

# The News - Banner

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TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2024 BLUFFTON, INDIANA • Wells County's Hometown Connection \$1.00

## Standing together

### Wells County Chamber hosts annual dinner and awards program

By HOLLY GASKILL

The annual dinner and awards program sponsored by the Wells County Chamber of Commerce Monday made evident how the community stands together — and by the end of the evening, it did so in a round of applause.

The evening marked the 110th for the Chamber and honored the Citizens of the Year, Educators of the Year and Business of the Year.

Citizens of the Year were Jeff and Jamie Lemler, who own and operate Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home in Bluffton. The two were introduced by their dear friend, Jessica

Bricker, who works as the communications specialist for Bluffton-Harrison schools. Bricker had also nominated them for the award, accompanied by letters of recommendation from multiple community leaders.

In addition to the service of their business, the Lemlers have been deeply involved in numerous organizations, supporting local programs, events and individuals. Bricker concluded, “Thank you to the Chamber of Commerce for endorsing what has been known all along — that it’s people like Jeff and Jamie who make this community a great place to call home, raise a family and invest in. And that it’s always worth it to be kind, compassionate and generous, like the Lemlers.”

In their separate speeches, Jeff and Jamie Lemler expressed a shared gratefulness for each other and the community.

Jamie led, describing how choices impact the community. Jamie explained how every day provides opportunities to help one another and brighten each other’s day, but it’s a choice to do so. She challenged the audience to consider the little moments where they can spread kindness and goodness, creating ripples within the community.

Jeff followed, connecting their lives to the Matthew (Continued on Page 2)



Jeff and Jamie Lemler were honored as Citizens of the Year by the Wells County Chamber of Commerce during the annual awards dinner and awards program Monday night. Pictured left to right are Braden and Macy Lemler, the couple’s children, Jamie Lemler, Jeff Lemler, and Jessica Bricker, who nominated the couple for the award and introduced them during the program. (Photos by Sydney Kent)



Kevin Pritchard of Ruoff Mortgage was honored as the Chamber of Commerce’s Ambassador of the Year. Pictured is Chamber Executive Director Erin Prible and Pritchard.



Educators of the Year from the Wells County districts were, from left, David Butler, Mark Weinert, and at right, Jim Bueter. Awards were presented Sydney Sheltz-Kempf, the granddaughter of Mike Sailsbery, a previous Norwell superintendent who continues to support the awards. Sheltz-Kempf is also a former student of Weinert.

## Local man sentenced after dealing drugs at work place

By SYDNEY KENT

A man from Bluffton who sold drugs from his work was ordered to spend the next 10 years in prison. However, it is likely that he will spend far more time behind bars due to other ongoing cases.

Devon James Schultz, 30, was sentenced to 10 years at the Indiana Department of Correction during his hearing in the Wells Circuit Court last week. Schultz received 430 days of jail credit towards his sentence.

According to a probable cause affidavit, Schultz was the subject of back-to-back undercover stings involving a “cooperating individual.”

According to the affidavit, the CI

arranged to purchase both marijuana and 17 Suboxone pills in the designated smoking shed outside of Schultz’s workplace at 5:58 a.m. on Oct. 26, 2022. Schultz reportedly told the CI that he did not want to text about the deal as he did not want his wife to find out.

For this, Schultz was charged with one count of dealing in a Schedule III controlled substance, a Level 4 felony, which is punishable by up to 12 years in prison.

Four days later, Schultz reportedly met again with a CI in the bathroom of his work. He sold 17 Suboxone pills and six Adderall pills to the CI for \$300.

Schultz was charged with one count of dealing in a Schedule III controlled substance, a Level 4 felony, and dealing in a Schedule II controlled substance, a Level 5 felony. If found convicted, Schultz could face up to 18 years in prison on the additional charges. However, both counts were dismissed pursuant to

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Devon James Schultz

## U.S. sues to block merger of Kroger and Albertsons, saying it could push prices higher

By DEE-ANN DURBIN  
AP Business Writer

The Federal Trade Commission sued to block a proposed merger between grocery giants Kroger and Albertsons, saying the \$24.6 billion deal would eliminate competition and lead to higher prices for millions of Americans.

The FTC filed an administrative complaint against the companies Monday, which will be considered by an administrative law judge at the agency. It also filed a lawsuit with the U.S. District Court in Oregon requesting a temporary injunction blocking the merger. That lawsuit was joined by the attorneys general of eight states and the District of Columbia.

Kroger and Albertsons, two of the nation’s largest grocers, agreed to merge in October 2022. The companies said a merger would help them better compete with Walmart, Amazon, Costco and other big rivals. Together, Kroger and Albertsons would control around 13% of the U.S. grocery market; Walmart controls 22%, accord-

ing to J.P. Morgan analyst Ken Goldman.

Both companies, immediately after the FTC announcement, said that they will challenge the agency in court.

Kroger, based in Cincinnati, Ohio, operates 2,750 stores in 35 states and the District of Columbia, including brands like Ralphs, Smith’s and Harris Teeter. Albertsons, based in Boise, Idaho, operates 2,273 stores in 34 states, including brands like Safeway, Jewel Osco and Shaw’s. Together the companies employ around 700,000 people.

But the merger, announced at a time of high food-price inflation, was bound to get tough regulatory scrutiny. U.S. prices for food eaten at home typically rise 2.5% per year, but in 2022 they rose 11.4% and in 2023 they rose another 5%, according to government data. Inflation is cooling, but gradually.

“Kroger’s acquisition of Albertsons would lead to additional grocery price hikes for everyday goods, further exacerbating the financial strain consumers across the coun-

(Continued on Page 2)

## Moon landing mission cut short, lander will stop working Tuesday

By MARCIA DUNN  
AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — A private U.S. lunar lander is expected to stop working Tuesday, its mission cut short after landing sideways near the south pole of the moon.

Intuitive Machines, the Houston company that built and flew the spacecraft, said Monday it will continue to collect data until

sunlight no longer shines on the solar panels. Based on the position of Earth and the moon, officials expect that to happen Tuesday morning. That’s two to three days short of the week or so that NASA and other customers had been counting on.

The lander, named Odysseus, is the first U.S. spacecraft to land on the moon in more than 50 years, carrying experiments for NASA,

the main sponsor. But it came in too fast last Thursday and the foot of one of its six legs caught on the surface, causing it to tumble over, according to company officials.

Based on photos from NASA’s Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter flying overhead, Odysseus landed within a mile or so of its intended target near the Malapert A crater, just 185 miles or so from the moon’s south pole.

The LRO photos from 56 miles up are the only ones showing the lander on the surface, but as little more than a spot in the grainy images. A camera-ejecting experiment by Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, to capture images of the lander as they both descended, was called off shortly before touchdown because of a last-minute navigation issue.

According to NASA, the lander

ended up in a small, degraded crater with a 12-degree slope. That’s the closest a spacecraft has ever come to the south pole, an area of interest because of suspected frozen water in the permanently shadowed craters there.

NASA, which plans to land astronauts in this region in the next few years, paid Intuitive Machines \$118 million to deliver six experi-

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**Outside**



Warm with a chance of showers and storms

|         |         |          |
|---------|---------|----------|
| Today   | Wed.    | Thursday |
| High 69 | High 47 | High 40  |
| Low 42  | Low 21  | Low 28   |

More Weather on Page 2

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Rep. Matt Pierce, D-Bloomington, opposes legislative interference into a Gary gun lawsuit. (Photo by Monroe Bush)

# Key lawmakers once balked at bills affecting active lawsuits. Is the 'default' approach dying?

By LESLIE BONILLA MUÑIZ  
Indiana Capital Chronicle

A common phrase in an Indiana legislative committee room and on a chamber floor — “pending litigation” — is increasingly said to little effect.

Open lawsuits are off-limits to some lawmakers, while others consider the unwritten ban on legislative interference an unnecessary barrier to policy goals.

Current and former lawmakers said former Senate President Pro Tem Robert Garton, who held that powerful post from 1980 to 2006, implemented the rule. He killed numerous proposals involving ongoing disputes during his tenure.

But Indiana’s current General Assembly has recently taken aim at active lawsuits involving the firearm industry, a Hoosier family with a transgender child, streaming services, lethal injections and more — sometimes multiple times.

Does the old rule still hold sway? “I think (it’s) about the same. (Such bills) come up,” said Republican Sen. Sue Glick, an attorney who has served in the Senate since 2010.

“I think it’s accelerating. There’s much more intervention now,” said Democrat Rep. Matt Pierce, an attorney first elected to the House of Representatives in 2002.

## Gary lawsuit is the latest

Lawmakers have heard hours of testimony and discussion this session on legislation that seeks to end a lawsuit the city of Gary has waged against members of the firearm industry for over 24 years.

It’s their third try. Courts let the dispute continue despite attempts to kill it in 2001 and 2015. The city, with the Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence, filed in 1999.

They allege that local gun dealers and major firearms manufacturers — Smith & Wesson, Glock and more — have contributed to the city’s high gun violence through negligent business practices, such as not preventing illegal straw purchases.

The defendants and the National Shooting Sports Foundation, their trade organization, say they’ve followed the law and that the legal fight is preventing them from doing business in the Region and the state.

Gary Mayor Eddie Melton, a Democrat, told a panel of lawmakers last week that House Bill 1235 would — when it comes to the firearm industry — strip the right to access the legal system from all Hoosier communities.

Prominent conservative attorney Jim Bopp and gun-rights attorney Guy Relford countered that local units of government derive their authorities from the state.

“The state giveth; the state can taketh away,” Relford told the committee.

## Twenty-four years and counting

The Gary lawsuit’s long life has emerged as a key detail in the debate over killing it.

“Now, the fact that it’s (been nearly) 25 years also tells you everything you want to know about the merits of this case,” Bopp said.

He asserted the plaintiff “like(s) the idea of endless discovery.”

Bopp, the National Shooting Sports Foundation’s Christopher Lee and firearm supporters blamed the plaintiff for years-long delays in the case. Melton, Brady Center Senior Litigation Counsel Philip Bengle and others blamed the defendants.

Bray, the Senate’s president pro tem, indicated the lengthy timeline played into his decision-making.

“Here, you’ve got a case that’s been going north of 20 years. It’s been a frustration, and so that’s why there’s some interest in engaging in it,” he told reporters Thursday.

“If a case is going to move through trial court, go into appellate court and come up with an answer, then we can interpret that answer and decide — and maybe more intelligently decide — whether we need to craft legislation to answer the question or not,” he added.

Others said the case’s lifespan wasn’t key. “The length doesn’t really matter. ... That’s not the issue,” Sen. Liz Brown, a Republican attorney, said while questioning a witness in committee.

“Maybe the parties are racking up litigation expenses, but as a matter of policy — which is what the legislature should be concerning itself with — there’s no impact to your average Hoosier of having a lawsuit drag out,” Pierce told the Capital Chronicle.

Melton indicated the city of Gary was not spending substantial amounts of money on the case. Lee said one defendant’s contractors had estimated it would cost \$12 million to produce documents for discovery, which would add up to \$96 million across the eight defendants; Bengle called the estimates “false” and characterized the discovery requests as simple.

## Precedent for legislative engagement

The bill comes on the heels of two

attempts last session — one lived, the other died — to alter ongoing lawsuits.

In the first, several Hoosier municipalities sued satellite TV and video streaming services like DirectTV and Netflix to extract franchise fees for using equipment in the public right-of-way to transmit programming.

Rep. Craig Snow, R-Warsaw, said he was approached by well-known lobbyist Matt Bell on the lawsuit and agreed to insert a provision aimed at ending it into the wide-ranging House Bill 1454, according to the Times of Northwest Indiana. The proposal became law.

In another, a Hoosier family sued the Indiana Department of Child Services over the removal of their transgender child. House Bill 1407 made it through its originating chamber, but Senate leader Rodric Bray killed it, citing the pending court case.

Bray justified that decision Thursday, telling reporters that case “seemed to be actively moving through” the justice system, and that he’d seen “some value in watching that resolve itself.”

Last year, Indiana Attorney General Todd Rokita’s office crafted an amendment and lawmakers made it law in the closing hours of the session. It determined that advisory ethics opinions are confidential. The move came in the middle of a lawsuit filed against Rokita to release an opinion he sought. A trial judge ordered it to be released but Rokita appealed, the Indiana Citizen reported. And then he turned to the legislature to intervene retroactively. That case is still pending.

Also, the year before Bray was elected Senate leader, lawmakers made headlines when they intervened in a court case over the state’s lethal injection suppliers. An anti-death penalty lawyer filed a public records request in 2014, and filed suit in 2016 when the Department of Correction (DOC) refused that request.

In a ruling that same year, a trial court ordered the DOC to release the information. But in 2017, lawmakers slipped a confidentiality provision into the budget bill. That didn’t end the case, however. A Marion County judge struck down the retroactive clause and a split Indiana Supreme Court affirmed the ruling.

“As applied to this case, the General Assembly’s passage of the Statute overstepped its authority and violated the Indiana Constitution’s Separation of Powers by disturbing a pending case and upsetting this Court’s judgment,” Judge Sheryl Lynch wrote.

## The case for ...

Supporters of the informal tendency against interference say they’d rather react to a ruling, but some opponents contend that litigation itself can be a strategy to keep the General Assembly away from a certain topic.

“It is better to allow the lawsuit to play out,” and tweak a statute afterward, Pierce said. But he asserted that parties afraid of a loss increasingly ask lawmakers to end disputes in their favor.

“The only people who get that privilege in the legislature are the well-connected: the big donors, lobbyists representing associations that play in the political process,” Pierce said. “Your average citizen doesn’t get to come in and say, ‘Hey, I’m getting sued. Could you make it go away by changing the laws?’”

Glick, who often cites pending litigation in “no” votes on legislation, said ongoing disputes are the justice system’s “province.”

“It would be like the courts ... making a declaratory judgment on a bill that’s pending in the legislature,” she told the Capital Chronicle. “We haven’t resolved it. We don’t know what it’s going to look like at the end. So, you know, they’re a little premature in getting involved in something that may or may not pass in that in that form. That’s what we’re doing in terms of their court case.”

Glick indicated it would take an “emergency” like the pandemic to get her to agree to interference.

Both Glick and Pierce are attorneys.

## ... And against

Others view those lawsuits with more suspicion.

David Long, a Republican who served as Senate leader from Garton’s departure in 2006 to the end of his own tenure in 2018, said he felt a blanket ban was “wrong.”

“All you need to do if you don’t want certain legislation is to file a lawsuit on the subject, and use the courts as a weapon ... to make sure that your issue doesn’t come before the Legislature,” said Long, who is an attorney.

Parties could use that to their benefit in ways that could harm state interests, he added. And he defended interference advancing those interests, like the lethal injection confidentiality provision.

# Police Notebook

## INCIDENTS

### County:

Friday, 12:10 p.m., Wells County Jail. Warrant served to Troy Jones at the jail.

Friday, 12:26 p.m., Wells County Jail. Warrant served to Johnathon Okeley at the jail.

Friday, 12:59 p.m., 20 block of Lakeside Drive, Bluffton. Caller reported a dog running loose in neighborhood.

Friday, 2:52 p.m., West 1050 South and South 200 West, Keystone. Report of a pole snapped in half.

Friday, 7:16 p.m., West 800 South and South 300 West, Poneto. Driver cited for speeding 75 in a 55 mph zone.

Friday, 9:23 p.m., 6700 South Meridian Road, Poneto. Report of subjects blowing items up. Large bonfire located, advised to not throw fireworks into the fire.

Friday, 11:05 p.m., Southeast Jeff Road and Ind. 3, Warren. Report of an instant regret from semi truck driver who got stuck in a field after he attempted to turn around in it due to closed road.

Saturday, 7:32 a.m., 3600 South Hoosier Highway, Bluffton. Report of a vehicle slide off.

Saturday, 7:35 a.m., 2500 Girls School Rd., Indianapolis. Transported Julie Ann Dettmer from the women’s prison to the Wells County Jail.

Sunday, 12:35 a.m., Ind.

1 and East 400 North, Bluffton. Driver cited for speeding 80 in a 55 mph zone.

Sunday, 1:21 a.m., Ind. 1 and East 350 North, Bluffton. Car vs. deer.

Sunday, 1:17 p.m., Tipsy Ditch. Report of a semi truck and trailer parked by dumpsters.

Sunday, 3:53 p.m., 9400 South 600 West, Warren. Caller reported someone hunting on their property.

Sunday, 8:33 p.m., North Meridian Road and West 100 North, Bluffton. Report of a semi trailer in ditch.

Sunday, 8:52 p.m., Wells County Jail. Warrant served to Preston Hamilton at the jail.

Monday, 5:01 a.m., East 250 North and Ind. 116, Bluffton. Caller reported that a deer hit their vehicle.

Ossian: Monday, 5:49 a.m., Ind. 1 and East 1050 North, Ossian. Report of bags of trash in roadway. Removed.

## ARRESTS

Chad Shawn Sweet, 50, Kalamazoo, Michigan; criminal trespassing, a Class A misdemeanor.

Jared Isaac Williams, 33, Bluffton; possession of methamphetamine, a Level 6 felony.

Noelle Ann Maure, 44, Fort Wayne; possession of marijuana, a Class B misdemeanor, and possession of paraphernalia, a Class C misdemeanor.

Jyler Andrew Morphew, 20, Bluffton; resisting law enforcement, a Level 6 felony.

ny, operating a vehicle while intoxicated and reckless driving, both Class C misdemeanors, and operating with a controlled substance in body, a Class C misdemeanor. Bond set at \$7,000.

Adam Richard Baker, 42, Bluffton; battery against a public safety official, a Level 5 felony, and resisting law enforcement, a Level 6 felony. Bond set at \$25,000.

Julie Ann Dettmer, 42, Fort Wayne; possession of a narcotic drug, a Level 6 felony, and possession of paraphernalia, a Class A misdemeanor. No bond set.

Jacob Clinton Taylor, 28, Bluffton; dealing a narcotic drug, a Level 3 felony, possession of a legend drug, a Level 6 felony, resisting law enforcement, a Class A misdemeanor, and possession of paraphernalia, a Class C misdemeanor. No bond set.

Wade Christopher Smelser, 44, Ossian; domestic battery in the presence of a child, a Level 6 felony, and domestic battery, a Class A misdemeanor. Bond set at \$50,000.

Matthew King, 43, Theodore, Alabama; battery, a Class B misdemeanor, and criminal mischief, a Class B misdemeanor. Bond set at \$2,000.

Preston Eric Hamilton, 30, Ossian; operating while intoxicated, a Class C misdemeanor, and operating while intoxicated — endangerment, a Class A misdemeanor. Bond set at \$1,500.

# Manufacturer-friendly PFAS bill abandoned by Senate committee

By CASEY SMITH  
Indiana Capital Chronicle

Indiana senators ditched a bill on Monday that would have changed the definition of toxic PFAS chemicals to exempt those that Hoosier manufacturers want to keep using.

House Bill 1399 would have carved out more than 5,000 “forever chemicals” from being defined as such by the state and its environmental rules board. The proposal sought to proactively exempt the chemicals in case state or federal regulators try to ban them in the future.

But Sen. Rick Niemeyer, R-Lowell, who chairs the Senate Environmental Affairs Committee, said Monday that he viewed the bill “as being a little proactive.”

Niemeyer said he had several “extensive conversations” with Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) Commissioner Brian Rockness and “came to the conclusion that we have nothing that’s out there that’s proposed right now to the rules board or anyplace else.” No IDEM representatives spoke publicly about the bill, however.

“I understand (manufacturers) want that certainty — they need that — especially with the things that this chemical is involved in, and it does a lot for our citizens of this state,” he said. “But

there’s nothing pending ... it looks like there’s nothing that’s going to happen in the future.”

Niemeyer noted that

PFAS regulation proposals must go through the state’s Environmental Rules Board, which he said would take “a minimum” of 18 months.

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## Congress needs to represent us. But it also needs to act

Back in January, you might have noticed a story from Oklahoma about James Lankford, that state's senior US senator. Lankford, a Republican, was spearheading his caucus's negotiations with Democrats over the country's border policies. This made GOP activists back home unhappy, and at a weekend meeting, members of the state party approved a resolution condemning Lankford and vowing to withhold their support until he ended negotiations.



Lee Hamilton

### Hoosier Opinions

I get that people can legitimately disagree over policy. But condemning someone for negotiating in Congress? That's what Congress is all about!

Let's begin with this simple point: Yes, we send people to Congress to represent us, but that's only half of the reason they're there. The other half is that it's their responsibility to make hard decisions on behalf of the American people and to help us meet the challenges we face. In our system, it's the people we elect—in this case, Congress and the President—who do that. Thankfully, no one else can swoop in and do it for them.

I say "thankfully" because one of the things that makes their work so difficult is the first part of their responsibilities: to represent their constituents. They're our voices in the halls of power—and if you think about the broad expanse of this country and the diversity of its people, its cities and small towns, its counties and its states, you can understand why the ability to seek common ground and to negotiate is so crucial. Without it, huge swaths of the American people lose their voice and their representation. You could argue, in fact, that negotiation and compromise lie at the very heart of the American experiment with democracy.

Yet they're just part of what needs to happen. The other part of what's required from Congress is to make the country work.

As we've seen over the past decade or more—and certainly so far this year—this is extremely tough when the US is as politically divided as it is now. And it's especially tough when one of the chambers has a strong faction of members who put ideological purity ahead of taking action on the country's problems and responsibilities. House Republicans' intractability on the border and on aid to Ukraine and Israel almost certainly plays well at home in their GOP-dominated districts, but it weakens the US's ability to meet the moment. It means that Congress is keeping the country from doing what needs to be done.

It's at moments like these that I'm reminded of one of my favorite statues in the Capitol. It's of another Oklahoman, Will Rogers, and it stands in the second-floor corridor between the rotunda and the House chamber. The story—passed from generation to generation of members of Congress—is that he requested it be placed there so he could keep an eye on them. Capitol officials say the location was actually chosen by the sculptor because it had the best light, but I'm with tradition here: Congress needs watching over by ordinary Americans. And if it's not doing its job—if it's keeping the US gridlocked and unable to act wisely and forcefully as needed—then its members need to hear from us.

I believe strongly in representative democracy. I think it's one of the great ideas developed by humankind and given form, in part, by the US. But the more I watch it in action, the more I'm impressed by how difficult it is to make it work. Giving the multitude of Americans their voice while at the same time crafting policies that can get a legislative majority and move the ball forward takes a huge amount of effort by people who are working hard to find common ground. This requires that members of Congress square their shoulders and step up to their responsibilities—whatever's trying to knock them off their path.

But it also requires that we, as ordinary Americans, give them room to make things work. Not condemn them for trying.

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

## Today in History

By The Associated Press

Today is Tuesday, Feb. 27, the 58th day of 2024. There are 308 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Feb. 27, 1973, members of the American Indian Movement occupied the hamlet of Wounded Knee in South Dakota, the site of the 1890 massacre of Sioux men, women and children. (The occupation lasted until May.)

On this date: In 1807, poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was born in Portland, Maine.

In 1922, the Supreme Court, in *Leser v. Garnett*, unanimously upheld the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, which guaranteed the right of women to vote.

In 1933, Germany's parliament building, the Reichstag, was gutted by fire; Chancellor Adolf Hitler, blaming the Communists, used the fire to justify suspending civil liberties.

In 1939, the Supreme Court, in *National Labor Relations Board v. Fansteel Metallurgical Corp.*, effectively outlawed sit-down strikes.

In 1942, the Battle of the Java Sea began during World War II; Imperial Japanese naval forces scored a decisive victory over the Allies.

In 1951, the 22nd Amendment to the Constitution, limiting a president to two terms of office, was ratified.



## Despite anticipation of a Trump nomination, Super Tuesday demands to be heard

Donald Trump's handlers handled him well Saturday night. By sending him out for his victory remarks minutes after South Carolina's polls closed, they prevented him from emitting the sort of long, bilious snarl that was his response to hearing, immediately after he won in New Hampshire, Nikki Haley's feisty vow to continue competing.

After basking in the adoration of South Carolina's officialdom, arrayed behind him like third-graders singled out as teacher's pets, Trump departed before he learned the fact that the high voter turnout had foretold: His win was less "gigantic" than he had promised. In November 2016, he carried South Carolina with 54.9 percent and in 2020 with 55.1. On Saturday, in a primary in which mostly Republicans participated, he received only 59.8 percent.

In the state that has the nation's most rapidly growing population, the two places where the electorate most resembles the nation's are Charleston and Columbia. There, Haley received 62 percent and 58 percent, respectively. It is likely that a significant number of Trumpkins value the prospective satisfaction of defeating Joe Biden more than the immediate fun of being tribal together. They might yet recognize that Trump vs. Biden would be a close call, whereas Haley vs. Biden would be a landslide for the former, with down-ballot consequences that might produce Republican control of Congress.

Brookings Institution scholars William A. Galston and Elaine Kamarck write at the Progressive Policy Institute that in the 17 elections from 1920 to 1984, 10 winners achieved a popular-vote victory margin of at least 10 points, and five achieved at least 20 points. In the nine elections from 1988 to 2020, no winner had even a 10-point victory margin. This year, Haley probably would achieve such a margin. And it is highly probable that Trump would lose the popular vote for a third time.

Furthermore, it is pertinent that in 2020 women outvoted men by 4 to 6 percent. According to the AP VoteCast survey, women favored Biden 55 percent to 44 percent; according to Edison data, 57 percent to 42 percent. Women provided Biden's narrow margin of victory.

Like cold pizza washed down by flat beer, Trump, who once upon a time was edgy, is the epitome of staleness. Pity him: It is difficult to be transgressive when there are no remaining norms to transgress. Being an acolyte in the Trump cult used to be thrillingly naughty, a rude gesture against the Republican "establishment." Now even the least alert Trumpkins

must notice that he is the party's establishment. Only one Republican member of Congress (South Carolina Rep. Ralph Norman) publicly supports Haley. For most of the rest, who call to mind Theodore Roosevelt's scumptious description of spines carved from bananas, his whims are commands (regarding Ukraine, the border, the budget, etc.).

They might not understand the significance of the low ceiling above the hard floor of Trump's support. Analyst Charlie Cook says Trump's approval numbers while president moved within a narrow 15-point band: His highest Gallup rating was 49 percent, and his lowest was 34. Of Trump's nine elected predecessors (excluding Gerald Ford), those with the smallest range between highs and lows were John Kennedy at 27 points; Dwight Eisenhower, Richard Nixon and Barack Obama with 31-point spreads; Ronald Reagan with a 32-point range; Bill Clinton with 37. The widest spreads were Jimmy Carter (47), George H.W. Bush (60) and George W. Bush (65). Trump was comparatively frozen, and, unlike all those predecessors, constantly below 50 percent.

What Cook calls "the full-blown tribalism" that has made Republicans and Democrats "virtually monolithic" in their support of presidential nominees and presidents of their parties is of recent vintage. And is not forever, because nothing is.

Republicans (and others eligible to participate) in the 46 states not yet heard from might experience a mind-opening excitement if on Super Tuesday (March 5) Haley continues to provoke Trump's annoying insistence that their opinions are nullities, given his inevitability. If so, his handlers will be hard put to contain his off-putting petulance that constantly threatens his tenuous hold on his composure.

The political air is thick with the theory that Trump's nomination is something to be anticipated with certainty and accepted philosophically. He is, however, a blimp filled with two lighter-than-air gases - the charisma of wealth, and an aura of invincibility among Republicans. He has lied ludicrously about the former; Haley can continue to dissipate the latter.

On Aug. 11, 1951, the Brooklyn Dodgers led the New York Giants by 13.5 games with more than two-thirds of the season gone. But the Dodgers experienced the World Series sitting on their sofas.

*georgewill@washpost.com.*



George Will

## Too many corporations, like universities, have lost their way

Universities are not alone among our institutions that have lost their way. How about America's corporations, which now seem to think social justice is their job, beside efficiently delivering goods and services to the American public?

In a recent panel discussion at the Bipartisan Policy Institute, Jamie Dimon, chairman and CEO of JPMorgan, the nation's largest bank, rang the alarm about the nation's debt.

He noted what is already widely known — that federal debt now equals 100 percent of GDP, on its way to 130 percent of GDP by 2035.

We're headed for a cliff at "60 miles an hour," said Dimon. But this is not new.

In 2018, for instance, an opinion piece in *The Washington Post* authored by four distinguished economists from the Hoover Institution — Michael Boskin, John Cochrane, John Cogan and John B. Taylor, along with former Secretary of State and Secretary of the Treasury George Shultz — announced "A debt crisis is on the horizon."

They pointed to the enormous burden and risk to our budget of the then debt burden, which stood at \$15 trillion, 76 percent of GDP. Now we're at \$34 trillion and 100 percent of GDP.

At the end of 2008, debt stood at 43 percent of GDP.

It is good that the chairman of the largest bank in the country is waking



Star Parker

up. But where has he been and is he really waking up?

Per OpenSecrets, which tracks and reports political spending, in the most recent political cycle, 2023/2024, 65 percent of JPMorgan's political contributions went to Democrats, and their contributions to "liberal groups" were greater than contributions to "conservative groups" by a margin of 10-to-1.

The Business Roundtable is a Washington, D.C.-based association of "more than 200 chief executive officers of America's leading companies ... that support one in four American jobs and almost a quarter of U.S. GDP."

In 2019, Jamie Dimon served as their chairman, and under his leadership, they made a significant change.

It has always been understood that the responsibility of any corporation is to serve the interests of its shareholders — the owners of the company.

Economist Milton Friedman wrote in his famous book "Capitalism and Freedom," first published in 1962, that corporations have one responsibility — to maximize profitability for its shareholders.

"Few trends could so thoroughly undermine the very foundations of our free society as the acceptance by corporate officials of a social responsibility other than to make as much money for their stockholders as possible," wrote Friedman.

But in 2019 the Business Roundtable did exactly this. They announced that they were abandoning primacy

of serving shareholders as the core corporate responsibility and that shareholders would now be viewed as just one group of "stakeholders," alongside "customers, employees, suppliers" and "communities."

What happened to private property? Corporate CEOs work for the owners, the shareholders.

Private property is what sets a free society apart from socialism.

Dimon noted, "The American dream is alive but fraying. ... These modernized principles reflect the business community's unwavering commitment to continue to push for an economy that serves all Americans."

If the American dream is "fraying," it is because of departure from the principles that define a free society, upon which our great country emerged. Economic freedom, private property, personal responsibility and creativity are the source of our success, not of our failures.

Blurring the lines between the private and the public, no one knows what their job is — government, corporations, universities.

Government has exploded by trying to do what individuals should be doing for themselves.

The result of all the efficiencies is slowdown of growth. The victims are the poor, not high-earning CEOs.

As our country sinks under a tsunami of spending and debt, hopefully the CEO of the nation's largest bank, and CEOs of all our corporations, will wake up that loss of freedom, not too much freedom, is what is hurting our nation.

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With encouragement from Wells County's Department of Child Services a little Food Pantry has been established in Ossian outside Welches All Vehicle Repair. The pantry was assembled by Welches employees and was painted by Jen Burns with the message "for I was hungry and you fed me." Announcing that the pantry is open for either the taking of food or the stocking of it were, left to right, Tom and Angie Vachon, representing the Family Protection Team, Seth St. Myers and Keegan Mautz, Welches employees, and Joe Welches. (Photo by Barbara Barbieri)

## Little food pantry opens in Ossian

**By BARBARA BARBIERI**  
Residents of the northern part of Wells county now have access to a little Food Pantry, located outside Welches All Auto Repair in Ossian, thanks to the encouragement of the Child Protection Team from the Department of Child Services of Wells County.

This is the fourth pantry they have assisted with setting up with the first one set up in 2022 behind their office at 221 West Market St. It is called Mandi's Pantry as it was established in memory of DSC Family Case Manager Mandi.

The other two are located beside the First Reformed Church and by the

Park Community Church by Washington Park, both in Bluffton.

Community members are encouraged to help stock the pantries if they are able. Non-perishable food items, preferably items that can provide a meal to families are welcome at all of the pantries.



### Honoring Tri Kappa Week

Members of the Beta Phi chapter of Tri Kappa have gifted four county organizations with checks totaling \$1,275, as they have been celebrating Tri Kappa Week (Feb. 19-23). Holding checks left to right are Jolin Whicker (Boys & Girls Club), Marielle Lael (Library's summer reading program), Pam Blessing (Creative Arts project) and Bonnie Ramsey (Bluffton Parks Dept.). Other groups presented checks have included: Wells on Wheels, Backpack program and teacher mini-grants. All the donated funds come from the group's selling of Street Fair shirts and their annual sale of pecans and other nuts. (Photo provided)

## Zanesville News

by Melba Edwards

Things are about the same as the Coffee Cafe at the Zanesville Community Church of God is open to all on weekdays from 7:30 to 10 a.m.

The area Men's Lenten Breakfast will be held at the Fairview Church of God at 8 a.m. on Saturday, March 2. All men and boys are welcome to attend these meetings. The church is just a few miles east of Indianapolis Road on Yoder Road 1 mile north of Zanesville.

Please be in prayer for those who are having health problems.

I am sad to report that John Holbrook has passed away. John had many friends and he was a go-to for those who needed help.

I first knew him when our son Doug needed the mobile home that sits next to our house moved here from Ossian. From then on Kenny and I were friends of John and Charlotte. When our daughter moved here to town with her family, he helped out as

granddaughter Anna was still battling cancer. The mobile home was moved in late 1973 so the Holbrook family has been here as long as the Edwards, as we moved back in 1973. Our son Jim and their son Mike have been good friends.

John spent lots of time at Rich's Restaurant heckling the waitresses and just talking (his favorite thing). He always asked me what was going on in town as he considered Zanesville his home.

Now he is at home where he has longed to be with his wife Charlotte. They are both buried at Hoverstock here.

March 9 and 10 is Indiana Maple Weekend. This is the weekend when maple syrup producers show and educate the general public on how maple syrup is made. The Sheltons, south of here on the west side of Marzane Road, are currently tapping their trees. I know of several others near here that also tap trees.

### Jefferson Homemakers hold February meeting

Mary Ann Ripperger opened the meeting thanking Margie Huss and Charlotte Steffen for hosting.

Marjana Huss gave the inspiration by Mother Teresa "A Simple Path."

Roll Call was answered by 11 ladies stating what is their favorite candy.

Mary Ann read of the history of Valentine's Day. It was first celebrated in the United States in the 1980's.

Sharon Jump gave a Health and Safety Lesson on Heart Disease. She gave the risk factors and causes of heart disease.

Mary Ann stated that the name for February Moon was Snow Moon.

In absence of Carol Baker, Mary Ann read the January minutes. One correction was made of the date of the meeting. All approved with the one change.

Treasurer's Report was given by Margie Huss. No questions were asked and approved. Club collection was on the word "Valen-

time".

Mary Ann then read many cute things that make you "Feel Old". We all could relate and had a good laugh.

Cards were sent to Lois Neuenschwander, Liz Bledsoe, Martha Harris, and Judy Kaehr.

Birthdays of the month were celebrated by Liz Bledsoe, Marjana Huss, and Sharon Jump.

Anniversaries were celebrated by Sharon Friend and Carol Lochtefeld.

It was mentioned that St. Al's would be having their fish fry on March 8. It is the time to watch for many fish fries.

Mary Ann passed around the Prersidential Pointer's from the new IEHA website for the girls to look at. She explained about the new website and how much better it is now. It is IEHAFamily.org.

Margie and Charlotte presented a plate of officers starting in July. President-Mary Ann Ripperger, vice-

president Charlotte Steffen, secretary Sharon Jump, and treasurer Marjana Huss. All were in favor of the plate of officers.

Mary Ann reminded everyone this was the last day to sign up for the District Meeting held in Adams County. Three from our club will be attending.

It was decided that our responsibility for the Homemaker's Festival is door prizes. It was decided that we would purchase flowers.

Forms for the County Extension Office was filled out to be turned in by March.

Mary Ann stated she would not be at the next meeting as she and her daughter were going to Ireland and Sharon Jump would be in charge of that meeting.

Mary Ann gave a lesson on Stress Management.

Next meeting will be March 13 at the Ossian Library at 1 p.m. Anyone is welcome to attend.

### Live radio show at Pulse Opera House

"The Invisible Man: A Live Radio Show" will be on stage at the Pulse Opera House in Warren on March 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10.

This script was developed and performed by actors from various Star Trek casts. The Pulse cast will include: Priscilla Alter (Rebecca), Shaun Berkey (Bartender), Jon Cole (Griffin), Ben Kiser (Teddy), Michael Blaugher (Peter), J.J. Leak (Mrs. Hall), David Parker (Marvel), Steve Rodenberger (Kemp), David Schultz (Narrator/Inspector), April Smith (Rebecca's mother) and Ken Zuk (Mayor).

Admission is \$15 adults and \$5 for those 12 and younger. Curtain times are at 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday with a 2 p.m. matinee on Saturdays and 4 p.m. on Sundays.

Online reservations to [www.pulseoperahouse.org](http://www.pulseoperahouse.org) or call 260-375-017.

### Gaven Drew's play to debut March 2 in FW

"Equals—A New Play" will have a debut on Saturday, March 2 at The Local Archive in Fort Wayne.

Authors of the production are Dakota Norman and Gavin Thomas Drew, who was active once as both a performer and a director for Wells Community Theater (now Creative Arts Theatre). The one-man play will feature Drew in the role written about his life as an actor who becomes deaf and finds a new way to pursue his theater passion.

Drew, who can now hear with a cochlear implant, currently is artistic director for the Summit City Music. The one night presentation will serve as a fund raiser for Summit City Music Theatre in the small venue to allow the audience to become a part of the story.

Admission is \$25 adults and \$20 for students and seniors. The Local Archive is located at 118 W. Columbia St., Suite 201 (door near Utopian Coffee + Kitchen).

The production is being recorded in hopes of getting community theaters to bring it to their audiences.

### Coffee concerts at Crescendo

Fort Wayne's Crescendo Coffee Cafe (by the Clyde) will host monthly Wednesday morning concerts by small groups of musicians from the Wayne Philharmonic over the next few months.

Scheduled dates include: March 6, April 2 and May 15. All concerts begin at 10 a.m. with coffee and breakfast items available for purchase. The concerts are free.

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# Cody Bellinger returns to Cubs on an \$80 million, 3-year deal

By JAY COHEN  
AP Baseball Writer

Cody Bellinger is going back to the Chicago Cubs, agreeing to an \$80 million, three-year contract, a person familiar with the deal told The Associated Press.



Cody Bellinger

The slugger can opt out of the deal after each of the first two seasons, according to the person who spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity Sunday because the agreement was pending a physical. Bellinger is set to make \$30 million this year, and then \$30 million in 2025 if he stays with Chicago and \$20 million in 2026 if he doesn't opt out of the contract.

Bellinger was among five significant free agents represented by Scott Boras who went into spring training without agreements. Pitchers Blake Snell and Jordan Montgomery, third baseman Matt Chapman and designated hitter J.D. Martinez remain on the market.

It was a much different experience than last offseason, when Bellinger finalized a \$17.5 million, one-year deal with the Cubs in December 2022. He then declined his end of a \$25 million mutual option for 2024 and rejected a \$20,325,000 qualifying offer from Chicago after a resurgent performance.

Healthy again after years of injuries, Bellinger regained the form that made him one of baseball's biggest stars at the beginning of his career with the Los Angeles Dodgers. He hit a career-best .307 with 26 homers, 97 RBIs and 20 steals in 130 games in 2023.

The 28-year-old Bellinger helped power the Cubs into playoff contention before the team faded in September. He had 48 RBIs in one 45-game stretch from Aug. 1 to Sept. 19.

"He's part of this club. He's one of us. There was a little void in here, for sure, before he came back," pitcher Kyle Hendricks told reporters at the team's spring training facility in Arizona. "Just seeing him

in here, man, getting a hug, smiling. I know he'll be back to work soon. But yeah, just seeing his body, seeing his face in here, was just amazing."

Bellinger also gave Chicago a lift with his defensive versatility. He won a Gold Glove in 2019 for his work in center, and he also plays a solid first base. He likely will be in center on opening day this year, giving top prospect Pete Crow-Armstrong more time to develop.

"Just the impact that (Bellinger) had on our group last year from a personality standpoint, from a versatility standpoint, and then obviously his ability to produce at a high level really made our team and put ourselves in position to have some success last year," shortstop Dansby Swanson said in Arizona. "And that's something that we've been looking forward to being able to get back."

Bellinger's rejuvenation was greeted with some skepticism from the analytics crowd. He ranked in the 22nd percentile among big leaguers in average exit velocity and in the 10th percentile in hard-hit rate in 2023 — he was in the 83rd and 86th percentiles, respectively, when he won NL MVP in 2019.

Bellinger was selected by Los Angeles in the fourth round of the 2013 amateur draft. His father, Clay, was a utilityman who appeared in 183 big league games, mostly with the New York Yankees.

Cody Bellinger broke into the majors in 2017, hitting 39 homers for the Dodgers and winning the NL Rookie of the Year award. He was the NL MVP in 2019, batting .305 with a career-best 47 homers and 115 RBIs in 156 games.

The Dodgers won the 2020 World Series, and Bellinger played a key role in their October success. He hit four homers and drove in 13 runs in 18 postseason games as Los Angeles won it all for the first time since 1988.

After that stellar season in 2019, injuries became an issue. Bellinger had surgery on his right shoulder in November 2020. He hit a career-low .165 in 95 games in 2021.

Bellinger was let go by the Dodgers in November 2022 after he hit .210 with 19 homers, 150 strikeouts and a .654 OPS in 144 games in his final season with the team.



# Barnes records 4th triple-double, of the season, Raptors beat Pacers

By MICHAEL MAROT  
AP Sports Writer

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Toronto Raptors coach Darko Rajakovic promised his players a tasty reward when they finally strung together a three-game winning streak.

Now it's time to pay up.

With All-Star Scottie Barnes logging his fourth triple-double of the season and RJ Barrett scoring 24 points in Thursday night's 130-122 victory, players responded to their longest winning streak of the season by chanting "piz-za."

"I told them that when we won three straight I'd take them to dinner," Rajakovic explained outside a joyous locker room. "But I told them this team's so humble, we could have pizza."

Whatever the meal preference, this young team again looked hungry — extending its post-All-Star break record to 3-0.

And it came with a pretty typical menu, too.

Barnes had 21 points, 12 rebounds and 12 assists on a night seven Raptors scored in double figures. Rookie Grady Dick had 18 points and made two key 3s late to break open the game while matching his season-high with four 3s.

"This is just the beginning," Rajakovic said, referring to Dick. "He's going to have good games, he's going to have bad games, but he needs to continue winning in those situations, continue to learn and get better."

Benedict Mathurin kept the Pacers within reach by matching his career high with 34 points and nine rebounds. Two-time All-Star Pascal Siakam tormented his former team with 27 points, nine rebounds and six assists. Indiana acquired Siakam in a January trade.

But with the league's best shooting team and All-Star guard Tyrese Haliburton having an off-night, the Pacers struggled. Haliburton had nine points and seven assists while

(Continued on Page 7)



# Mid-American Conference invites UMass to rejoin league in 2025-26

By RALPH D. RUSSO  
AP College Sports Writer

The Mid-American Conference is inviting UMass to join as a full member, starting in 2025, a person familiar with the decision told The Associated Press on Monday.

The person spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because neither the school nor the MAC had confirmed the move. The person said the MAC's university presidents voted to approve the invitation on Monday, and the school is expected to accept after weeks of talks between the parties.

The Minutemen are currently an independent in football and compete in the Atlantic 10 in most other sports, excluding men's hockey, which is part of Hockey East.

The Athletic first reported the MAC was inviting UMass.

UMass is the only A-10 school that plays football at the highest tier of Division I, known as the Bowl Subdivision.

The Minutemen had a football-only membership in the MAC when the school first moved up from the Championship Subdivision to FBS from 2012-15. They won only eight games during that time and were essentially booted from the conference.

They have operated as a football independent since, but have yet to win more than four games in a season. The addition of UMass gives the MAC 13 full members, mostly located in Ohio and Michigan.

With Army set to join the American Athletic Conference in 2024, UMass' move would decrease the number of FBS independents to two: Notre Dame and UConn.

# High School Calendar

**TUESDAY, FEB. 27**  
BOYS BASKETBALL: (Sectional) Southern Wells vs. Southwood at Southern Wells High School, 6 p.m.  
**WEDNESDAY, FEB. 28**  
BOYS BASKETBALL: (Sectional) Bluffton vs. Bishop Luers at Bluffton High School, 7:30 p.m.; Norwell vs. Peru at Mississinewa High School, 7:30 p.m.  
**THURSDAY, FEB. 29**  
No events scheduled.  
**FRIDAY, MARCH 1**

TRACK & FIELD (CO-ED): Bluffton at Hoosier State Relays (IWU Troyer Fieldhouse), 5:30 p.m.  
**SATURDAY, MARCH 2**  
No events scheduled.  
**MONDAY, MARCH 4**  
No events scheduled.  
**TUESDAY, MARCH 5**  
No events scheduled.  
**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6**  
No events scheduled.  
**THURSDAY, MARCH 7**  
No events scheduled.

# Duke's John Scheyer wants the ACC to implement measures to prevent court-storming

By AARON BEARD  
AP Basketball Writer

Duke coach Jon Scheyer wants the Atlantic Coast Conference to implement measures to prevent court-storming after star big man Kyle Filipowski was hobbled following a collision with a fan during a weekend loss at Wake Forest.

Scheyer said Monday that Filipowski was "a little bit sore" following the incident, which left him sporting a bag of ice on his knee after banging his right leg into the leg of a fan running by him toward midcourt.

"Absolutely we shouldn't wait until next year, something should be done right now," Scheyer said during the weekly league coaches teleconference, adding: "At the end of the day, players and coaches and officials are the only people that belong on a court."

Scheyer — who initially misspoke Saturday when he said Filipowski hurt his ankle — said Monday that the preseason Associated Press All-American didn't require any type of diagnostic internal imaging for a structural injury. Filipowski didn't have a significant limp when he spoke to a few reporters after the game, though his status wasn't immediately clear for the 10th-ranked Blue Devils' game Wednesday against an eight-win Louisville team.

Scheyer followed his postgame call to ban court-storming with a plea for the ACC to put such a policy in place now, even with Duke down to four regular-season games and only one on the road (at North Carolina State on March 4).

The ACC requires member schools to have detailed safety procedures in place for managing court-stormings. But it historically has not levied fines, something four of the six major bas-

ketball conferences do for a first offense — such as the Southeastern Conference issuing a \$100,000 penalty on LSU after its fans stormed the court following last week's win over a ranked Kentucky team.

The ACC has no plans to issue a fine to Wake Forest, a person with knowledge of the situation told The Associated Press on Monday. The person spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because the league hasn't commented publicly beyond commissioner Jim Phillips' statement Saturday night.

Still, the image of Filipowski having to be helped off the court amid the chaos only added to the discussion on the dangers of court-storming in a season with multiple run-ins, the highest-profile one being when Iowa star Caitlin Clark was accidentally knocked down by a fan running onto the court after a January upset loss.

Alabama athletics director Greg Byrne went as far as saying he thinks teams should have to forfeit in scenarios like the Duke-Wake Forest game.

"You have two kids run out there, no, but when you have a sustained rush like what just happened the other day at Wake, you lose the game," Byrne told reporters in Birmingham on Monday. "That will get people to stop."

Purdue coach Matt Painter raised concerns about court-storming security measures after a loss at Nebraska, less than two weeks before Clark's collision. And on Sunday, after his Boilermakers had beaten Michigan, Painter reiterated those concerns while noting that court-storming fans can simply overwhelm security measures set out in pregame plans.

"But also watch the weather, because when they say it's snowing, you've got to be ready for the snow," Painter told the

AP. "You know Duke's coming to town or you know Kansas is coming to town or the (then-) No. 1-ranked team in the country, UConn, is coming to town. If they get upset, it's probably going to happen."

"Well, they probably should make a rule so it doesn't happen, period. Just period."

Painter went on to say: "The NCAA has got to step in here and show some leadership on this. Because what's happened to Caitlin Clark, what happened to Filipowski, should not happen."

It's a position echoed by Kansas coach Bill Self, who said the court-storming at Wake Forest "was one of the quickest ones I've ever seen."

"That happened so fast," Self told a small group of reporters Monday. "And if you don't have the proper security in a situation like that, it would be hard to imagine that fans do not come into contact with visiting players, which could lead obviously to injuries or maybe legal things down the road. I would hope they could totally do away with them."

To Self's point, Scheyer pointed to the risk of confrontation, noting that Jared McCain had a fan run onto the court and stop right in front of the freshman as McCain tried to exit the court Saturday.

"It would be wrong of me not to speak up for all the student-athletes that can be put in this position," Scheyer said. "And something needs to change now before something serious happens. Go back and look at Jared McCain, and the position he was in when that game ended. Where the kid could've punched him in the face, he could've punched the kid for his own safety."

"When you get a student or a fan that close to you, face to face, 2 seconds after the game ends — we'll regret that as college athletics, college basketball, if we don't do something to prevent that from happening in the future."

# José DeLeón, former St. Louis Cardinals pitcher, dies at 63

SANTO DOMINGO — Dominican Republic (AP) — José DeLeón, a major league pitcher for 13 seasons who led the National League in strikeouts for the St. Louis Cardinals in 1989, has died. He was 63.

Los Leones del Escogido, DeLeón's team in the Dominican Winter League, said he died Sunday evening at Cedimat hospital in Santo Domingo. The team said DeLeón had health issues without giving further information.

DeLeón was 86-119 with a 3.76 ERA in 264 starts and 151 relief appearances for Pittsburgh (1983-86), the Chicago White Sox (1986-87, 1993-95), St. Louis (1988-92), Philadelphia (1992-93) and Montreal (1995). The right-hander struck out 1,594 in 1,897 1/3 innings.

He topped the NL with 201 strikeouts in 1989 and tied for the NL lead

with 19 losses in 1985 and 1990.

Selected by the Pirates in the third round of the 1979 amateur draft, DeLeón made his major league debut on July 23, 1983, striking out nine over eight innings in a 5-2 win over visiting San Francisco.

DeLeón finished 7-3 with a 2.83 ERA in 15 starts and was seventh in voting for NL Rookie of the Year, an award won by the New York Mets' Darryl Strawberry.

DeLeón was traded to the Chicago White Sox in July 1986 for Bobby Bonilla, who earned four consecutive All-Star Game selections with Pittsburgh from 1988-1991.

DeLeón made his only postseason appearances in 1993, allowing one run over 4 2/3 innings in a pair of AL Championship Series relief appearances against Toronto.

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# News-Banner Scoreboard

## BASKETBALL

### High School

#### Monday Boys' Scores

No Games.

### College

#### AP Poll

- Houston (24-3)
- Purdue (25-3)
- UConn (25-3)
- Tennessee (21-6)
- Marquette (21-6)
- Arizona (21-6)
- Kansas (21-6)
- Iowa St. (21-6)
- North Carolina (21-6)
- Duke (21-6)
- Auburn (21-6), 12. Creighton (20-8), 13. Illinois (20-7), 14/Alabama (19-8), 15. Baylor (19-8), 16. Kentucky (19-8), 17. Saint Mary's (23-6), 18. South Carolina (22-5), 19. Washington St. (21-7), 20. San Diego State (21-7), 21. Dayton (21-5), 22. Utah St. (22-5), 23. Gonzaga (22-6), 24. Florida (19-8), 25. South Florida (21-5).

**Receiving Votes:** BYU 93, Texas Tech 65, TCU 46, Clemson 45, Wake Forest 44, Wisconsin 42, Nevada 25, Colorado St. 20, New Mexico 10, FAU 8, Nebraska 7, Oklahoma 7, Mississippi St. 5, Appalachian St. 3, Northwestern 1, Boise St. 1, Indiana St. 1, McNeese St. 1, Loyola Chicago 1.

#### Big Ten Standings

- Purdue (14-3)
- Illinois (11-5)
- Northwestern (10-6)
- Wisconsin (10-6)
- Nebraska (10-7)
- Michigan St. (9-8)
- Minnesota (8-8)
- Iowa (8-9)
- Penn St. (8-9)
- Maryland (7-10)
- Indiana (6-10)
- Rutgers (6-10)
- Ohio St. (6-11)
- Michigan (3-11)

#### Men's Basketball Scores

##### Monday, Feb. 26

- EAST**  
Drexel 70, Delaware 60  
Norfolk St. 85, Morgan St. 82
- SOUTH**  
Nicholls 92, Incarnate Word 82  
North Carolina 75, Miami 71
- MIDWEST**  
Kansas St. 94, West Virginia 90, OT

#### Women's Basketball Scores

- South Carolina (21-0)
  - Ohio St. (24-3)
  - Texas (26-3)
  - Stanford (24-4)
  - Virginia Tech (23-4)
  - Iowa (24-4)
  - USC (21-5)
  - UCLA (21-5)
  - LSU (24-4)
  - UConn (24-5)
  - Oregon St. (22-5), 12. North Carolina St. (23-5), 13. Colorado (20-6), 14. Indiana (22-4), 15. Kansas St. (23-5), 16. Gonzaga (28-2), 17. Notre Dame (21-6), 18. Utah (20-8), 19. Syracuse (23-5), 20. Oklahoma (20-7), 21. Baylor (21-6), 22. Louisville (22-7), 23. Creighton (22-4), T24. UNLV (24-2), T24. West Virginia (22-5)
- Receiving Votes:** Fairfield 49, Duke 33, Princeton 7, North Carolina 5, Florida St. 3, Columbia 2, Mississippi 1.

#### Big Ten Standings

- Ohio St. (15-1)
- Iowa (13-3)
- Indiana (13-3)
- Nebraska (11-6)
- Michigan St. (10-6)
- Michigan (8-8)
- Maryland (8-8)
- Penn St. (7-9)
- Illinois (7-9)
- Wisconsin (6-10)
- Minnesota (5-11)
- Purdue (5-11)
- Northwestern (3-13)
- Rutgers (2-15)

#### Women's Basketball Scores

##### Monday, Feb. 26

- SOUTH**  
Alabama A&M 65, Florida A&M 43  
Bethune-Cookman 84, Alabama St. 43
- Delaware St. 75, NC Central 64, OT  
Howard 76, Coppin St. 73  
Md.-Eastern Shore 67, SC State 51  
Norfolk St. 79, Morgan St. 49  
Prairie View 69, MVSU 63
- MIDWEST**  
Mississippi 66, Missouri 45
- SOUTHWEST**  
Ark.-Pine Bluff 81, Texas Southern 62

#### NBA

##### EASTERN CONFERENCE

###### Atlantic Division

| W            | L  | Pct | GB   |     |
|--------------|----|-----|------|-----|
| Boston       | 45 | 12  | .789 | —   |
| New York     | 35 | 23  | .603 | 10½ |
| Philadelphia | 33 | 24  | .579 | 12  |
| Toronto      | 22 | 36  | .379 | 23½ |
| Brooklyn     | 21 | 35  | .375 | 23½ |

| W          | L  | Pct | GB   |     |
|------------|----|-----|------|-----|
| Miami      | 31 | 25  | .554 | —   |
| Orlando    | 32 | 26  | .552 | —   |
| Atlanta    | 25 | 32  | .439 | 6½  |
| Charlotte  | 15 | 42  | .263 | 16½ |
| Washington | 9  | 48  | .158 | 22½ |

| W         | L  | Pct | GB   |     |
|-----------|----|-----|------|-----|
| Cleveland | 37 | 19  | .661 | —   |
| Milwaukee | 37 | 21  | .638 | 1   |
| Indiana   | 33 | 26  | .559 | 5½  |
| Chicago   | 27 | 30  | .474 | 10½ |
| Detroit   | 8  | 49  | .140 | 29½ |

| W           | L  | Pct | GB   |     |
|-------------|----|-----|------|-----|
| New Orleans | 34 | 24  | .586 | —   |
| Dallas      | 33 | 24  | .579 | ½   |
| Houston     | 25 | 32  | .439 | 8½  |
| Memphis     | 20 | 37  | .351 | 13½ |
| San Antonio | 11 | 47  | .190 | 23  |

| W             | L  | Pct | GB   |     |
|---------------|----|-----|------|-----|
| Minnesota     | 40 | 17  | .702 | —   |
| Oklahoma City | 40 | 17  | .702 | —   |
| Denver        | 39 | 19  | .672 | 1½  |
| Utah          | 27 | 31  | .466 | 13½ |
| Portland      | 15 | 41  | .268 | 24½ |

| W             | L  | Pct | GB   |    |
|---------------|----|-----|------|----|
| L.A. Clippers | 37 | 19  | .661 | —  |
| Sacramento    | 33 | 23  | .589 | 4  |
| Phoenix       | 34 | 24  | .586 | 4  |
| L.A. Lakers   | 31 | 25  | .552 | 7½ |
| Golden State  | 29 | 27  | .518 | 8  |

| W             | L   | Pct           | GB  |
|---------------|-----|---------------|-----|
| Milwaukee     | 119 | Philadelphia  | 98  |
| Phoenix       | 123 | L.A. Lakers   | 113 |
| Indiana       | 133 | Dallas        | 111 |
| Cleveland     | 114 | Washington    | 105 |
| Chicago       | 114 | New Orleans   | 106 |
| Atlanta       | 109 | Orlando       | 92  |
| Oklahoma City | 123 | Houston       | 110 |
| Denver        | 119 | Golden State  | 103 |
| Utah          | 128 | San Antonio   | 109 |
| Charlotte     | 93  | Portland      | 80  |
| Sacramento    | 123 | L.A. Clippers | 107 |

| W        | L             | Pct     | GB  |
|----------|---------------|---------|-----|
| Toronto  | 130           | Indiana | 122 |
| New York | 113           | Detroit | 111 |
| Brooklyn | at Memphis    | late    |     |
| Miami    | at Sacramento | late    |     |

| W            | L                | Pct       | GB |
|--------------|------------------|-----------|----|
| Dallas       | at Cleveland     | 7 p.m.    |    |
| Golden State | at Washington    | 7 p.m.    |    |
| New Orleans  | at New York      | 7:30 p.m. |    |
| Philadelphia | at Boston        | 7:30 p.m. |    |
| Utah         | at Atlanta       | 7:30 p.m. |    |
| Charlotte    | at Milwaukee     | 8 p.m.    |    |
| Detroit      | at Chicago       | 8 p.m.    |    |
| San Antonio  | at Minnesota     | 8 p.m.    |    |
| Houston      | at Oklahoma City | 10 p.m.   |    |
| Miami        | at Portland      | 10 p.m.   |    |

| W           | L                | Pct       | GB |
|-------------|------------------|-----------|----|
| Dallas      | at Toronto       | 7:30 p.m. |    |
| New Orleans | at Indiana       | 7:30 p.m. |    |
| Cleveland   | at Chicago       | 8 p.m.    |    |
| Memphis     | at Minnesota     | 8 p.m.    |    |
| Sacramento  | at Denver        | 9 p.m.    |    |
| L.A. Lakers | at L.A. Clippers | 10 p.m.   |    |

| W            | L            | Pct       | GB |
|--------------|--------------|-----------|----|
| Milwaukee    | at Charlotte | 7 p.m.    |    |
| Utah         | at Orlando   | 7 p.m.    |    |
| Atlanta      | at Brooklyn  | 7:30 p.m. |    |
| Golden State | at New York  | 7:30 p.m. |    |

| W             | L              | Pct        | GB |
|---------------|----------------|------------|----|
| Oklahoma City | at San Antonio | 8:30 p.m.  |    |
| Houston       | at Phoenix     | 9 p.m.     |    |
| Miami         | at Denver      | 10 p.m.    |    |
| Washington    | at L.A. Lakers | 10:30 p.m. |    |

| W             | L | Pct    | GB |
|---------------|---|--------|----|
| Los Angeles   | 4 | 01.000 |    |
| Cincinnati    | 3 | 1.750  |    |
| New York      | 2 | 1.667  |    |
| Philadelphia  | 2 | 1.667  |    |
| St. Louis     | 2 | 1.667  |    |
| Miami         | 1 | 1.500  |    |
| Chicago       | 2 | 2.500  |    |
| Atlanta       | 1 | 2.333  |    |
| Washington    | 1 | 2.333  |    |
| Colorado      | 3 | 2.600  |    |
| Milwaukee     | 1 | 2.333  |    |
| Arizona       | 2 | 2.500  |    |
| Pittsburgh    | 0 | 3.000  |    |
| San Francisco | 0 | 2.000  |    |
| San Diego     | 1 | 4.200  |    |

## HOCKEY

### NHL

| W         | L  | Pct | GB |       |       |     |
|-----------|----|-----|----|-------|-------|-----|
| Boston    | 59 | 34  | 13 | 81199 | 161   |     |
| Florida   | 58 | 38  | 16 | 4     | 80191 | 140 |
| Toronto   | 57 | 33  | 16 | 8     | 74214 | 179 |
| Detroit   | 58 | 32  | 20 | 6     | 70205 | 183 |
| Tampa Bay | 60 | 32  | 23 | 5     | 69206 | 201 |
| Buffalo   | 58 | 27  | 27 | 4     | 58169 | 175 |
| Ottawa    | 56 | 25  | 28 | 3     | 53189 | 199 |
| Montreal  | 58 | 22  | 28 | 8     | 52163 | 209 |

| W              | L  | Pct | GB |       |       |     |
|----------------|----|-----|----|-------|-------|-----|
| N.Y. Rangers   | 59 | 39  | 17 | 81197 | 163   |     |
| Carolina       | 58 | 34  | 18 | 6     | 74191 | 163 |
| Philadelphia   | 59 | 30  | 22 | 7     | 67177 | 175 |
| Washington     | 57 | 27  | 21 | 9     | 63150 | 178 |
| New Jersey     | 58 | 29  | 25 | 4     | 62191 | 203 |
| N.Y. Islanders | 58 | 24  | 20 | 14    | 62170 | 197 |
| Pittsburgh     | 55 | 26  | 21 | 8     | 60166 | 151 |
| Columbus       | 57 | 19  | 28 | 10    | 48170 | 210 |

| W         | L  | Pct | GB |   |       |     |
|-----------|----|-----|----|---|-------|-----|
| Dallas    | 60 | 35  | 16 | 9 | 79217 | 182 |
| Winnipeg  | 56 | 36  | 15 | 5 | 77172 | 133 |
| Colorado  | 59 | 35  | 19 | 5 | 75216 | 188 |
| Nashville | 59 | 32  | 25 | 2 | 66184 | 187 |
| St. Louis | 57 | 30  | 25 | 2 | 62167 | 178 |
| Minnesota | 58 | 28  | 24 | 6 | 62186 | 193 |
| Arizona   | 57 | 23  | 29 | 5 | 51166 | 188 |

| W       | L  | Pct | GB |   |       |     |
|---------|----|-----|----|---|-------|-----|
| Chicago | 59 | 15  | 39 | 5 | 35123 | 208 |

| W           | L  | Pct | GB |    |       |     |
|-------------|----|-----|----|----|-------|-----|
| Vancouver   | 60 | 38  | 16 | 6  | 82218 | 166 |
| Vegas       | 58 | 32  | 19 | 7  | 71186 | 165 |
| Edmonton    | 55 | 33  | 20 | 2  | 68197 | 166 |
| Los Angeles | 56 | 29  | 17 | 10 | 68174 | 152 |
| Calgary     | 58 | 28  | 25 | 5  | 61181 | 182 |
| Seattle     | 57 | 24  | 22 | 11 | 59159 | 166 |
| Anaheim     | 58 | 20  | 35 | 3  | 43151 | 207 |
| San Jose    | 56 | 15  | 36 | 5  | 35118 | 215 |

NOTE: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.

| W          | L | Pct          | GB    |
|------------|---|--------------|-------|
| Tampa Bay  | 4 | New Jersey   | 1     |
| Pittsburgh | 7 | Philadelphia | 6     |
| Winnipeg   | 4 | Arizona      | 3, OT |
| Detroit    | 3 | Chicago      | 2, OT |
| Buffalo    | 3 | Carolina     | 2, SO |
| Columbus   | 4 | N.Y. Rangers | 2     |
| Nashville  | 4 | Anaheim      | 2     |

| W              | L           | Pct    | GB    |
|----------------|-------------|--------|-------|
| Washington     | 6           | Ottawa | 3     |
| N.Y. Islanders | 3           | Dallas | 2, OT |
| Los Angeles    | at Edmonton | late   |       |
| Boston         | at Seattle  | late   |       |

| W           | L               | Pct        | GB |
|-------------|-----------------|------------|----|
| Arizona     | at Montreal     | 7 p.m.     |    |
| Buffalo     | at Florida      | 7 p.m.     |    |
| Tampa Bay   | at Philadelphia | 7 p.m.     |    |
| Vegas       | at Toronto      | 7 p.m.     |    |
| Washington  | at Detroit      | 7 p.m.     |    |
| Carolina    | at Minnesota    | 8 p.m.     |    |
| Ottawa      | at Nashville    | 8 p.m.     |    |
| St. Louis   | at Winnipeg     | 8 p.m.     |    |
| Los Angeles | at Calgary      | 9 p.m.     |    |
| Dallas      | at Colorado     | 9:30 p.m.  |    |
| Pittsburgh  | at Vancouver    | 10 p.m.    |    |
| New Jersey  | at San Jose     | 10:30 p.m. |    |

| W         | L               | Pct       | GB |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------|----|
| Columbus  | at N.Y. Rangers | 7 p.m.    |    |
| St. Louis | at Edmonton     | 8:30 p.m. |    |

| W              | L            | Pct        | GB |
|----------------|--------------|------------|----|
| Arizona        | at Toronto   | 7 p.m.     |    |
| Buffalo        | at Tampa Bay | 7 p.m.     |    |
| Carolina       | at Columbus  | 7 p.m.     |    |
| Montreal       | at Florida   | 7 p.m.     |    |
| N.Y. Islanders | at Detroit   | 7 p.m.     |    |
| Vegas          | at Boston    | 7 p.m.     |    |
| Minnesota      | at Nashville | 8 p.m.     |    |
| Winnipeg       | at Dallas    | 8 p.m.     |    |
| Colorado       | at Chicago   | 9 p.m.     |    |
| Los Angeles    | at Vancouver | 10 p.m.    |    |
| Pittsburgh     | at Seattle   | 10 p.m.    |    |
| Anaheim        | at San Jose  | 10:30 p.m. |    |

| W           | L | Pct   | GB |
|-------------|---|-------|----|
| Baltimore   | 3 | 1.750 |    |
| Boston      | 3 | 1.750 |    |
| Kansas City | 3 | 1.750 |    |
| New York    | 3 | 1.750 |    |
| Texas       | 2 | 1.667 |    |
| Cleveland   | 2 | 1.667 |    |
| Detroit     | 1 | 1.500 |    |
| Tampa Bay   | 1 | 1.500 |    |
| Los Angeles | 1 | 2.333 |    |
| Oakland     | 1 | 2.333 |    |
| Seattle     | 1 | 2.333 |    |
| Minnesota   | 1 | 2.333 |    |
| Toronto     | 1 | 2.333 |    |
| Houston     | 1 | 3.250 |    |
| Chicago     | 1 | 3.250 |    |

| W             | L | Pct    | GB |
|---------------|---|--------|----|
| Los Angeles   | 4 | 01.000 |    |
| Cincinnati    | 3 | 1.750  |    |
| New York      | 2 | 1.667  |    |
| Philadelphia  | 2 | 1.667  |    |
| St. Louis     | 2 | 1.667  |    |
| Miami         | 1 | 1.500  |    |
| Chicago       | 2 | 2.500  |    |
| Atlanta       | 1 | 2.333  |    |
| Washington    | 1 | 2.333  |    |
| Colorado      | 3 | 2.600  |    |
| Milwaukee     | 1 | 2.333  |    |
| Arizona       | 2 | 2.500  |    |
| Pittsburgh    | 0 | 3.000  |    |
| San Francisco | 0 | 2.000  |    |
| San Diego     | 1 | 4.200  |    |

| W             | L      | Pct               | GB     |
|---------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| Philadelphia  | 4      | N.Y. Yankees      | (ss) 0 |
| St. Louis     | 3      | Houston           | (ss) 0 |
| Baltimore     | 2      | Pittsburgh        | 0      |
| Boston        | (ss) 8 | Minnesota         | 6      |
| N.Y. Yankees  | (ss) 5 | Atlanta           | 4      |
| N.Y. Mets     | 3      | Toronto           | 6      |
| Detroit       | 9      | Tampa Bay         | 9      |
| N.Y. Mets     | 3      | Houston           | (ss) 1 |
| Washington    | 6      | Miami             | 3      |
| L.A. Dodgers  | 4      | Oakland           | 2      |
| Cincinnati    | 9      | L.A. Angels       | (ss) 4 |
| San Francisco | 0      | Texas             | 0      |
| San Diego     | 7      | Chicago Cubs      | 0      |
| Kansas City   | 1      | L.A. Angels       | (ss) 0 |
| Arizona       | 5      | Chicago White Sox | 0      |
| Cleveland     | 8      | Seattle           | 4      |
| Colorado      | 10     | Milwaukee         | 3      |

| W            | L      | Pct          | GB     |
|--------------|--------|--------------|--------|
| Baltimore    | (ss) 2 | Atlanta      | 1      |
| Detroit      | 4      | Houston      | 0      |
| Tampa Bay    | 8      | Baltimore    | (ss) 3 |
| N.Y. Yankees | 9      | Minnesota    | 2      |
| Boston       | 7      | Philadelphia | 6      |
| N            |        |              |        |





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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

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

Difficulty: ★★

2/27

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## SERVICES

### Services

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ethansoutdoor@gmail.com

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## Services

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**5 for \$5 SPECIAL!**

Earn Extra Cash by selling your "Unwants"! A 20-word, line classified ad is \$5 for 5 Days! For Sale Items Only. Contact the Bluffton News-Banner office at 125 N. Johnson St., 260-824-0224, or [classifieds.news-banner.com](http://classifieds.news-banner.com)

**CURIO CABINET WITH** dual lights, \$95. Antique piano desk, \$125. Library table (metal with glass top), \$60. (260) 824-9960.

## Lottery Numbers

**Monday's Drawings HOOSIER LOTTERY**  
Cash 5 — 12-18-23-29-30  
Cash4Life — 11-34-40-43-55, Cash Ball: 02  
Quick Draw Midday — 03-04-08-11-18-19-22-29-33-37-39-42-43-54-55-57-62-63-71-77, BE: 04  
Daily Three-Midday — 05-02-03, SB: 02  
Daily Three-Evening — 05-00-07, SB: 04  
Daily Four-Midday — 09-00-04-02, SB: 02  
Daily Four-Evening — 03-04-03-08, SB: 04  
Quick Draw Evening — 06-07-10-20-28-33-34-38-42-54-55-58-59-61-67-69-71-75-77-78, BE: 78  
Hoosier Lotto — Estimated jackpot (for Wednesday): \$5.4 million  
MEGA MILLIONS  
Estimated jackpot (for Tuesday): \$563 million  
POWERBALL  
24-29-42-51-54 Powerball: 16; Power Play: 3X

## SELL YOUR STUFF!

All Classified Line Ads automatically appear on the News-Banner website at NO ADDITIONAL CHARGE!

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just \$25  
ADD A PHOTO  
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One item per ad

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20 words \$39

Add'l Lines: 88 cents each

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Your "Guaranteed Sold" ad (up to 20 words) with a Photo: \$44  
Add'l Lines, 88 cents each

### GARAGE SALES

Put your Garage Sale in Wells County's Easy-to-Use Garage Sale Guide!

Get a FREE

### GARAGE SALE KIT

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## SELL YOUR WHEELS!

### HOT DEAL!

20 Words, 10 Days

just \$25

ADD A PHOTO

for just \$5 more

One item per ad

### GUARANTEED SOLD

Your ad runs 'til your item is sold! (6-month maximum). Limited to one-item, private party only.

20 words \$39

Add'l Lines: 88 cents each

### ADD A PHOTO!

Your "Guaranteed Sold" ad (up to 20 words) with a Photo: \$44  
Add'l Lines, 88 cents each

### SERVICES SPECIAL!

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### ATTENTION GRABBERS!

Add a photo or artwork to any ad! You can also add a headline or other attention-getters for less than you'd expect! Place your ad ON-LINE and explore the possibilities!

## EMPLOYMENT

### 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](http://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.

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

**HELOISE HINT:** As depressing as being out of work is. Keep yourself in good shape. Exercise will help you look good, make you feel better and keep you on a routine until you secure your next job. Send your job-success story to [HELOISE@Heloise.com](mailto:HELOISE@Heloise.com).

### 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., 260-824-0224, or [classifieds.news-banner.com](http://classifieds.news-banner.com).

## SUDOKU ANSWER

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | 2 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 3 |
| 5 | 7 | 6 | 1 | 9 | 8 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 8 | 6 | 9 | 9 | 7 |
| 9 | 6 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 9 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
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## Public Sale Calendar

**MARCH 2 - 9 a.m. - Consignment auction.** 6632 N. 500 W., Decatur, IN. Personal property: Furniture, antiques, jewelry, household, holiday decor, knife decor, collectibles, die cast, Scooby Doo, Betty Boop, books, vintage clothing, and more. Preview March 1, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. **Wiegmann Auctioneers**, [wiegmannauctioneers.com](http://wiegmannauctioneers.com), 260-447-4311.

**BIDDING ENDS 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 Airlyne exercise bike, household, 2017 Grasshopper zero turn mower, 2018 Sure-Trac enclosed trailer. Preview: Feb. 29 from 4 p.m.-6 p.m., 3651 E. 1000 N., Ossian. Sale manager, Brandon Steffen, *The Steffen Group Inc.*, 260-824-3006, [www.steffengrp.com](http://www.steffengrp.com).  
**BIDDING ENDS 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. 29 from 4 p.m.-6 p.m., 3651 E. 1000 N., Ossian. Sale manager, Brandon Steffen, *The Steffen Group Inc.*, 260-824-3006, [www.steffengrp.com](http://www.steffengrp.com).

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# Supreme Court casts doubt on states' efforts to regulate social media

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court cast doubt Monday on state laws that could affect how Facebook, TikTok, X, YouTube and other social media platforms regulate content posted by their users. The cases are among several this term in which the justices could set standards for free speech in the digital age.

In nearly four hours of arguments, several justices questioned aspects of laws adopted by Republican-dominated legislatures and signed by Republican governors in Florida and Texas in 2021. But they seemed wary of a broad ruling, with Justice Amy Coney Barrett warning of "land mines" she and her colleagues need to avoid in resolving the two cases.

While the details vary, both laws aimed to address conservative complaints that the social media companies were liberal-leaning and censored users based on their viewpoints, especially on the political right.

Differences on the court Wednesday emerged over how to think about the platforms — as akin to newspapers that have broad free-speech protections, or

telephone companies, known as common carriers that are susceptible to broader regulation.

Chief Justice John Roberts suggested he was in the former camp, saying early in the session. "And I wonder, since we're talking about the First Amendment, whether our first concern should be with the state regulating what we have called the modern public square?"

Justices Samuel Alito and Clarence Thomas appeared most ready to embrace arguments made by lawyers for the states. Thomas raised the idea that the companies are seeking constitutional protection for "censoring other speech."

Alito complained about the term "content moderation" that the sites employ to keep material off their platforms.

"Is it anything more than a euphemism for censorship?" he asked, later musing that term struck him as Orwellian.

But Justice Brett Kavanaugh, seemingly more favorable to the companies, took issue with calling the actions of private companies censorship, a term he said should be reserved for restrictions imposed by the government.

"When I think of Orwellian, I think of the state, not the private sector, not private individuals," Kavanaugh said.

The precise contours of rulings in the two cases were not clear after arguments, although it seemed likely the court would not let the laws take effect. The justices posed questions about how the laws might affect businesses that are not the primary targets of the laws, including e-commerce sites like Uber and Etsy and email and messaging services.

The cases are among several the justices have grappled with over the past year involving social media platforms. Next month, the court will hear an appeal from Louisiana, Missouri and other parties accusing administration officials of pressuring social media companies to silence conservative points of view. Two more cases awaiting decision concern whether public officials can block critics from commenting on their social media accounts, an issue that previously came up in a case involving then-President Donald Trump. The court dismissed the Trump case when his presidential term

ended in January 2021.

The Florida and Texas laws were passed in the months following decisions by Facebook and Twitter, now X, to cut Trump off over his posts related to the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol by his supporters.

Trade associations representing the companies sued in federal court, claiming that the laws violated the platforms' speech rights. One federal appeal struck down Florida's statute, while another upheld the Texas law. But both are on hold pending the outcome at the Supreme Court.

In a statement when he signed the bill into law, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said the measure would be "protection against the Silicon Valley elites."

When Gov. Greg Abbott signed the Texas law, he said that it was needed to protect free speech in what he termed the new public square. Social media platforms "are a place for healthy public debate where information should be able to flow freely — but there is a dangerous movement by social media companies to silence conservative viewpoints and ideas.

That is wrong, and we will not allow it in Texas," Abbott said.

But much has changed since then. Elon Musk purchased Twitter and, in addition to changing its name, eliminated teams focused on content moderation, welcomed back many users previously banned for hate speech and used the site to spread conspiracy theories.

The Biden administration is siding with the challengers. Lawyers for Trump have filed a brief in the Florida case urging the court to uphold the state law.

Still, Solicitor General Elizabeth Prelogar, the administration's top Supreme Court lawyer, cautioned the court to seek a narrow ruling that blocked the laws. Prelogar said governments maintain the ability to impose regulations to ensure competition, preserve data privacy and protect consumer interests.

Several academics and privacy advocacy groups told the court that they view the laws at issue in these cases as unconstitutional, but want the justices to preserve the government's ability to regulate social media companies to some extent.

# Ex-FBI informant charged with lying about Bidens to remain jailed while he awaits trial

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A former FBI informant charged with fabricating a multimillion-dollar bribery scheme involving President Joe Biden's family must remain behind bars while he awaits trial, a judge ruled Monday, reversing an earlier order releasing the man.

U.S. District Judge Otis Wright II in Los Angeles ordered Alexander Smirnov's detention days after he was freed by another judge, then re-arrested while meeting with his lawyers at their offices in Las Vegas. Wright said he did not believe there were release conditions he could set that would guarantee that the man who has claimed to have ties to Russian intelligence would not flee the country.

"There is nothing garden variety about this case," Wright said. "I have not changed my mind. This man will be remanded pending trial."

Smirnov, 43, pleaded not guilty to the charges accusing him of falsely telling his FBI handler that executives from the Ukrainian energy company Burisma had paid President Biden and Hunter Biden \$5 million each around 2015.

The claim became central to the Republican impeachment inquiry of President Biden in Congress.

A different judge had released him from jail on electronic GPS monitoring after his Feb. 14 arrest, but Wright ordered him to be taken back into custody last week after prosecutors asked to reconsider Smirnov's detention. Wright said in a written order unsealed Friday that Smirnov's lawyers' efforts to free him were "likely to facilitate his absconding from the United States."

In urging the judge to keep him in jail, prosecutors revealed Smirnov has reported to the FBI having extensive contact with officials associated with Russian intelligence, and claimed that such officials were involved in passing a story to him about Hunter Biden. Prosecutors said Smirnov had been planning to travel to multiple countries days after his Feb. 14 arrest to meet with foreign intelligence contacts.

Prosecutor Leo Wise told the judge Monday that Smirnov could not be trusted to tell the truth to those

monitoring his whereabouts if released from jail, noting that he was pushing a new false story about Hunter Biden during a meeting with investigators as recently as September. Prosecutors have accused Smirnov in court papers of "actively peddling new lies that could impact U.S. elections."

Wise said the reason Smirnov was re-arrested at his lawyers' offices in Las Vegas was that he had nine firearms at his home.

Smirnov, who holds dual Israeli-U.S. citizenship, is charged by the same Justice Department special counsel — Delaware U.S. Attorney David Weiss — who has separately filed gun and tax charges against Hunter Biden.

Smirnov was escorted into the courtroom Monday wearing an off-white jail jumpsuit and black rimmed eyeglasses and was seated at the table with his lawyers. Defense attorney David Chesnoff told reporters outside the courthouse after the hearing that he plans to go to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to continue to push for his release.

Defense attorneys said

Smirnov has no criminal history and has strong ties to the United States, including a longtime significant other who lives in Las Vegas. Chesnoff told the judge that Smirnov was being held largely in isolation with access to a phone only once or twice a week, and that he was needed to assist in his own defense.

"He intends to vigorously defend these allegations, having never been in trouble his entire life," Chesnoff said.

In his ruling last week releasing Smirnov on GPS monitoring, U.S. Magistrate Judge Daniel Albrechts in Las Vegas said he was concerned about the defendant's access to what prosecutors estimate is \$6 million in funds, but noted that federal guidelines required him to fashion "the least restrictive conditions" ahead of trial.

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