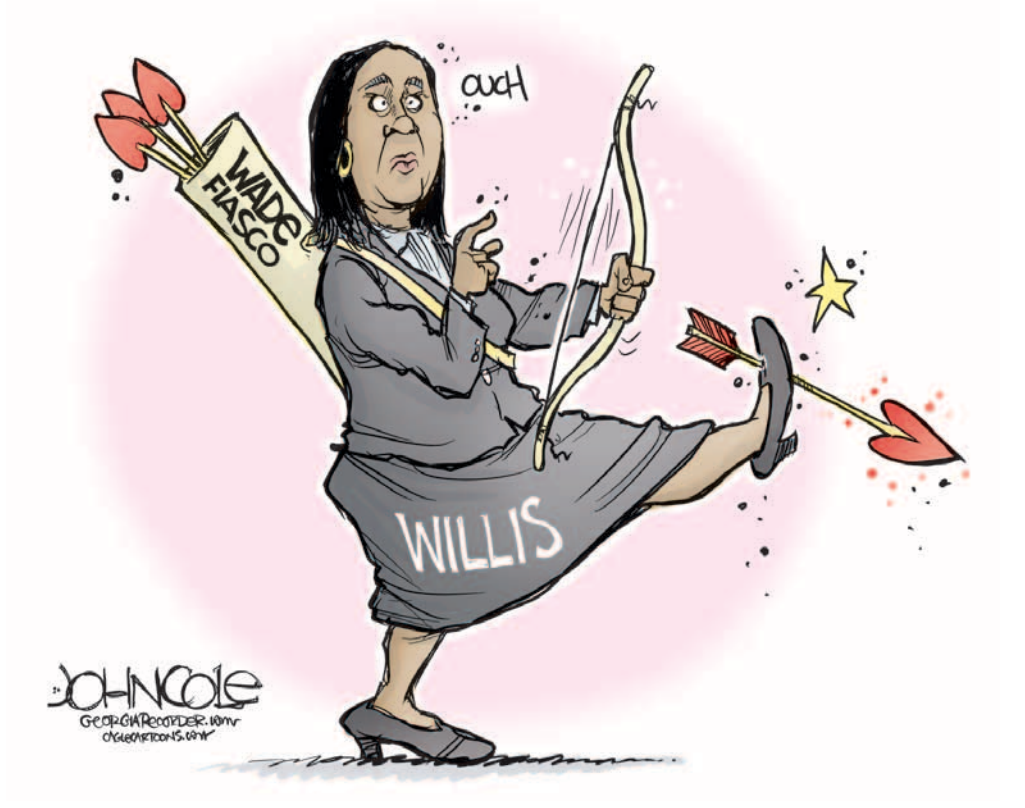
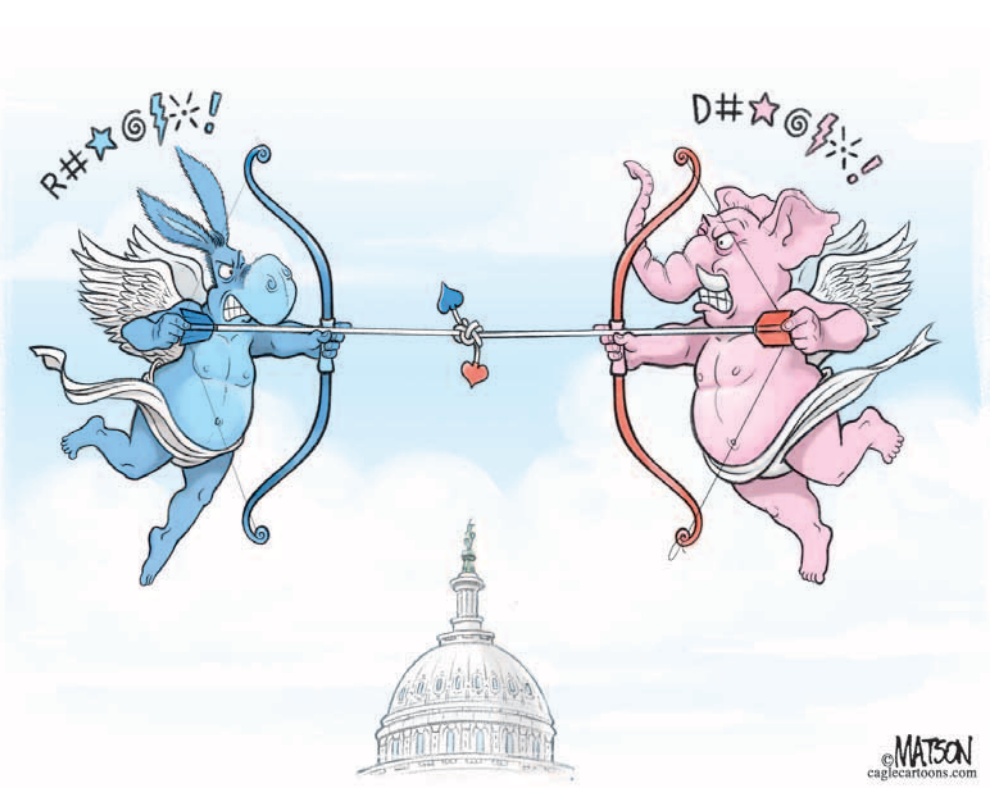
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The Week That Was - a look back through cartoonists' eyes...



GOP governor candidates need to move beyond federal issues

Five leading candidates are seeking the Republican nomination for Indiana governor in what promises to be the liveliest and most expensive GOP primary race in state history.

IBJ has profiled each of them over the course of the past few months. The final installment, a profile of U.S. Sen. Mike Braun, appears in this week's edition.

The profiles have provided interesting insights into each of the candidates, a field that also includes former Indiana Secretary of Commerce Brad Chambers, Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch, Fort Wayne businessman Eric Doden and former Indiana Attorney General Curtis Hill.

Hoosier Opinions

Much of the campaign so far has focused on whether and to what degree a candidate is committed to former President Donald Trump, where they stand on immigration policy and how they would protect the state from a potential Chinese threat.

While each of those issues certainly has some impact on the state, what we'd really like to hear more about is their vision for Indiana: how they would approach economic development, what should be done to address the state's workforce shortage and how to solve a growing literacy problem in K-12 education.

Among the loudest debates, though, is who is most solidly behind Trump.

Trump has endorsed Braun for governor, so it's clear where Braun stands. Doden and Hill say they have long supported Trump. Crouch formally endorsed Trump after his win in the New Hampshire primary. Chambers hasn't issued an endorsement, according to the Indiana Capital Chronicle.

On China, Chambers and Hill both have proposed policies aimed at banning China-affiliated people or entities from owning any or certain kinds of property in Indiana, according to The Times of Northwest Indiana. Braun has called for a ban on all travel between China and the United States.

On immigration policy, Braun and Doden have taken frequent swipes at each other. More recently, the Chambers campaign has accused Braun of playing politics with immigration policy by speaking out against a proposed bipartisan deal that was emerging in the Senate but appears imperiled by Trump's opposition.

While those hot-button issues might motivate voters, they divert attention from important issues closer to home.

Our hope is that voters, journalists and debate moderators will all do more in the coming weeks to push the candidates to have robust discussions on economic development policy and other key issues that will determine the economic trajectory of our state.

Those debates should occur not only in the Republican primary but also when the GOP nominee faces the presumptive Democratic nominee, Jennifer McCormick, in the fall.

Our state needs open debate and dialogue to come up with best ways to stop the slide in reading skills among the state's third-graders, figure out how to produce the skilled workforce needed to continue to attract big-time economic investment and craft a long-term economic vision that will lift all boats.

INDIANAPOLIS BUSINESS JOURNAL.

In the arms race for space weaponry, Russia fires a shot across the bow

The Ukraine war demonstrated the military impact of Starlink and other space-based communications and intelligence networks. Now, Russia appears to be working on weapons aimed at disabling such systems using new space-warfare technologies.

Russia's development of space weapons technology is at the heart of the "serious national security threat" mentioned elliptically on Wednesday by Rep. Michael R. Turner (R-Ohio), chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, according to congressional sources. National security adviser Jake Sullivan plans to brief the so-called Gang of Eight congressional leaders about the Russian threat Thursday.

Although national security officials caution that the Russian capability isn't an imminent danger to the United States, Turner's spotlighting of Moscow's aggressive plans could have a short-term impact on congressional approval of additional military assistance for Ukraine. Ironically, it's the Ukraine conflict — and the role of space systems in helping Kyiv survive the initial Russian onslaught in 2022 — that likely triggered Russia to rush development of its new space tactics.

Starlink and other space systems allowed Ukraine to create an electronic battle-management system. Constellations of commercial satellites could gather information with optical, thermal and other sensors. That information could be analyzed by artificial intelligence to determine likely targets, and the targeting information could then be beamed to Ukrainian troops at the front through Starlink and other broadband connections.

Russia warned more than a year ago that it might take action against these commercial satellite providers. Konstantin Vorontsov, a senior Russian diplomat, said in a speech at the United Nations in October 2022 that the array of private satellites was "an extremely dangerous trend that goes beyond the harmless use of outer-space technologies and has become apparent during the latest developments in Ukraine." He said this "quasi-civilian infrastructure may become a legitimate target for retaliation."

U.S. officials didn't provide details of Russia's new capability. But the Russians might be planning to use directed-energy weapons or electromagnetic pulses in space that could disable commercial and military networks. Such systems could, for example, attack the exotic "mesh networks" that allow Starlink and other companies to bounce signals among their satellites before sending data back to Earth.

In 2021, Russia tested an antisatellite weapon that could shoot an orbiter out of the sky (creating a horrible debris field in the process). And Russia could, in theory, fire a series of nuclear ASATs to make space a no-go zone. But such an approach would be sloppy and self-destructive, in addition to violating a treaty banning nuclear weapons in space. Russia's new

technology appears to be something more sophisticated.

The United States has an array of intelligence and military systems in space with what officials often describe as "exquisite" capabilities. But these amazing sensors and other technologies are carried by a small network of satellites that offer a handful of "fat, juicy targets," as Gen. John E. Hyten, former vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, put it in 2017.

"We have to build a more resilient architecture," with more small satellites, Gen. John W. "Jay" Raymond, then head of the Space Force, told me in 2021. As things have evolved, it has been commercial companies such as Starlink, which has more than 5,000 satellites, that have developed the hard-to-target architecture. That's what probably worries Russia.

Starlink, owned by Elon Musk's SpaceX, was a game changer in the opening weeks of the war in Ukraine. The satellites provided broadband internet signals that, combined with commercial imagery satellites, helped Ukraine identify and target Russian attacks. In the first hours of the war, a Russian cyberattack briefly disabled a smaller U.S. broadband system operated by a company called Viasat. But that network rebounded, and it was joined by a galaxy of other space systems.

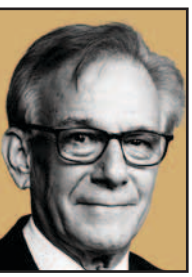
Starlink terminals gave Ukraine the connectivity to fight a 21st-century "algorithm war." Russia tried to jam and spoof the data coming from space, but Starlink engineers found ingenious ways to keep the data flowing. On Feb. 26, 2022, two days after the Russian invasion, Musk tweeted: "Starlink service is now active in Ukraine. More terminals en route."

Musk doubled down that May, posting: "Starlink has resisted Russian cyberwar jamming & hacking attempts so far, but they're ramping up their efforts." But he became anxious about Starlink's role and threatened to withhold the vital service unless he got paid for it, before deciding in October 2022, "The hell with it ... we'll just keep funding Ukraine govt for free."

Musk's growing concern about Starlink's role in the war was described by Walter Isaacson in his recent biography. The mega-billionaire balked at Ukraine's request to provide coverage for operations against Russian-occupied Crimea. Musk explained to Isaacson: "Starlink was not meant to be involved in wars. It was so people can watch Netflix and chill and get online for school and do good peaceful things, not drone strikes."

Russia, it seems, is looking for new ways to challenge the United States' space supremacy. But given the ingenuity of U.S. engineers in helping friends and evading enemies, it's a safe bet that the cycle of punch and counterpunch in space is just beginning.

Follow David Ignatius @IgnatiusPost on X



David Ignatius

Today in History

By The Associated Press

Today is Friday, Feb. 16, the 47th day of 2024. There are 319 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Feb. 16, 1959, Fidel Castro became premier of Cuba a month and a-half after the overthrow of Fulgencio Batista.

On this date: In 1862, the Civil War Battle of Fort Donelson in Tennessee ended as some 12,000 Confederate soldiers surrendered; Union Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's victory earned him the moniker "Unconditional Surrender Grant."

In 1923, the burial chamber of King Tutankhamen's recently unearthed tomb was unsealed in Egypt by English archaeologist Howard Carter.

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Desperate to decode this dating dilemma

Dear Annie: I've found myself in a dating maze and desperately need some advice. I've been dealing with some mixed signals from the person I'm dating; he's all about making plans and being super affectionate one day, then is distant and elusive the next. I'm getting whiplash. How do I make sense of this behavior without coming off as needy or insecure? I genuinely care about the connection but could use some tips for decoding this emotional puzzle. — Love Limbo

Dear Love Limbo: If you haven't done so already, it's probably time for the dreaded "what are we?" conversation. It sounds like you are genuinely invested in this person, and ready for a more serious commitment. If he isn't on the same page, then you're wasting your time. The only way to find out the answer is to ask.

Dear Annie: My 93-years-young mother had a cousin she was very close with, as children and as adults. He passed away several years ago, but his second wife has kept loosely in touch and, although my mom doesn't have a lot of history with the second wife, they are on good terms.

Mom received an email stating that this lady will be in our area soon and would like to stop in for a visit. My question is, would it be OK for my mother to share the happy stories of them as kids with her cousin's widow? Or do you think it would make things awkward? Of course, Mom wouldn't want to make the woman uncomfortable, but I'm sure she'd get a kick out of sharing some of the good times they had as youngsters, and his widow might even enjoy learning a bit more

about the man she was married to for a short while. What do you think would be best: Talk about the good times, or just don't mention it? — My Mom's Kid in Ohio

Dear Mom's Kid: It is lovely that your mother and her cousin's widow have kept in touch with each other in the years after the death of their loved one.

Your mother can casually mention her cousin and gauge his widow's response accordingly. While there is certainly a chance that the wounds of her loss are still too fresh, it is also possible that hearing childhood stories and family anecdotes about her husband might bring his widow comfort and serve as a way to honor her late husband's memory. Best-case scenario, a walk down memory lane allows your mother and this woman to bond and grow closer in their relationship. We all grieve differently, so your mother should prepare herself for either response.

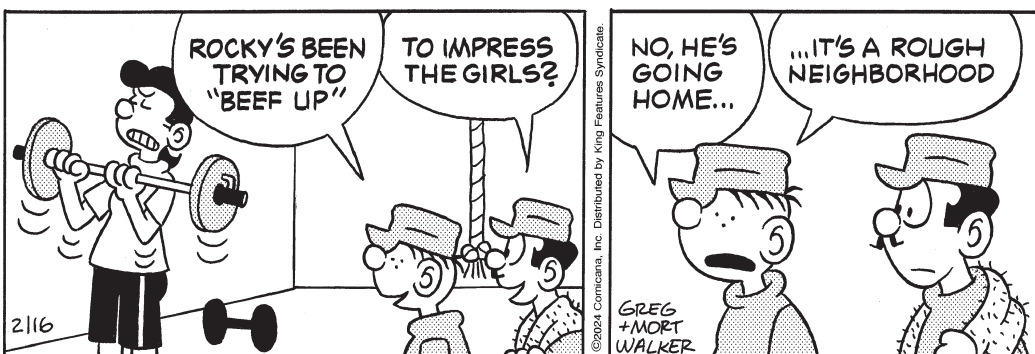
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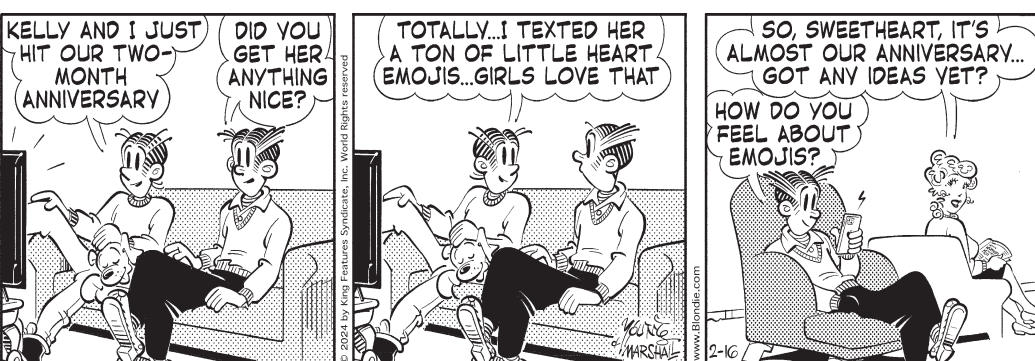
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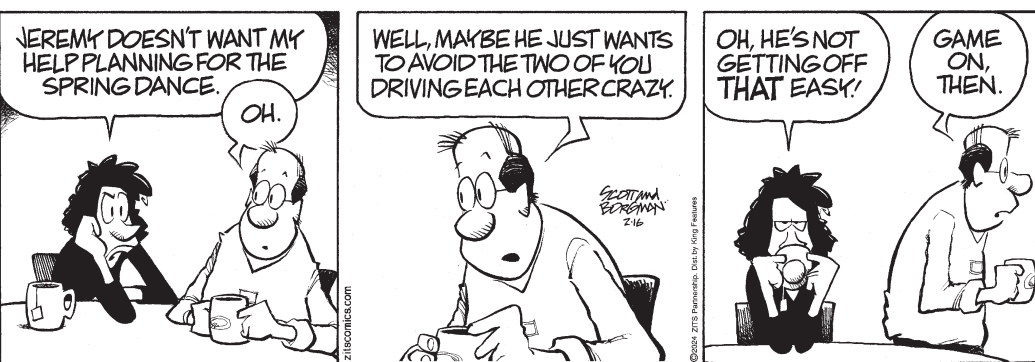
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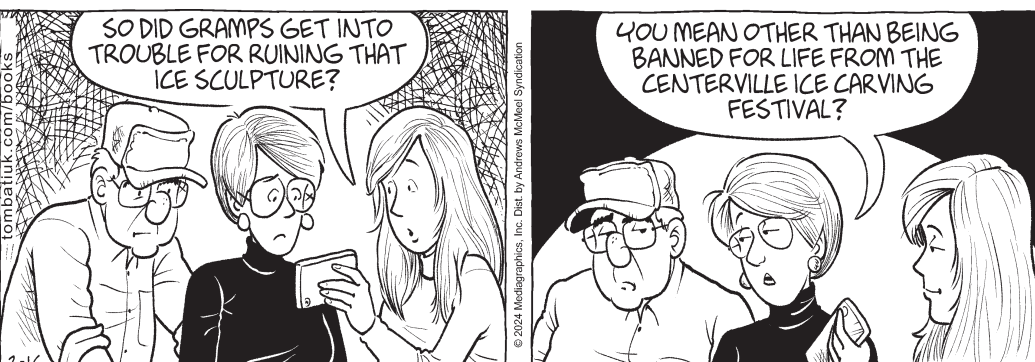
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My Answer

By Dr. Billy Graham



God through His Word leads us to the answers to life's problems

Question: When I was released from prison, my mother gave me her Bible and told me that if I would read and take it to heart, I would understand the Gospel that could change my life. I never want to see the inside of a cell again and have asked the Lord to forgive me of my sin and for breaking my mother's heart when I was arrested for selling drugs. I asked my mother where I should start reading. She said to start at the beginning, but is there anything wrong with starting somewhere else and then backing up? — N.B.

Answer: The first hint of the Gospel comes from Genesis 3:15; this is the first promise of salvation. Genesis is the book of beginnings. "In the

beginning God created ... man in His own image" (Genesis 1:1, 27, NKJV).

The gospel of John (one of the four gospels in the New Testament) says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). This book is the clearest and most readily understood, written to make salvation understood, and a marvelous way to begin reading the Bible. A knowledge of the Bible is essential to a rich and meaningful life. The words have a way of filling in the missing pieces, of bridging the gaps, of turning the tarnished colors of life to jewel-like brilliance. By taking every problem to

the Bible, God through His Word leads us to the answers to life's problems.

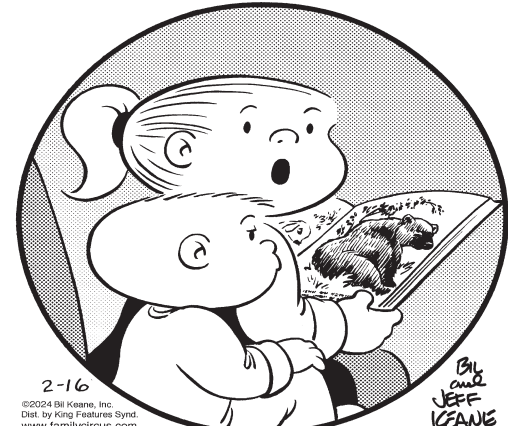
Jesus said of Himself, "I am the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End" (Revelation 21:6; 22:13). He died on the cross for man's sin to set the prisoners [of sin] free by paying the penalty of sin with His own life. By His resurrection, He offers new life and eternal life to everyone who will repent and receive Him as Lord and Savior. This is the story of the Bible.

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

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THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane



"Why do bears hyperventilate in the winter?"

The LOCKHORNS



"I CAN STILL GET INTO MY LITTLE BLACK DRESS... I JUST CAN'T GO OUT IN PUBLIC WEARING IT."

TV schedule table with columns for time slots (5 PM to 12:30) and rows for various channels (WINM, CBS, etc.) listing programs and their descriptions.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words, and a solution grid for the previous day's puzzle.

Caitlin Clark of Iowa breaks NCAA women's career scoring record with 35-foot 3-pointer

By ERIC OLSON
AP Sports Writer

IOWA CITY, Iowa (AP) — Caitlin Clark wasted no time becoming the NCAA women's career scoring leader Thursday night, taking less than three minutes to score the eight points she needed to break Kelsey Plum's record.



Caitlin Clark

The Iowa star who has brought unprecedented attention to women's basketball surpassed the record with her signature shot — a 35-foot 3-pointer that hit nothing but the bottom of the net.

And Clark didn't let up from there. She finished with a career-high 49 points, tied her career best with nine 3-pointers and had 13 assists in No. 4 Iowa's 106-89 victory over Michigan.

Hawkeyes coach Lisa Bluder took Clark out of the game with 1:46 left, shortly after she made her final 3, and she went to the bench to an ovation from the sellout crowd at Carver-Hawkeye Arena.

Clark's huge night put her at 3,569 points and within 80 of her next milestone, Lynette Woodard's major women's college scoring record of 3,649.

Clark went into the game needing eight points to pass Plum's total of 3,527. The record-breaker was a 3 off the dribble on the left wing near the Mediacom Court logo with 7:45 left in the first quarter.

"It's cool. It's cool to be in the same realm as a lot of really, really good players," Clark said at halftime in a televised interview. "I'm lucky to do it because I have really good teammates and really good coaches and a great support system that surrounds me."

Plum established the previous record as a senior at Washington in 2017. Woodard starred at Kansas from 1977-81, an era when women's sports were governed by the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women. Pearl Moore of Francis Marion holds the overall women's record with 4,061 points from 1975-79.

Iowa has four regular-season games left, plus the Big Ten Tournament and the NCAA Tournament. Barring injury, Clark, a senior who averages 32.1 points per game, is all but certain to pass Woodard. And she has the option to return for a fifth season of college basketball because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The crowd started chanting "One more year! One more year!" while Clark, who is projected as the No. 1 overall pick in the WNBA draft, was doing a postgame television interview.

Among those offering congratulations on social media was LSU star Angel Reese, who shared the spotlight with Clark in last season's national championship game won by the Tigers. The Big Ten Network put out a congratulatory compilation video that included Tom Brady and Peyton and Eli Manning.

Iowa won the tip and Clark, guarded by Laila Phelia, drove to the basket and banked in a shot from the right side. Clark hit a 3 from the left wing on Iowa's next possession.

The Hawkeyes turned the ball over twice before Clark took a pass from Gabbie Marshall in transition, stopped and shot from deep.

When the ball went through, the fans — many of them standing and holding up phones to capture the moment — let loose a huge roar.

Bluder called a timeout shortly thereafter, and Clark hugged teammates and coaches during a brief celebration.

"Just grateful. Thankful to be surrounded by people and be in a city that supports women's basketball so much," Clark said. "Be surrounded by my best friends and people that want to see me be great and push me to be great every single day."

Clark and her dynamic game have captivated the nation for two seasons. Last year, she led the Hawkeyes to the NCAA title game and was named AP player of the year. More than just her pursuit of the record, her long 3-pointers and flashy passes have raised interest in the women's game. Arenas have been sold out for her games, home and away, and television ratings have never been higher.

It's all been more than Clark imagined when the 6-foot guard from West Des Moines stayed in state and picked Iowa over Notre Dame in November 2019.

"I dreamed of doing really big things, playing in front of big crowds, going to the Final Four, maybe not quite on this level," Clark said this week. "I think that's really hard to dream. You can always exceed expectations, even your own, and I think that's been one of the coolest parts."

Though her basketball obligations and endorsement deals (State Farm ads, etc.) have put demands on her time, she said she is the same person who showed up on campus four years ago. She still cleans her apartment, does laundry, plays video games, hangs out with friends and does schoolwork.

Her run to the record could have come earlier, but it arrived back at Carver-Hawkeye Arena, where ticket resale prices for the game ranged from hundreds of dollars into the thousands. As usual, fans showed up early outside the arena, many wearing black-and-gold No. 22 jerseys and holding signs paying homage.

Mya Anderson and her friend, Ellie Stephensen, both 12, and their moms made the six-hour drive from Canton, South Dakota, to see Clark break the record.

"I think she's inspired a lot of people," Mya said.

"Yeah, a lot of little girls," Ellie added. Mya and Ellie both play basketball, and both said they try to do some of the things Clark does on the court, like shoot long 3s.

"But I'm not as good as her," Ellie said. Kelly Jared of Manchester, Iowa, said she likes everything about Clark and expects her impact on the women's game to endure.

"She's taken it to a new level," Jared said. "The aspirations and goals that the current players and future players have, she has set that bar way up in the sky. And it's perfect, because they will work to attain them. As far as the fans, there's excitement for the people who never watched women's basketball. My son isn't a basketball fan, but he watched Caitlin last year and he was sold. He absolutely loves her."

Raiders get second straight boys' hoops win, top Bulldogs

Southern Wells picked up its second win in a row in a 72-56 victory at Clinton Central Thursday night.

The win gives the Raiders a 6-2 stretch over their last eight games, improving to an 8-12 mark for the season.

Evan Pennington led the way with 20

points, followed by CJ Reber's 19 and Perrin Gates' 15. Chandler Oswalt followed with nine, Landon Johnson (5), and Andrew Aker (2) and Caleb Johnson (2).

The Raiders will travel to Wes-Del for a 7 p.m. tipoff Tuesday, Feb. 20.

Blue Jackets fire GM Jarmo Kekalainen midway through his 11th full season

By STEPHEN WHYNO
AP Hockey Writer

The Columbus Blue Jackets fired general manager Jarmo Kekalainen on Thursday, ending his time on the job ahead of another crucial trade deadline for the struggling club.

President of hockey operations John Davidson made the call midway through Kekalainen's 11th full season on the job and with just over three weeks to go before the March 8 deadline. The 57-year-old Kekalainen, who is from Finland, was the third-longest tenured GM in the NHL.

"This is one of the hardest days I have had in my career as Jarmo is a friend, someone I have a great deal of respect

for and someone who has done a lot of good things during his time here," Davidson said in a statement. "While the future of our club is bright, our performance has not been good enough, and it is time for a fresh perspective as we move forward."

Davidson and the hockey operations team will assume GM duties on an interim basis until a full-time replacement is hired. Davidson said at a news conference in Columbus the focus will be primarily on external candidates and predicted an exhaustive search.

Firing Kekalainen now comes with the Blue Jackets in last place in the Eastern Conference and on track to miss the playoffs for a fourth

consecutive year. They could be sellers at the deadline, with center Jack Roslovic set to be an unrestricted free agent and a few others potential trade candidates.

Davidson and assistant GMs Josh Flynn and Basil McRae will be making those decisions, not Kekalainen.

"We have a lot ahead of us," said Davidson, who mentioned his own absence because of back surgery when asked about why this happened now. "We've had an up-and-down, at times turbulent, season. I just think that going forward, now was the time to turn that page and go forward with all the decisions that we have to make that are ahead of us."

Second Gentleman Emhoff visits Indiana for NBA All Star weekend

By WHITNEY DOWNARD,
Indiana Capital Chronical

As thousands of basketball fans inundate Indianapolis this upcoming weekend for the NBA All-Star Game, Second Gentleman Douglas Emhoff will be making his own appearance in the Hoosier State as part of the celebration's calendar of events.

On Saturday, Emhoff will join both a basketball clinic and fireside chat as

part of the WNBA's Her Time to Play initiative, an arm of the national organization dedicated to encouraging women and girls to participate in the sport.

Emhoff will appear with Jewell Loyd, of the Seattle Storm; Arike Ogunbowale, of the Dallas Wings; Shaira Austin, of the Washington Mystics; and Grace Berger, of the Indiana Fever.

Previously, Berger played for the Hoosiers at

Indiana University.

Later that day, Emhoff will attend the NBA HBCU Classic, which pits Winston-Salem State University against Virginia Union University at Gainbridge Fieldhouse.

Other NBA All-Star events include the All-Star celebrity game; the Rising Stars Mini-Tournament; the Skills Challenge, 3-Point Contest; Slam Dunk contest and All-Star Game.

High School Calendar

FRIDAY, FEB. 16
BOYS BASKETBALL: Jay County at Norwell, 7:45 p.m.; Bluffton at Belmont, 7:30 p.m.
SATURDAY, FEB. 17
BOYS BASKETBALL: Mississinewa at Bluffton, 7:30 p.m.
GIRLS BASKETBALL: (Semi-State) Norwell vs. Hamilton Heights at Huntington North High School, 10 a.m.
SWIMMING & DIVING: (Sectional, boys only) Norwell and Bluffton at Jay County, 1 p.m.
MONDAY, FEB. 19
BOYS BASKETBALL: Norwell at Concor-

dia, 7:30 p.m.
TUESDAY, FEB. 20
BOYS BASKETBALL: Southern Wells at Wes-Del, 7:30 p.m.
WEDNESDAY, FEB. 21
No events scheduled.
THURSDAY, FEB. 22
No events scheduled.
FRIDAY, FEB. 23
BOYS BASKETBALL: Norwell at Homestead, 7:30 p.m.; Bluffton at Southwood, 7:30 p.m.; Cowan at Southern Wells, 7:30 p.m.
SATURDAY, FEB. 24
No events scheduled.

News-Banner Scoreboard

BASKETBALL

High School

Thursday Boys' Scores
Cowan 79, Sheridan 73
Ft. Wayne Canterbury 73, Lake-wood Park 34
Gary West 63, Victory Christian Academy 59
Greencastle 61, Owen Valley 28
Illiana Christian 69, Lake Station 36
Lakeland Christian 51, Ft. Wayne Smith Academy 17
Madison Shawe 76, Trimble Co., Ky. 73, OT
Michigan City Marquette 56, Hammond Science and Tech 36
Milan 71, Jac-Cen-Del 68, OT
Randolph Southern 70, Anderson Prep Academy 59
River Forest 56, Lowell 53
Scottsburg 71, Southwestern (Hanover) 48
W. Vigo 77, N. Central (Farmersburg) 42
Wes-Del 56, Muncie Burris 50
POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCEL-LATIONS
Liberty Christian vs. Thrival, ccd.

Thursday Girls' Scores

No games.

College

Men's Basketball Scores
Thursday, Feb. 15
EAST
Rutgers 63, Northwestern 60
SOUTH
East Carolina 68, Wichita St. 55
FAU 80, Temple 68
James Madison 83, Georgia St. 63
Middle Tennessee 76, New Mexico St. 69
SMU 87, Tulane 79
MIDWEST

E. Illinois 75, SE Missouri 57
N. Dakota St. 73, Oral Roberts 60
Purdue 84, Minnesota 76
SOUTHWEST
North Texas 76, Memphis 66

Women's Basketball Scores

Thursday, Feb. 15
EAST
Illinois 86, Penn St. 71
Louisville 69, Boston College 67
Vermont 75, New Hampshire 41
SOUTH
Auburn 78, Kentucky 50
Florida St. 71, Wake Forest 63
Georgia Tech 64, Clemson 63
Mississippi 77, Florida 67, OT
North Carolina 75, Pittsburgh 62
S. Indiana 73, UT Martin 67
South Carolina 66, Tennessee 55
Syracuse 71, Miami 60
Virginia Tech 61, Duke 56

MIDWEST

Cleveland St. 78, Oakland 63
E. Illinois 71, SE Missouri 52
Evansville 93, S. Illinois 89, OT
Fort Wayne 75, Milwaukee 55
Illinois St. 64, Ill. Chicago 61
Iowa 106, Michigan 89
Missouri St. 59, Indiana St. 51
N. Dakota St. 83, Oral Roberts 72
NC State 59, Notre Dame 43
SIU-Edwardsville 69, Lindenwood (Mo.) 67
Valparaiso 68, Bradley 50

FAR WEST

Gonzaga 96, Saint Mary's (Cal) 68
Middle Tennessee 73, New Mexico St. 37

NBA

Wednesday's Games
Charlotte 122, Atlanta 99
Orlando 118, New York 100
Miami 109, Philadelphia 104
Boston 136, Brooklyn 86
Indiana 127, Toronto 125

Cleveland 108, Chicago 105
Memphis 121, Houston 113
Dallas 116, San Antonio 93
New Orleans 133, Washington 126
L.A. Lakers 138, Utah 122
Sacramento 102, Denver 98
Phoenix 116, Detroit 100
L.A. Clippers 130, Golden State 125

Thursday's Games

Milwaukee at Memphis, 8:30 p.m.
Golden State at Utah, 9 p.m.
Minnesota at Portland, 10 p.m.

Friday's Games

2024 Rising Stars Semifinal 1
Team Tamika vs Team Jalen, 9 p.m., Indianapolis
2024 Rising Stars Semifinal 2
Team Pau vs Team Detlef, 9:30 p.m., Indianapolis

Saturday's Games

No games scheduled.

Sunday's Games

2024 All-Star Game
East NBA All Stars vs West NBA All Stars, 8 p.m., Indianapolis

HOCKEY

NHL

Wednesday's Games
Winnipeg 1, San Jose 0
Florida 5, Pittsburgh 2
Minnesota 3, Arizona 1
Thursday's Games
Seattle 4, Boston 1
Los Angeles 2, New Jersey 1
Florida 4, Buffalo 0
Anaheim 5, Ottawa 1
Toronto 4, Philadelphia 3, OT
N.Y. Rangers 7, Montreal 4
Tampa Bay 6, Colorado 3
Dallas 9, Nashville 2
St. Louis 6, Edmonton 3
Pittsburgh at Chicago, 8:30 p.m.
San Jose at Calgary, 9 p.m.



IndyCar moves season finale from downtown streets to Nashville Superspeedway

By JENNA FRYER
AP Auto Racing Writer

IndyCar will move its season-ending championship finale in September from the streets of downtown Nashville to the superspeedway in Lebanon nearly 40 miles away because of construction surrounding the Tennessee Titans' new stadium.

The Big Machine Music City Grand Prix has been a smashing success racing down lower Broadway and using a bridge as part of a tricky track layout.

Big Machine Label Group chairman and founder Scott Borchetta said Wednesday he started overseeing the Sept. 15 race in December and spent several weeks reviewing plans before determining the event had to be moved.

"I don't see that we can properly race downtown until that stadium is completed," Borchetta said. "We all have a great desire to race IndyCars in Nashville. We have a great desire to return to the streets when we can."

Groundbreaking for the Titans' new stadium is scheduled for Feb. 29 but the stadium won't be ready until the 2027 NFL season.

Borchetta said the old stadium was central to all IndyCar operations, particularly hosting the paddock and team hospitality. That, combined with the NFL schedule not being released until May, created uncertainty. Other construction in the honky tonk district of Lower Broadway also make racing in that area more challenging.

"We all just looked at each other and said, 'You know what? We're we're trying to put 10 gallons in a 5 gallon bucket for this year,'" Borchetta said.

The IndyCar race has a contract in Nashville through 2026. The superspeedway is not unfamiliar: IndyCar has run eight times at the track, with Scott Dixon winning the final three races from 2006 to 2008.

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The Classifieds

SUDOKU

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

Difficulty: ★★★★★

2/16

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Garage Sales

HELOISE HINT: If you are going to visit garage sales in your area. Be sure to take several business cards with you. If you have your eye on something, but you'd rather buy it when the price lowers, the garage sale host can call you and let you know when the price has been lowered. Fax Heloise @ 210-HELOISE (435-6473).

NOTICE

Found

DRONE FOUND ON N. Oak St. Extended around a year ago. Call 260-824-4563 with description.

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Public Sale Calendar

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. *Krueckeberg Auction & Realty LLC*, 260-724-7402, Kjauction.com.

FEBRUARY 18-FEBRUARY 25 - (Online Only Auction) - Thomas and Mary Woodward and other consignors, seller. Outstanding collection of vintage pickle casters & brides baskets, condiment sets, cut & pressed glassware, toothpick holders, sterling silver, antique & modern furniture, vintage toys, primitives, shop tools, generator. Preview: Feb. 22 from 3 p.m.-6 p.m., 102 South Jefferson, Ossian. Sale manager, Patrick Carter, *The Steffen Group Inc.*, 260-824-3006, www.steffengrp.com.

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 CLOSING FEBRUARY 21 - 6 p.m. EST - Dean Stoppenhagen, 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, Kjauction.com.

FEBRUARY 25-MARCH 3 - (Online Only Auction) - The Estate of Alan Johnson, seller. 2021 Jeep Grand Cherokee Limited w/3,600 miles, (2) Vintage Triumph motorcycles, modern furniture, antiques, beer signs, model ships, quality tools, Schwinn Airdyne exercise bike, household, 2017 Grasshopper zero turn mower, 2018 Sure-Trac enclosed trailer. Preview: Feb. 25 from 2 p.m.-4 p.m. and Feb. 29 from 4 p.m.-6 p.m., 3651 E. 1000 N., Ossian. Sale manager, Brandon Steffen, *The Steffen Group Inc.*, www.steffengrp.com, 260-824-3006.

FEBRUARY 27-MARCH 5 - (Online Only Auction) - The Estate of Alan Johnson, seller. Northern Wells, 3 bedroom ranch home on 1/2 acre with 2,384 square feet and 1 full bathroom. Preview: Feb. 25 from 2 p.m.-4 p.m. and Feb. 29 from 4 p.m.-6 p.m., 1000 N., Ossian. Sale manager, Brandon Steffen, *The Steffen Group Inc.*, 260-824-3006, www.steffengrp.com.

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COUNTY OF WELLS)
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CIRCUIT COURT)
PROBATE DIVISION)
CAUSE NO.)
90C01-2208-EM-000017)
IN THE MATTER OF)
THE ESTATE OF)
SHARON L. EAGLE,)
DECEASED.)

NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATION
For Publication in Newspaper
Notice is hereby given that Angel D. Skinner was on the 11th day of August, 2022, appointed Special Administrator of the estate of Sharon L. Eagle, deceased, who died on the 3rd day of August, 2022.

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

Dated at Bluffton, Indiana, this 25th day of January, 2024.

Beth Davis
Clerk, Wells Circuit Court
BURT, BLEE, DIXON, SUTTON & BLOOM, LLP
Madison M. Heiney, Attorney for Special Administrator
Attorney No. 38218-53
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Fort Wayne IN 46802
(260) 426-1300

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Help Wanted

WELLS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE is currently seeking applicants for the position of Full Time Deputy Sheriff. Applicants must be a US Citizen, at least 21 years of age upon graduation from police academy, possess a high school diploma or equivalent as well as a valid Indiana Operators License. Applicant can't have any felony convictions. Applicants must pass all aspects of the hiring process including physical agility testing, written examination, background investigation, oral interview, polygraph and physiological evaluation. Selected applicant must be able to graduate from the Indiana Law Enforcement Academy. ILEA certified applicants do not have to attend the physical agility and written examination portion of the process. 20-year matrix salary range for a Deputy Sheriff (no rank) is \$56,600 - \$68,400. Years of service and experience will be honored for a starting salary up to five years in the pay matrix. Pre-Application can be found on our website at www.wellscountysheriff.com. Once pre-application is completed, details on the paper application will be emailed to the applicant. Return completed paper application to 1615 W Western Ave, Bluffton, Indiana 46714 Attn: Chief Deputy Randy Steele no later than 12:00 pm on March 15, 2024.

NEED MORE EMPLOYEES! A 20 word, line classified in the Bluffton News-Banner for a month is \$52. Contact the office at 125 N. Johnson St., 824-0224, or classifieds.news-banner.com.

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Lottery Numbers

Thursday's Drawings HOOSIER LOTTERY

Cash 5 — 07-11-17-43-44
Cash4Life — 15-30-37-39-59, Cash Ball: 02
Quick Draw Midday — 02-04-05-10-11-12-15-18-20-31-46-49-60-62-67-72-73-75-77-79, BE: 60
Daily Three-Midday — 05-06-00, SB:08
Daily Three-Evening — 07-06-07, SB: 05
Daily Four-Midday — 02-08-04-02, SB: 08
Daily Four-Evening — 02-01-02-02, SB: 05
Quick Draw Evening — 08-10-12-13-20-30-32-33-44-48-50-54-57-60-61-65-69-74-76-78, BE: 74
Hoosier Lotto — Estimated jackpot (for Saturday): \$4.8 million

MEGA MILLIONS

Estimated jackpot (for Friday): \$457 million
POWERBALL
Estimated jackpot (for Saturday): \$306 million

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

Difficulty: ★★★★★ 2/16

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It's a celebration

Above, Norwell girls basketball team celebrated Saturday afternoon after knocking off 3A No. 7 Benton Central 58-44 to advance to the two-game semi-state next Saturday at Huntington North. The No. 2 Lady Knights will face No. 1 Hamilton Heights in the opening game at 10 a.m. At right, Kennedy Fuelling shares an emotional moment with her mom, Lindey, after Fuelling broke the all-time girls basketball scoring record for Norwell. She broke the record on the final shot of the game with 9.8 seconds to play. Below, the team poses with the regional trophy and game ball. Story and game photo on Page 6. (Photos by Glen Werling)



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Ready for what's next.



Dekota Hubble races in for a layup off a steal against Benton Central. The senior forward grabbed eight offensive rebounds and nine total to go with her 13 points. (Photo by Glen Werling)



Vanessa Rosswurm hooks a shot over Benton Central's Sarah Gick (25) and Keara Lipscomb-Allen (12) in the first quarter of Saturday's Class 3A Regional 13 at Caston High School. (Photo by Glen Werling)

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