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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 2024

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BHMS celebrates career exploration classroom

By HOLLY GASKILL

Bluffton-Harrison Middle School hosted a ribbon-cutting celebration for its new EEE Exploration Center on Wednesday.

The classroom was designed to provide hands-on experiences in possible career pathways for seventh and eighth grade students. Specifically, there are three stations connected with programs available at Bluffton High School — culinary, welding and electrical. The renovation project, including its various interactive technology, was made possible by a \$200,000 grant from the Don Wood Foundation.

Lizette Downey, marketing manager for the Don Wood Foundation, described her excitement for the new venture's investment in younger students.

"Programs like this, classes like this, hopefully, will make it OK for you to decide, 'Maybe a four-year degree is not my thing, maybe another path is,' but also, we need engineers, we need all kinds of other educated people as well," Downey told a seventh grade class on Wednesday. "Don Wood would be so proud of this space and the great work you're doing here at Bluffton-Harrison Middle School and carrying that up into the high school."

Assistant Superintendent Julie Meitzler, working alongside Area 18 CTE Director Brittany Kloer, spearheaded the project in the middle school.

"The EEE Exploration Center is a culmination of collaboration to meet the needs

of our middle school students," Meitzler added in a press release. "When we talked to our students last year about what they wanted more of at the middle school level, they said PCC (Preparing for College and Careers). With that information, we expanded to include our seventh grade students and are continually working to make this a hands-on learning experience to allow students the opportunity to explore the possibilities."

Krista Baxter joined the district to teach the college and careers class. Previously teaching science, Baxter compared the interactive components of the classroom to a lab. Instead of experimenting to calculate or record data, however, the students are experimenting to learn more about themselves and their possible career pathways.

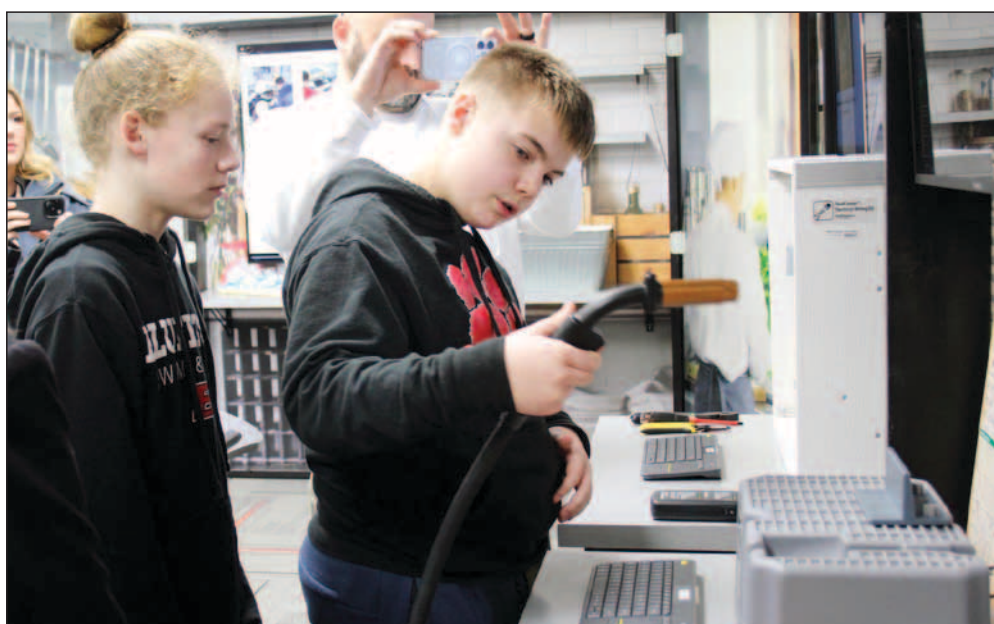
"They get to enjoy things and try it out — that's the fun part," Baxter said. "It's less pressure, and there's no danger to any of the equipment we're using."

For seventh grader Anna Hartman, the interactive elements of the classroom have made all the difference.

"I feel like I didn't expect (the job possibilities) to be as interesting," Hartman said. "When you learn about it, you can kind of connect with some of the ones you know you want to do."

"It's almost like it just clicks," added Charlie Shantz.

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Above, Bluffton-Harrison seventh grade students Charlie Schantz and Deacon Yates demonstrate how to use the virtual welder to the classroom's visitors during the ribbon cutting on Wednesday. The machine has a physical components that mimic a torch and welded materials, which are then shown in an animated form on an adjacent screen. At left, Lizette Downey, representing the Don Wood Foundation, shares her excitement for the school. (Photos by Holly Gaskill)

Senate approves child care proposal, House punts on health care merger oversight

By LESLIE BONILLA MUÑIZ
Indiana Capital Chronicle

Senate Republicans on Monday pushed the legislature's latest effort to improve child care access for Hoosier families closer to the finish line. But Democrats say the bill loosens regulations for providers and could put children at risk.

The House, meanwhile, withdrew cost-controlling legislation increasing oversight of health industry mergers and acquisitions. Committees additionally advanced bills limiting land ownership by certain "foreign adversaries" and protecting election workers from threats and injury.

Child care shortage

Sen. Greg Walker, R-Columbus, said Hoosier families are spending nearly a quarter of their incomes on child care. It should take up no more than 10% to be considered affordable, according to federal guidelines.

House Bill 1102's provisions, he said, "are necessary if we're to begin to address the problem of such a shortfall of seats that we have."

Under the bill, unlicensed home providers would be able to care for up to seven children — an increase from the previous limit of five children. The limit doesn't

include children related to the provider.

That's above the National Association for the Education of Young Children's recommended caregiver-to-child ratios: one adult for four infants under a year old, and one adult for six toddlers between one and three years old.

Other child care centers would see license renewals every three years instead of every two years. Programs operating out of a private or public school would also be exempt from licensure, so long as they comply with health and safety regulations.

Democrats have opposed the bill, arguing that it focuses on deregulation over investment.

Sen. J.D. Ford, D-Indianapolis, said lawmakers should have boosted pay for child care workers or increased eligibility for child care vouchers instead of relaxing caregiver-to-child ratios. He also advocated for greater security measures at home child care settings, like background checks for other adults in the home.

"Without proper and reasonable oversight to ensure the safety of children, we can unwillingly be allowing opportunities for child predators, sex abusers (and) violent

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Reading bill clears House Chamber; controversial tenure bill also approved

By WHITNEY DOWNARD
Indiana Capital Chronicle

Lawmakers voted Tuesday to approve two contentious education bills — one would require school corporations to retain students who fail to pass the IREAD exam and another would push colleges and universities to include more conservative instruction.

The reading overhaul in Senate Bill 1 now moves back to its original chamber where senators must approve changes made by the House before it can head for the governor's desk.

Under the bill, schools must first test students in second grade — a year earlier than current statute — and offer targeted support to struggling students. If a student fails three times they must be held back with limited exceptions.

"The future is bleak for students who are not proficient in literacy," said GOP Rep. Jake Teshka, the bill's sponsor. "It's really about earlier intervention and giving student's every possible chance to read by third grade."

Various Democrats spoke against the retention mandate, even calling it a "poison pill" in a bill with "good intentions."

Several attempts to weaken the retention mandate failed on Monday, as bill sponsors repeated the assurance that retention was "the last resort." Rep. Vernon Smith, D-Gary, also noted that the body hadn't given adequate time to analyze the impact of the science of reading, a literacy initiative passed by the General Assembly last year.

According to the latest reading scores, one in five Hoosier students struggle to read. Even as 13,840 third-graders failed the test, just 412 were retained. Roughly one-third, or 5,503 students, received an exemption.

The law provides for exemptions, including those for special education and English learner students.

Others pointed out what they called a hypocrisy in the General Assembly for not funding universal pre-kindergarten education, which repeated studies

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Congressional leaders reach a tentative deal to avoid shutdown

By LISA MASCARO
and KEVIN FREKING
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Congressional leaders announced Wednesday they have reached a tentative agreement to prevent a government shutdown for now, days before an end-of-the-week deadline that risked shuttering some federal operations.

Under the new plan, Congress would temporarily fund one set of federal agencies through March 8 and another set through March 22.

In the meantime, Congress will try to draft and pass packages of legislation to fund the government for the remainder of the budget year.

But there was no immediate plan to approve the \$95 billion emergency national security funds for Ukraine, Israel and other allies.

"We are in agreement that Congress must work in a bipartisan manner to fund our government," said the joint statement from House Speaker Mike Johnson, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, Senate Repub-

lican Leader Mitch McConnell and House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries, along with the Appropriation Committee leaders.

Johnson said the House would vote Thursday to approve the temporary funds — ahead of Friday's deadline, when some federal monies run out. The Senate would be expected to vote next.

The deal comes together as negotiators in Congress have been working furiously to finish up a federal spending plan and Washington joined Ukraine and other

American allies around the world in watching and waiting for Johnson's next move.

The new Republican leader is facing the test of his career trying to keep the U.S. government open by Friday's midnight deadline for several federal departments. At the same time, emergency funding for Ukraine, Israel and Indo-Pacific allies remains stubbornly stalled. President Joe Biden convened leaders Tuesday in hopes of pushing them toward a deal.

"As the President and Congress-

sional Leaders made clear at yesterday's meeting, we cannot allow a government shutdown," White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said in a statement. She said the agreement reached would help prevent a "needless" federal shutdown.

Congress is in what has become a familiar cycle of threatened shutdowns and disruptions as hard-right Republicans in Johnson's majority strive for steeper spending reductions than Democrats and

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Outside



Sunny and windy today,
cloudy and cool tomorrow

Today	Friday	Saturday
High 41	High 47	High 57
Low 27	Low 37	Low 44

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Vol. 95 No. 101

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Seventh grade students were invited to join Bluffton-Harrison Superintendent Brad Yates (at left) and Area 18 CTE Director Britany Kloer (at right) in cutting the ribbon, ceremoniously opening the classroom. Below, Yates speaks about the endeavor prior to the ribbon cutting. (Photo by Holly Gaskill)

BHMS celebrates

(Continued from Page 1)

Shantz, Hartman and Deacon Yates shared that the class has helped them shape a better idea of what they might want to do someday, as well as what classes they might take in high school to get them ready. Hartman would like to be a veterinarian, Shantz an aerospace engineer and Yates a robotics engineer.

Superintendent Brad Yates concluded, "It was referred to by the other speakers that we had today that we had the opportunity

to align visions with foundations, with local business and with schools, and (because of that), really incredibly things can happen. As our students in the room, you're going to be the direct result of the incredible things that are going to happen in this classroom with Mrs. Baxter. We're really excited about that opportunity for you, not only for this school year but for school years to come."

holly@news-banner.com



Child care proposal

(Continued from Page 1)

felons to be in a home with children – without their parents' knowledge," Ford said. "Parents deserve to know their children are safe."

Senators approved the bill on a 40-9 vote, along party lines.

The House must consent to changes made in the Senate to send the legislation to Gov. Eric Holcomb. Otherwise, they'll negotiate a final draft in a specialized conference committee.

Merger notification bill withdrawn – for now?

Rep. Donna Schaibley pulled back a bill that would have required health care entities making an acquisition valued at \$10 million or more report such a purchase with the attorney general's office, which would conduct an antitrust review.

The Carmel Republican introduced the bill, which has faced little opposition from lawmakers in the legislative process until now, but later withdrew it from consideration after bipartisan pushback.

More than two dozen other states already require such a report, 13 of which also stipulate that the office must approve the acquisition. Indiana didn't include the latter – which concerned members of both parties.

Schaibley said the bill's contents came from an interim committee, where national experts testified that Indiana's consolidated health care market increased prices. When Senate Bill 9 went through the committee process, stakeholders acknowledged that the bill would have been more effective decades ago, before Indiana's health care monopolies emerged.

Rep. Ryan Hatfield, D-Evansville, criticized the standalone bill for being "cherry-picked" out of a comprehensive set of recommendations and said it would require private businesses to

hand over sensitive information to the attorney general.

"If this had been part of a comprehensive overview, perhaps this could be something we could stomach," Hatfield said.

Republican Rep. Peggy Mayfield, of Martinsville, expressed reservations with the bill's impact.

"I appreciate the years – literally years – of work Rep. Schaibley has been putting into these transparency bills. ... I'm not so sure that the way the bill is currently worded actually gets to the point that she's trying to make," Mayfield said. "I am cautious about voting for a bill that in my view is vague enough that I don't know if it addresses the issues."

When asked whether she thought the bill could move before deadlines later this week, Schaibley said she "hope(s) so."

The deadline to move the bill out of the House is Monday.

Committee moves land ownership limits over enforcement concerns

Legislation banning citizens and companies from six "foreign adversary" countries from owning or leasing certain plots of land got a mixed reception in a Senate Agriculture Committee on Monday, but passed unanimously.

"We don't want some little glitch to hold the bill up because we've got a lot bigger fish to fry," said Sen. Jean Leising, R-Oldenburg, who chairs the panel.

She pledged to "try and get that language right."

House Bill 1183 bars entities affiliated with China, Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Russia and Venezuela from acquiring or leasing agricultural land – and mineral, riparian and water rights.

A substantive amendment taken Monday exempts renewals for leases made

before July 1, 2024 from the ban, as long as the acreage doesn't change. That edit was made to accommodate Syngenta, a Switzerland-based agrichemical company acquired by ChemChina in 2017.

The bill was also amended to prohibit such foreign adversaries from owning or leasing land within 50 miles of a military installation, and 10 miles from an Indiana National Guard armory or maintenance facility.

Residential property was excluded, Leising said, to allow people like foreign university students to rent apartments.

The legislation additionally requires entities buying land to sign affidavits affirming that they're not banned from making the purchase.

Attorney General Todd Rokita's office would be tasked with investigating suspect transactions. Land purchased in contravention of the law would be put in receivership and divested.

Rep. Kendell Culp, R-Rensselaer, emphasized that while Canada is by far the largest foreign owner of farmland in the United States, Chinese interests – and the amount of nationwide acreage acquired – are "growing at an alarming rate."

He feared that control could risk the state's food security, and the country's national security.

The legislation would therefore cover much of the state, according to a map distributed to committee members and viewed by the Capital Chronicle.

But some had concerns.

Maggie McShane, of the Indiana Realtors Association, said she supported the changes but still feared real estate professionals would be on the front lines of enforcing the legislation. She said such professionals are barred from even ask-

ing a buyer's nationality, in accordance with nondiscrimination laws.

Chris Daley, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana, said the bill punished people escaping "oppressive regimes" and noted that it takes years to become a U.S. citizen.

"Because this bill is so incredibly broad, you are telling (those people) they are no longer welcome here, except for as employees of someone else," Daley said. "They cannot participate as owners of businesses if that includes renting or owning the storefront."

He added that litigation had put enforcement of a similar Florida bill on hold.

Protecting election workers

Members of the House Courts and Criminal Code committee advanced a bill that will provide support to election workers as the number of willing volunteers dwindles.

"Not only has it become increasingly and exponentially more difficult for Indiana's clerks to recruit and retain new poll workers, but our current and experienced poll workers are expressing concern for their personal safety and well-being at a time when clerks are preparing for what is likely to be history's biggest election to date," said Nicole Browne, Monroe County's clerk.

Browne also serves as the president of the Association of County Clerks and chairs the Association of Indiana Counties' legislative committee.

Senate Bill 170 would make it a Level 6 felony to threaten, injure or interfere with an election worker doing their duties. The bill would take effect immediately, rather than the traditional July 1 start, meaning it would be in place in time for the May primary elections this year.

Weather

Thursday, February 29, 2024

(24-hour observations at 9:49 p.m. Wednesday)

High: 62; Low: 23; Precipitation: Trace of snow, .06 inches of rain

Wabash River Level (at the Main Street bridge): 2.28 feet at 9:45 p.m. Wednesday

Wells County forecast

Today: Sunny, with a high near 41. West wind around 10 mph.

Tonight: Mostly clear, with a low around 27. South wind around 10 mph.

Friday: Mostly cloudy, with a high near 47. South wind around 10 mph.

Friday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 37. South wind around 10 mph.

Saturday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 57.

Saturday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 44.

Sunday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 66.

Sunday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 53.

Monday: A 40% chance of rain, mainly after 1 p.m. Partly sunny, with a high near 68. Breezy.

Monday Night: Rain likely. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 37. Chance of precipitation is 60%.

Reading bill

(Continued from Page 1)

demonstrate is pivotal to a child's ability to learn and read.

Rep. Renee Pack, a Democrat from Indianapolis, said she worked for a decade as a reading intervention specialist for Wayne Township schools. She said children who might fail IREAD need "a second look," especially children living in poverty or homelessness.

"This body is against adequate funding for pre-kindergarten where a child could get the head start that they critically need," Pack said. "Would you all please, please, please consider that as an option so that we can truly walk the walk and talk the talk when it comes to taking care of our kids and making sure that they can read proficiently."

Three Republicans joined the Democratic caucus and voted against the bill, which passed on a 69-27 vote: Rep. Ed Clere, R-New Albany; Rep. Randy Lyness, R-West Harrison; and Rep. J.D. Prescott, R-Union City.

Higher education targeted

The House also approved a bill aimed at pushing colleges toward "intellectual diversity."

Its author based the bills on surveys that found

conservative students feel uncomfortable in college classes. The legislation was amended meaning the Senate will also need to approve those changes.

Several Democrats, many of whom have outside employment with the state's universities, lambasted Senate Bill 202 for having a "chilling effect" on faculty and micromanaging higher education institutions.

"SB 202 makes the accusation that our universities can't be trusted to govern themselves," said Democrat Rep. Sue Errington, who moved to Muncie in the 1970s so she and her husband could work as professors at Ball State University.

"I trust our world-class universities; I trust our educators. I do not trust that this bill will do anything but dissuade potential students and teachers from coming to our state universities," Errington continued.

Several decried the infusion of a professor's potential politics into tenure decisions, specifically.

Two Republicans joined Democrats in a vote against the bill: Reps. Ed Clere, of New Albany, and Dave Hall, of Norman. It advanced on a 67-30 vote.



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*, 260-447-4311, wiegmannauctioneers.com.

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 Airborne 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.

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.*, www.steffengrp.com, 260-824-3006.

BIDDING STARTS CLOSING MARCH 14 - 10 a.m. EST - Clemens and Carol Burger, owners. Ken-Bar Tool & Engineering Company liquidation! Over 300 lots. 2016 GMC Sierra, 2005 Chevrolet 3500 cargo van, 2008 Mercury Grand Marquis, CNC machines, mills, lathes, ladders, grinders, saws, tooling, tools, more! Preview March 11, 10 a.m.-noon, 3121 S. Walnut St., Muncie, call for information. Pickup March 18 and 19, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., large items can be picked up by appointment only up to 10 days. *Krueckeberg Auction & Realty LLC*, 260-724-7402, kjauction.com.

Congressional leaders

(Continued from Page 1)

even some other Republicans are willing to accept. This would be the fourth short-term funding extension in about five months.

While Johnson, R-La., inherited a difficult dynamic, it was only compounded after his majority shrunk further when Democrat Tom Suozzi of New York was sworn in Wednesday to boisterous applause from Democrats and visitors in the galleries following the special election to replace ousted GOP Rep. George Santos. The House is split 213-219, leaving Johnson no room for dissent.

Congressional leaders said they reached an agreement on six bills that will adhere to spending levels previously agreed to last year.

Those bills involve Veterans Affairs and the departments of Agriculture, Transportation, Interior and others and will be voted on and enacted before March 8.

The remaining six bills for the Pentagon, Homeland Security, Health and Human Services and the State Department still need to be finalized, voted on and enacted before March 22.

Leaders said a short-term extension would be voted on this week so that

funding would continue for agencies while lawmakers worked on the two packages. Lawmakers would be given 72 hours to review the broader legislative packages, as is expected under House rules.

If the deal and the subsequent bills are approved, it would keep the federal government funded until the end of the budget year, on Sept. 30, and avoid more short-term measures.

Top military officials said at a Pentagon briefing that the delay in passing a 2024 budget has affected the military as it has responded to crises over the past several months without additional new money to do so.

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House members place transparency requirements on FSSA following Medicaid snafu

By WHITNEY DOWNARD
Indiana Capital Chronicle

A bill dealing with state fiscal matters attracted a bevy of amendments in the House Ways and Means Committee Tuesday, ranging from a tax exemption for feminine hygiene products to enhanced reporting on Medicaid spending.

The Republican supermajority additionally beat back several Democratic amendments on attendant care, a program used by over 1,600 families with disabled children that will be curtailed following a \$1 billion Medicaid shortfall.

The bulk of Tuesday's discussion revolved around the Family and Social Services Administration's oversight of attendant care. As costs surged under the program, which had no hourly caps nor federal approval, the agency decided to transition those families to Structured Family Caregiving and make up some of \$1 billion deficit. Families decried the move, which would transition them from an hourly rate to a lower per diem.

Committee Chair Rep. Jeff Thompson said work was ongoing and discussed possible second reading amendments addressing attendant care.

"I don't want to make any promises. I think there will be a motion on second reading but for me to say, 'This will be in,' or 'This will not be in' — I can't do that," Thompson, R-Lizton, said. "But I'm trying to find a spot to land with the Senate in discussions."

Second reading amendments must be adopted by Thursday, the deadline for such maneuvers, when a bill is heard before the entire House Chamber.

Medicaid oversight

Thompson introduced an amendment that would place additional reporting requirements on the Family and Social Services Administration, the agency responsible for administering Medicaid.

FSSA must make two reports to the State Budget Committee annually, one in either April or May — depending on whether it's a budget-writing year or not — and another in December, under the proposal. The agency's secretary, currently Dr. Dan Rusyniak, must present a "detailed plan for monitoring expenses" under Medicaid, including managed care and waiver programs, improving transparency on Medicaid expenditures and how they will share Medicaid data with legislators along with traditional forecasts.

Lastly, the agency presentation must include an analysis of the feasibility of a Medicaid dashboard that includes monthly reports on expenditures and enrollments.

"We know, obviously, there were some surprises that occurred last summer," said Thompson. "... In my view, it's a transparency amendment."

While the amendment had the full support of the committee, enrollment and the growth of expenses continued to be a concern for legislators — foreshadowing difficult conversations when lawmakers convene next year for a budget-writing session.

"It's not just a forecast issue, it's a policy issue where we may agree or disagree. But that's the broader issue to me," said Rep. Jack Jordan, R-Bremen. "I like the transparency in the forecast but we have a policy issue that I'm assuming we'll deal with and wrestle with maybe not this session but next session."

Attendant Care under the microscope

An amendment offered by Indianapolis Rep. Greg Porter, a Democrat, sparked vigorous debate about attendant care, which will still be used by elderly and adult Hoosiers. Porter pushed for a one-year pause in the transition of 1,622 pediatric beneficiaries from attendant care to Structured Family Caregiving — a move that Thompson said "part of (him) likes" but he worried about the state's compliance with the federal waiver.

"The other thing is — we have to change the structure. And how that should be changed, that we can debate about," Thompson said. "But the costs right now and what's happening in terms of exces-

sive costs that some of the providers, in my opinion, are receiving — that has to be addressed."

In particular, Thompson said there were some cases where payments exceeded those sent to nursing homes, traditionally the most expensive form of intensive care.

"I'm not saying that's all bad, maybe it's a good thing," Thompson said. "But there is, in some cases, a lot of money being paid and the service that's needed isn't that great ... I'm not so sure the dollars are being put in the right spot."

Indianapolis Democrat Rep. Ed DeLaney introduced a separate amendment targeting monies to intermediaries, or providers, noting that FSSA said last week it didn't have transparency on funds paid to families. The agency said it paid providers \$34.36 per hour, anticipating that families would get 60% and providers would keep the rest for administrative fees. Instead, families have indicated that they receive roughly \$15 per hour, or 44% of the funds.

"What I've learned, to my utter amazement, is that FSSA does not know if they send \$150 bucks to a home for attendant care (FSSA) does not know what percentage actually goes to the family and what percentage goes to the intermediary," DeLaney said. "I find that stunning."

DeLaney's amendment would have included other programs administered by FSSA. While attendant care has received most of the attention, FSSA has enacted several changes in response to the Medicaid shortfall, including a pause on indexing reimbursement rates and halting a practice of automatically approving certain claims.

DeLaney opted to withdraw his amendment, with the intention of reintroducing the language on the floor, while Porter's failed on a party-line vote.

Federal compliance, families in limbo

Being out of compliance with federal guidelines could be costly for the state should the federal government penalize Indiana for spending Medicaid dollars — of which roughly two-thirds is paid by the federal government — on an unapproved program. While using attendant care dollars to pay families of disabled children is an acceptable use, Indiana is not approved for it.

Rep. Ed Clere, R-New Albany, flagged concerns about adopting Porter's amendment, in particular, which would have extended the unapproved program for another year.

"If we were to adopt this amendment, I think it could actually dig our Medicaid hole even deeper and endanger other vulnerable Hoosiers who may see their services reduced because we would have to come up with this money," Clere said. "I think it could lead to other unpredictable and unfortunate cuts in Medicaid."

But Indianapolis' Democrat Reps. Cherish Pryor and DeLaney pointed to the families, who would transition to Structured Family Caregiving by July 1 of this year.

"I'm bothered by the notion that we don't quite know what's going to happen to them," DeLaney said.

Clere said that his discussions with stakeholders had convinced him that "many, if not most" families currently receiving payments under the attendant care system "will be served better under Structured Family Caregiving."

"My concern is there is a segment of families for which Structured Family Caregiving may not be adequate. And those are the folks we risk leaving behind if we don't do something here in the legislature before sine die," Clere said, using the legislative term for the adjourning session.

He noted that the state doesn't have enough providers to cover the needs of families, especially in rural areas.

The committee cleared the underlying bill, now with several amendments, to the House Chamber unanimously. Even if the measure passes the House, senators must also accept the changes before it can move to the governor's desk to be signed into law.

Police Notebook

INCIDENTS

City:
Tuesday, 2:04 p.m., 300 block of South Midway Street. Caller reported semi truck drove through yard.

Tuesday, 8:16 p.m., Ind. 124 and 800 East. Officer gave courtesy transport to police department to wait for daughter.

Wednesday, 9:30 a.m., 500 block of West Miller Street. Report of a theft of a bicycle.

County:
Tuesday, 3:49 p.m., Family Ford. Caller requested deputy for paperwork regarding inheritance encroachment.

Tuesday, 4:23 p.m., 500 block of East Dustman Road. Protection order served to Ian Adams.

Tuesday, 4:40 p.m., 5500 West 700 North, Markle. Protection order served to Anthony Grieb.

Tuesday, 7:45 p.m., 5400 West 600 North, Markle. Report of threatening via

phone due to domestic issues.

Tuesday, 10:22 p.m., West 900 North and North 200 West, Markle. Driver crashed vehicle, admitted to drinking before driving. PBT was .228.

Wednesday, 12:49 a.m., 1700 East 350 South, Bluffton. Officers responded to a report of an automated crash activation with no response on call back. Upon arrival, an ATV was seen in a field. Multiple subjects acquired non life-threatening injuries. Alcohol was involved with passengers and drivers.

Wednesday, 8:50 a.m., Ind. 124 and South 400 West, Liberty Center. Driver cited for speeding and warned for no vehicle registration.

Wednesday, 11:24 a.m., Wells County Jail. Warrant served to Trita Lamprecht who reportedly did not acknowledge officers presence or communicate during the process.

Ossian:

Tuesday, 3:13 p.m., North 100 East and 900 North, Ossian. Driver cited for speeding 65 in a 45 mph zone.

ARRESTS

Kaytlyn Marie Fayth Koch, 24, Fort Wayne; resisting law enforcement, a Level 6 felony, and driving while suspended, a Class A misdemeanor. Bond set at \$6,500.

Jami A. Gilbert, 35, Ossian; operating with an ACE of .15 or more, a Class A misdemeanor. Bond set at \$1,500.

Shawn A. King, 47, Bluffton; two counts of operating a vehicle while intoxicated, both Class C misdemeanors. Bond set at \$500.

Cooper Andrik King, 21, Bluffton; operating a vehicle while intoxicated, a Class C misdemeanor, and operating a vehicle while intoxicated — endangerment, a Class A misdemeanor. Bond set at \$1,500.

Bucher gets support from Hillsdale president in Congressional race

By MARK MILLER

Hillsdale College president Dr. Larry Arnn has endorsed the candidacy of Wells County native Grant Bucher in Bucher's quest to become the Republican nominee for the open 3rd Congressional District.

Arnn, along with Hillsdale College, has been one of the foremost conservative voices in the nation.

"Grant Bucher has helped his company build structures here at Hillsdale for many years," Arnn said in a statement released by Bucher. "I have watched him work and admired him. I have talked with him many times and found him principled, intelligent, and full of goodwill. He will be a fine congressman. I endorse him heartily."

Bucher, who now resides with his family in Steuben County, is one of six Republican candidates in the May 6 primary to replace Jim Banks, who is running to represent Indiana in the U.S. Senate.

"Dr. Arnn and I had the opportunity to interact a number of times before I shared with him that I was running for Congress," Bucher said. "If you have talked with Dr Arnn, you know his response to news like that is going to be honest and straightforward. To my delight, he commended my character and provided his endorsement."



Grant Bucher



Dr. Larry Arnn

Arnn produces a monthly commentary on political and cultural issues that receive wide recognition. His op-eds have appeared in national publications such as the Wall Street Journal.

Hillsdale College has long prevented any government interference or influence by refusing to accept any government money, including federal grants and loans for students.

"The reason Dr. Arnn inspires me is that he is not hesitant to speak truth," Bucher continued. "Moreover, he challenges all who interact with him, whether one-on-one or in a crowd, to seek truth."

miller@news-banner.com

House panel weakens bill limiting governor's executive powers

By LESLIE BONILLA MUÑIZ
Indiana Capital Chronicle

House Republicans on Tuesday weakened their Senate counterparts' latest attempt to limit the governor's emergency powers following a slew of pandemic-era executive orders by Republican Gov. Eric Holcomb.

Rep. Matt Lehman, R-Berne, who sponsored Senate Bill 234, said it established "parameters" for the state's next governor. Holcomb is term-limited, and a packed slate of candidates is competing to replace him.

"I think the time is right, with the new governor coming in, to know where the parameters are," Lehman told the Public Health Committee. "If I'm going to be the governor,

I'm going to ask my staff how far I can go in every division within the state. I think we need to set that parameter now."

The Senate version of the legislation would've removed a Hoosier governor's ability to extend a state of disaster emergency after 30 days. It included an exception: one 30-day renewal for the exclusive purpose of receiving federal

relief funds. And it applied to all disaster declarations, not just statewide.

Lehman brought changes Tuesday allowing the governor to make statewide disaster emergency declarations lasting 30 days with one 30-day renewal. There is no tie to funding. The General Assembly would have to convene to continue any statewide declaration.

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The things we miss

A few random bits happened in the past week that have me in a nostalgic mood.

This past Friday, in the middle of a serious conversation, it briefly devolved into a discussion about dogs we have lost.

For Larisa and I, dogs are part of the family, not just pets. We have cats at the moment — definitely not the same thing. Our dog, Indy, has been gone for two years and I still miss her dearly. Dogs tend to single one person out as their favorite. I was hers.

We spent a lot of time together. She followed me everywhere, she slept at my feet and we went for walks often. She was adamant about going with me to take the recycle container down to the road. We also had long discussions about our mutual hatred of rabbits.

I really don't hate rabbits, but I made it Indy's job to keep them out of our yard. Any time we saw one in the yard, Indy sprang into action. She wasn't good at it, but she tried. Yard rabbits are pretty nimble. It got to the point that I would yell at the yard rabbits for being in the yard and Indy for allowing it. Larisa thought I was nuts.

Two years later, our yard is overrun with frolicking rabbits. I still yell at them. Larisa still thinks I'm nuts. Who knew Indy was doing her job the whole time?

Cleaning out my laptop over the weekend, I stumbled on a misplaced folder named Ron. The folder was full of photos we accumulated to send to the funeral home for my father-in-law's service.

One of them, a photo from the day my son won his Lilly Scholarship, is a picture of Ron and I clapping. I had no discernible emotion. Ron was full-on ugly crying. The pride and love for his grandson was too much for the stoic grandfather to contain. That photo still moves me, nearly 11 years later.

My nephew played his final basketball game last week. During the senior night festivities, my brother and sister-in-law looked so happy. Proud as they were, I'm not sure if they realized how big that moment really was.

I readily admit to not realizing the magnitude of those moments for my boys. Both of them were extremely active with sports and show choir. Each time we were involved in a senior night, I knew there would be another sooner or later. Until there wasn't.

I wouldn't trade my life now to go back to those days. Raising two athletes was organized chaos. They played different sports more often than not. I don't have that kind of energy now but those are great memories to look back on fondly.

Reflecting on the things I miss has me thinking about creating new memories with the people I love the most.

When our boys were little we took a few overnight trips with Larisa's parents. Those are treasured memories. We haven't done anything that intentional since our oldest was a high school senior. He's nearly 29 now.

I love feeling nostalgic. Looking backwards is great as long as it inspires me to look forward. I'm reminded about an analogy I've heard many times; the windshield is bigger than the rear view mirror for a reason, because what's in front of you is more important than what's behind you.

I am inspired. It's way past time for Larisa and I to make a few new memories with our kids — and their girlfriends — before they are married and have kids of their own.

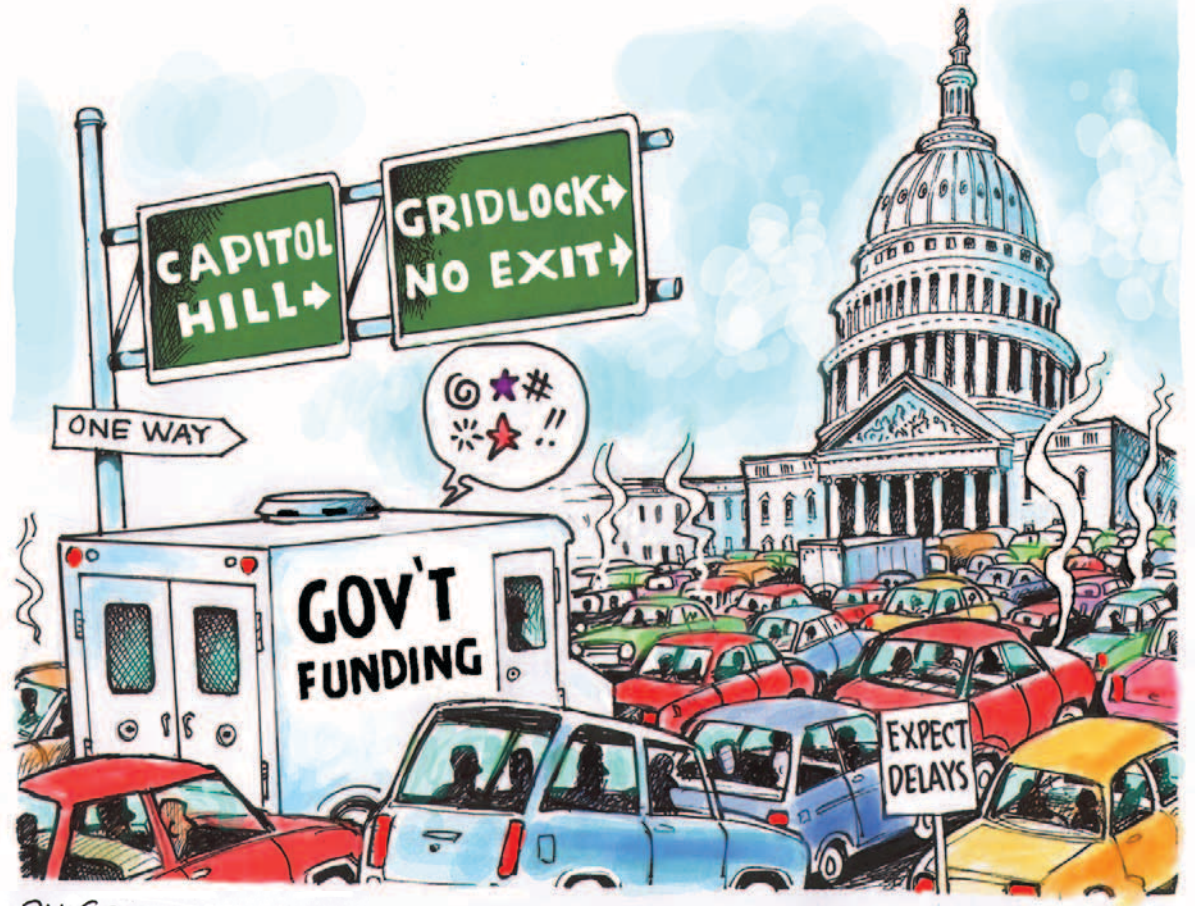
A famous line from the movie Ferris Bueller's Day Off sums up my current state of mind perfectly; "Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it."

Truer words were never spoken. All thanks to a few random bits.



Doug Brown

dough@news-banner.com



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Dock their pay

When the government shuts down, the people responsible continue to receive their pay because they are considered "essential." These include the president and members of Congress. It reminds me of when it snows in Washington (as opposed to the snow jobs we get all year from politicians). The guy on the radio says, "only essential workers need to report to work." Let's find out who they are and get rid of the rest. That would substantially reduce our \$34 trillion national debt and cut the size of the federal government, the nation's largest employer.

The threat of another government shutdown reminds me of movies some of the cable channels repeatedly run. Even films I love eventually reach a saturation point as they become overly familiar. It is the same with reruns of government shutdowns.

Government shutdowns are a relatively recent phenomenon. As the History Channel recounts, the first one happened in November 1981, Ronald Reagan's first year in office. Reagan vetoed a spending bill he thought should have cut more domestic programs. The shutdown lasted only a few days and the spending continued.

The second shutdown occurred in the fall of 1982 and for the nuttiest of reasons. As The New York Times reported: "Congress missed the deadline because both major parties had events they didn't want to miss: Republicans were attending a White House barbecue and the Democrats had a fundraising dinner."

The next one happened in mid-October of 1984. It lasted only half a day because Reagan was cruising toward re-election and Democrats quickly caved, a rarity.

In 1990, House Speaker Newt Gingrich, responding to President George H.W. Bush's broken promise not to raise taxes, led a Republican rebellion against a spending bill, triggering a shutdown that led to the closing of national parks and museums. The media then, as now, always heads for the parks and muse-



Cal Thomas

ums to show their "closed" signs, as well as trumpeting the scare tactics of Democrats who claim retirees might not get their Social Security checks.

During the Bill Clinton administration, the government was closed for 21 days over opposition to major spending cuts. In 2013, there was a 16-day shutdown during the Obama administration, caused by a dispute over implementation of the Affordable Care Act.

In late 2018, another funding gap triggered the longest shutdown in U.S. history. The argument was over President Trump's proposed plan to build a wall along the U.S. border with Mexico. As the History Channel notes: "The shutdown led the government to furlough 800,000 federal workers. Democrats refused to fund the wall, and ultimately Republicans relented. The shutdown ended a month after it began with no funding in place for a border wall." How's that looking with millions of migrants, including criminals and drugs, flooding the country?

There's no reason to recount the other shutdowns because it's all political theater. With only a few variations they have looked like reruns of a familiar movie. The real problem — too much spending, too much growth in government power, too much debt and

a failure to cut unnecessary and outmoded government programs — is rarely addressed, especially by the media, which prefers arguments over solutions.

If the pay of the president and members of Congress could be cut when faced with a shutdown, there likely would be no more of them. Unfortunately, like the hope some people have for term limits, the people who have created the problem pay no penalty for their refusal to do what used to be called the right thing.

In gangland days such threats were called extortion. Today, it is politics as usual. It is why so many hate Washington. If voters continue to vote for the people who have created the problem they will continue these reruns and get what they deserve.

tcaeditors@tribpub.com

The people who have created the problem pay no penalty for their refusal to do what used to be called the right thing.

Leap Year, when February has 29

Thirty days hath September, April, June, and November. All the rest have thirty-one, excepting February alone, and that has twenty-eight days clear, and twenty-nine in each leap year.

Angelkeep remembered learning a jingle something to that effect while being educated at Lancaster Central School. Teachers never taught beyond sing-song knowledge.

Today is the seventh Leap Year for Angelkeep. The house and pond started in 1999, habituated in 2000, the first Leap Year. Back in 1900, the year fell in the four year rotation, but was not a Leap Year. This writer will not see it, but year 2100, also a four year rotation date, will not, repeat, not, be Leap Year. Why? Lancaster math never taught this kind of stuff.

The year must be divisible by 4 evenly, and not divisible by 100 or 400.

1900 ÷ 400 = 4.75 thus not Leap Year.

2000 ÷ 400 = 5 = an even number = Leap Year.

2100 ÷ 400 = fractional 5.25 = no Leap Year.

Got it! After 75 years, Angelkeep's got it.

Who do we blame for this confusion? Julius Caesar arranged it in BC 45. No wonder Brutus stabbed him. Pope Gregory XIII, "improved" Caesar's calendar in 1582 and adjusting for the annual eleven minutes each year, began borrowing from the future. The Pope's solution was a "divide by 400" rule. The Pope adjusted 1582, and ordered October 5 to become October 15.

Angelkeep wonders what Protestants thought about that. Amish, set in their old ways? Atheists?

It proved horrendous for anyone born between October 6 and the 14th,

1582. The days simply didn't exist.

Angelkeep was just getting over the struggle to understand 12th Night. It had nothing to do with the drum corps of the chosen twelve at all.

Do the critters of Angelkeep observe Leap Year? Instead of red winged blackbirds strutting feathers to choose a mate, will brown females fluff dingy colors to grab themselves their choice of lover? Do the does go running through the forest on Leap Year looking for a buck? Are Leap Day does more industrious than a human deer hunter looking for the tented-kind?

In 1904, do the math, a Leap Year in Indiana, Bluffton noted a distinct reduction of marriage applications from the previous year. By Christmas the girls, who had the right to do the proposing, left the county with a deficiency of 78 due to what, shyness? It was nearly a 30 percent drop in weddings. Think of the tax burden for that next generation with reduced taxpayers. Was the Pope to blame in 1904? Doubtful.

Blame the British again. One if by land, two if by sea, once cometh Leap Year, set the ladies free.

The parliamentary record of 1228



Alan Daugherty

literally reads, "Ordonit that during ye reign of her maist blessed Majestie, ilka maiden, lade of baith high and lowe estait, shale hae libertie to speak ye man she likes. Gif he refuses to tak her to bee his wyf, he shale bee mulet in ye sum of ane hundredry pundes, or less, as his estait may bee, except ane always gif he can make it appear that he is betrothit to another woman, then he shale be free."

Angelkeep offers any man or beast a hiding place should he be accosted on Leap Day by hordes of unwed womenfolk desiring a change of marital tax status. Of course by saving such a man the cost of getting out of the proffered proposal, a sum of an hundred pundes, Angelkeep will require the payment of half a hundred pundes for providing the escape route.

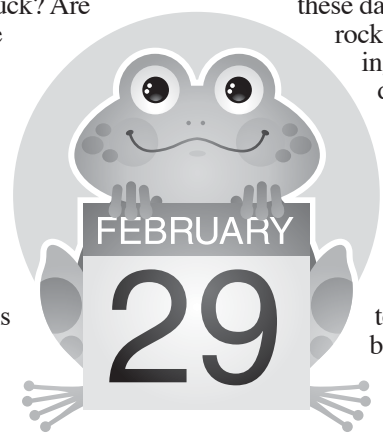
One can't have too many pundes these days with inflation skyrocketing, gas prices rising, pizza soaring, and deer corn kernels so costly.

Bluffton's newspaper deduced the reason few 1892 Leap Year parties were taking place fell due to girls trying to square accounts by boycotting young men for being stingy with money during the preceding three years.

Indiana Supreme Court in 1883 decreed "the added day of leap year and the day immediately preceding, if they shall occur in any period so to be computed, shall be reckoned together as one day."

So by Indiana law, Happy Wednesday/Thursday Leap Day.

Mr. Daugherty is a Wells County resident who, along with his wife Gwen, enjoy their backyard and have named it "Angelkeep."



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

Today in History

By The Associated Press
Today is Thursday, Feb. 29, the 60th day of 2024. There are 306 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On February 29, 1940, Hattie McDaniel became the first Black actor to win an Academy Award when she took best supporting actress for "Gone With the Wind," which won eight Oscars overall including best picture.

On this date:
In 1504, Christopher Columbus, stranded in Jamaica during his fourth voyage to the West, used a correctly predicted lunar eclipse to frighten hostile natives into providing food for his crew.

In 1796, President George Washington proclaimed Jay's Treaty, which settled some outstanding differences with Britain, in effect.

In 1892, the United States and Britain agreed to submit to arbitration their dispute over seal-hunting rights in the Bering Sea. (A commission later ruled in favor of Britain.)

In 1904, bandleader Jimmy Dorsey was born in Shenandoah, Pennsylvania. In 1960, the first Playboy Club, featuring waitresses clad in "bunny" outfits, opened in Chicago.

The News-Banner

(USPS 059-200)

Evening News est. 1892 • Evening Banner est. 1899 • Consolidated 1929

News-Banner Publications, Inc.
George B. Witwer, Chairman of the Board
Doug Brown, President, Publisher
Dianne Witwer, Secretary/Treasurer

Periodicals Postage Paid at Bluffton, IN 46714. Published every day except Sundays and principal holidays at 125 N. Johnson St., Bluffton IN 46714, Post Office Box 436

Holly Gaskill, Editor
Mark Miller, Opinion Page Editor

Opinions expressed on this page do not necessarily represent the views of this newspaper.

Dealing with the times when life doesn't go as planned

The sun is shining. Ah, the wonder of spring becoming reality! Doesn't it take the winter chill to enable us to appreciate the soothing rays of sunshine?

Isn't that life itself? The difficult life events generate a rest and tranquility no other could reformat.

I find that those older people in my life who are full of the sweetness and gentleness I covet are often the ones who have passed through the heat of the battles of life and learned to accept situations as they are.

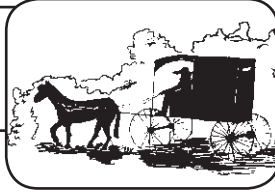
This past week, we had one of those reminders of life not being as planned. A six-week-old baby died through the night of SIDS. For that young family, the sting is real, and it's sharp.

Though I didn't know the family well, when I was a teenager, I babysat for a little girl who was a cousin to this baby's mother. Though they are not an Amish family we became friends through this connection. Though we rarely saw them, I still felt that kinship as years passed. Our children were spellbound by the story of such a tiny baby going to heaven.

We decided to all go to the viewing. It was an excellent opportunity for the children to experience the sovereignty of God, even in a situation as difficult as such.

The Amish Cook

by Gloria Yoder



It was precious to me; our six children gathered with me around the white cradle where baby Stetson was placed. Together we marveled, such sweet innocence. My mind went back to my two still-born sisters years ago, now blooming in heaven.

We do not understand why the crushing disappointment of it all. Three-year-old Joshua, who I was holding, whispered, "Is he for real?"

"The baby went to be with Jesus, where Daddy is," I responded. This reality, even sometimes too deep for us adults to grasp, made an impression on his young mind.

As the children shook hands with the grieving parents, it became real to them that these people also faced sadness with their loss. Shaking the father's hand, I told him how beautiful his son looked in the little shirt which had been cut from the father's favorite shirt. The father had requested explicitly for his best shirt to be used for a new shirt for his son. Beautiful. That's love.

The Mommy of the baby held her infant through the funeral services. Despite their grief they

rejoiced over their baby being safe with Jesus. What a beautiful picture of resilience.

Yes, we thought he was meant to stay, God meant for him to fly with the angels. I love the verse in Revelations 7:14 where it says, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

No matter how long or short our pathway to eternity is, we are promised an abundant life that goes on forever, filled with all the glories of love and joy abundant if we walk in obedience to our Savior Jesus Christ.

That afternoon Julia and Austin, along with more friends, sang at the graveyard. It was a sunny yet cool afternoon, as those gathered by the grave huddled together with both a common ache and a common joy. Though no longer with us, he's safe in the arms of Jesus, as the song they sang.

In the evening when we as a family gathered in a circle in the living room to pray, there was an



extra special accent to it. We are blessed to have each other.

As life continues, we pick up and go on with heartfelt prayers to the Father for all who have parted with loved ones. Surely, such tragedies will draw us all closer to the Lord and each other as we cry out to him.

Lastly, I'll leave you with a recipe from my cousin Judith, who is a friend to baby Stetson's mother. Judith has blessed many others with this recipe over the past months. Food can provide comfort during a difficult time and a dish like this is easy to make and people seem to really enjoy it.

EASY TACO SKILLET MEAL

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 pint tomato juice
- 3/4 cup water
- 1 package taco seasoning
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 cup rice
- 1-2 cup cups of shredded cheese (any kind you like)
- Optional: Lettuce, sour cream, salsa

Brown beef in a skillet with a lid. Add the rest of the ingredients and simmer until rice is tender, stirring several times throughout. Top with cheese and let it melt. Let it melt. Serve with lettuce, sour cream, salsa.

Helvie earns spot on SVSU's Deans' List

Over 1,800 students from Saginaw Valley State University earned a spot on the fall 2023 semester Deans' List.

Emma Helvie of Markle was among those honored for academic excellence.

To be eligible for the Deans' List, a student must take at least 12 credit hours and

carry a semester GPA of 3.4 or better.

Saginaw Valley State University is a comprehensive university with more than 90 programs of study for its nearly 7,000 students. The university is located on a suburban campus in Michigan's Great Lakes Bay Region.

This Weekend

'Live Radio Show' at the Pulse

"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 or call 260-375-017.

Artlink exhibits student art with teachers' art

Fort Wayne Artlink Gallery is sponsoring "Influences," an exhibit that will feature artwork by high school art teachers and their students, is ongoing through March 10.

Artlink representatives explain that this exhibit "reinforces the importance of art education in our schools."

Viewing hours for Artlink, 300 East Main St. in Fort Wayne are Thursday 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Friday and Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday noon to 5 p.m.

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.

FW's Youtheatre productions

Fort Wayne's Youtheatre will present the next two productions at the First Presbyterian Theater.

"The Prom" will be on stage March 1-17, There are 7:30 p.m. performances on March 1, 2, 8, 9, 15, 16 and 2 p.m. ones on March 2, 10, 17. Admission is \$16 adults and \$12 seniors and children 18 and younger and group rates. Tickets at Artistix o 260-422-4226.

FW Bach Collegium presenting St. John Passion

In celebration of the 300th anniversary of J.S.

Bach's St. John Passion, BWV 245 the Fort Wayne Bach Collegium will be presenting it on Sunday, March 3, at 4 p.m. at the Zion Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne.

Ticket information available at the web site at www.bachcollegium.org or at the group's Facebook page.

The Zion Lutheran Church is located at 2313 South Hanna St. in Fort Wayne.

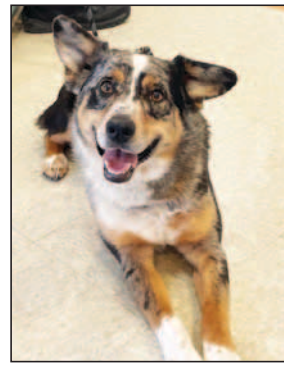
'Making Waves' art at Orchard Gallery

"Making Waves" art will be featured at the Orchard Gallery in Fort Wayne throughout the month of March.

All items by the 30 artists will be have a water focus and include wall art, jewelry and pottery. An open house will be held on Saturday, March 2, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Other hours will be Monday through Friday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The website is www.TheOrchardGallery.com.

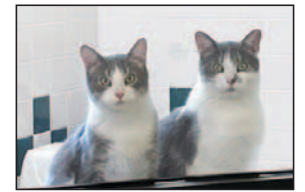
A Talk with Tego



Ruger is a three-year-old, Blue Merle Texas Heeler (cattle dog/Australian Shepherd mix), neutered male. He is very friendly but needs an only pet home.



Gwen is a one-year-old, domestic short hair, spayed female. She is super sweet but shy at first.



Loki and Aeros are almost two years of age, neutered and bonded brothers. They are both very affectionate.



Tego

Tego's Tips: Brushing a dog regularly removes its loose fur.

These are just a few pets available for adoption at the Wells County Animal Shelter, 1613 W. Cherry St., Bluffton. For more information call 824-6063.

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March 2, 2024
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Discover the magic of small-town elegance at our Formal Event Expo!

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- John & Renelle Stauffer~Airbnb
- Amy Sprunger Photography
- Josie Smith Photography
- AVT Creates~Photography & Videography
- ML Creamery~Food Truck
- Ellie Grace & Co~Tux Rental, Permanent Jewelry
- Son Rise Bakery~Bakery
- Texas Tenderloin~Food Truck
- The Charcuterie Shop~Catering
- Wells County 4H~Venue

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Food aid reaches north Gaza for the first time in weeks

By WAFSA SHURABA and SAMY MAGDY
Associated Press
RAFAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Aid convoys carrying food reached northern Gaza this week, Israeli officials said Wednesday, the first major delivery in a month to the devastated, isolated area, where the U.N. has warned of worsening starvation among hundreds of thousands of Palestinians amid Israel's offensive.

The increasing alarm over hunger across Gaza has fueled international calls for a cease-fire as the U.S., Egypt and Qatar work to secure a deal between Israel and Hamas for a pause in fighting and the release of some of the hostages seized by Hamas in its Oct. 7 attack.

Mediators hope to reach an agreement before the Muslim holy month of Ramadan starts around March 10. But so far, Israel and Hamas have remained far apart in public on their demands.

Increasing the pressure on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to reach a deal, families of hostages on Wednesday launched a four-day march from southern Israel to Jerusalem to demand their loved ones be set free. Some of the around 100 hostages freed during a cease-fire in late November are joining the march, which is to end near Netanyahu's official residence.

The plight of the hostages

has deeply shaken Israelis, who see in them an enduring symbol of the state's failure to protect its citizens from Hamas' assault. In its Oct. 7 attack, the Palestinian militant group abducted roughly 250 people, according to Israeli authorities, including men, women, children and older adults. After the November releases, some 130 hostages remain, and Israel says about a quarter of them are dead.

Israel's assault on Gaza, which it says aims at destroying Hamas after its attack, has killed more than 29,900 Palestinians. U.N. officials warn of further mass casualties if it follows through on vows to attack the southernmost city of Rafah, where more than half of Gaza's population of 2.3 million has taken refuge. They also say a Rafah offensive could collapse the aid operation that has already been crippled in the fighting.

Across Gaza, more than 576,000 people — a quarter of the population — are a step away from famine, the U.N. says. But northern Gaza in particular has been gutted by hunger. The north has largely been cut off and much of it has been leveled since Israeli ground troops invaded in late October. Several hundred thousand Palestinians are believed to remain there, and many have been reduced to eating animal fodder to survive. The U.N. says one in 6 children under 2 in the north suffer from acute malnutri-

tion and wasting. A convoy of 31 trucks carrying food entered northern Gaza on Wednesday, the Israeli military office that oversees Palestinian civilian affairs said. The office, known by the acronym COGAT, said nearly 20 other trucks entered the north on Monday and Tuesday. Associated Press footage showed people carrying sacks of flour from the distribution site. It was not immediately clear who carried out the deliveries. The U.N. was not involved, said a spokesperson for the U.N.'s humanitarian coordination office, Eri Keneko.

As of Sunday, the U.N. had been unable to deliver food to northern Gaza since Jan. 23, according to Philippe Lazzarini, the head of UNRWA, the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees that has led the aid effort during the war. On Feb. 18, the World Food Program attempted a delivery to the north for the first time in three weeks, but much of the convoy's cargo was taken en route by desperate Palestinians, and it was only able to distribute a small amount in the north. Two days later, the WFP announced it was pausing deliveries to the north because of the chaos.

Since launching its assault on Gaza following Hamas' Oct. 7 attack, Israel has barred entry of food, water, medicine and other supplies except for a trickle of aid entering the south

from Egypt at the Rafah crossing and Israel's Kerem Shalom crossing. Despite international calls to allow in more aid, the number of supply trucks entering has dropped dramatically in recent weeks.

COGAT said Wednesday that Israel does not impose limits on the amount of aid entering. Israel has blamed U.N. agencies for the bottleneck, saying hundreds of trucks are waiting on the Palestinian side of Kerem Shalom for aid workers to collect them.

U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric on Wednesday

countered saying large trucks entering Gaza have to be unloaded and reloaded onto smaller Palestinian trucks, but there aren't enough of them and there's a lack of security to distribute aid in Gaza. Police in Gaza stopped protecting convoys after Israeli strikes on them near the crossing. There is also "insufficient coordination" from Israel on security and deconfliction, which puts the lives of U.N. staff and other humanitarian workers at risk.

"That's why we've repeatedly asked for a humanitarian cease-fire," he said. The U.N. has called

for Israel to open crossings in the north to aid deliveries and guarantee safe corridors for convoys.

The director of Kamal Adwan Hospital in northern Gaza said the number of children who have died in recent days from severe malnutrition and dehydration had risen to four.

Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya said that operations at the hospital will shut off starting Wednesday due to fuel shortages. "Dialysis, intensive care, childcare, and surgeries will stop. Therefore, we will witness more deaths in the coming days," he said.

Hunter Biden insists he did not involve his father in business

WASHINGTON (AP) — Hunter Biden was defiant Wednesday in a closed-door deposition on Capitol Hill, blasting a Republican impeachment inquiry into his father and the family's business affairs as a "house of cards" built on "lies" as he faced a battery of probing questions from lawmakers.

"For more than a year, your Committees have hunted me in your partisan political pursuit of my dad," Hunter Biden said in an opening statement obtained by The Associated Press. He accused Republicans of trafficking in "innuendo, distortion, and sensationalism" and insisted, "I did not involve my father in my business."

After the nearly seven-hour deposition wrapped, an attorney for the president's son told reporters that during the testimony Republicans "produced no evidence that would do anything to support the notion that there was any financial transactions that involved Hunter with his father. Period."

He added, "It seems to me that the Republican members wanted to spend more time talking about my client's addiction than they could ask any question that had anything to do with what they call their impeachment inquiry." The White House echoed their sentiments, with press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre saying its probe is a "stunt" that has "dragged on for months and months."

But GOP lawmakers remained undeterred by Hunter Biden and his counsel's repudiation of their investigation. Rep. James Comer, one of the GOP

chairmen leading the inquiry, came out late Wednesday to declare that it was a "great deposition," and said it helped back several pieces of evidence they've gathered thus far.

"But there are also some contradictory statements that I think need further review," the Kentucky Republican said, adding that the next forum for that will be a public hearing with Hunter Biden at a future date.

The deposition of President Joe Biden's son marked a decisive point for the 14-month Republican investigation into the Biden family. The probe has centered on Hunter Biden and his overseas work for clients in Ukraine, China, Romania and other countries. Republicans have long questioned whether those business dealings involved corruption and influence peddling by President Biden, particularly when he was vice president.

Yet after conducting dozens of interviews and obtaining more than 100,000 pages of documents, Republicans have yet to produce direct evidence of misconduct by the president. Meanwhile, an FBI informant who alleged a bribery scheme involving the Bidens — a claim Republicans had cited repeatedly to justify their probe — is facing charges from federal prosecutors who accuse him of fabricating the story.

Many expected Hunter Biden, who is currently under federal investigation, to spend the duration of the deposition asserting his Fifth Amendment rights. But the 54-year-old facing an indictment on nine feder-

al tax charges and a firearm charge in Delaware did not assert those rights a single time throughout the grueling, hours-long session.

Instead, the few Republicans who spoke to reporters Wednesday said that Hunter Biden provided testimony that was "defiant and dishonest."

The majority of GOP lawmakers remained quiet as the deposition dragged into the afternoon, with Rep. Jim Jordan, the other Republican chairmen leading the inquiry, declining to answer reporters' questions in the hallways. He cited the sensitivity of a private deposition and said the release of the public transcript would speak for itself.

Online Directory

Check out these websites of local & area companies and businesses.

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FISHER'S GARAGE DOORS fishersgaragedoors.com	RiverStone DENTAL riverstonedental.net	Myers FUNERAL HOMES myersfuneralhomes.com	KELLY'S COLLISION CENTER, INC. Owners: Dustin Kelly 820 W. Washington Street, Bluffton kellysautocollision.com
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Still Waters FAMILY DENTISTRY stillwatersfamilydentistry.com	Bi-County Services of Adams & Wells County bi-countyservices.com	La Fontaine Center ARHF Community lafontainecenter.org	HOME COURT HOME CARE homecourthomecare.com
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Peru buzzer-beater ends Norwell's season

By ANDREW FEEBACK

GAS CITY — Ian Potts made a three-pointer at the buzzer to defeat the Norwell Knights 45-42 in the opening round of sectional play at Mississinewa High School Wednesday night.

The season ended abruptly for the Knights, who finished with a record of 14-9 and had won five straight entering the postseason. Peru will take a 13-10 record into the semi-final round later this week and face Oak Hill.

Norwell started hot, jumping out to a 14-5 lead after hitting five straight shots, four of them from beyond the arc.

The Knights held an 18-12 lead after the first quarter, but seemed to hit a wall in the next period.

"Early in the game, we had good ball movement, and we got really good shots," coach Mike McBride said. "The second quarter, we rushed. We didn't get the ball inside. We needed to get inside touches and play off the inside touches, and we just didn't do that."

Norwell missed nine straight shots to begin the quarter, and the Tigers gradually worked their way back. Back-to-back buckets from Alex Ross put them in front 22-20, and a three-point play from Matthew Roettger made it 25-23. Roettger then came up with a steal and took it in for a layup that gave Peru a four-point cushion at the break.

Points were hard to come by in the third quarter, even though McBride felt his team did a better job of finding shots.

"We missed some shots that were good shots," he said. "We got ourselves good shots, we just didn't convert them."

Peru widened its lead to 36-27 by the end of the third, but Norwell didn't go away quietly.

A mini-run by the Knights got them within 38-35 after Cade Shelton's put-back at the 4:34 mark.

Roettger got to the bucket for a layup, then Xavier Turner hit a short baseline jumper to put the Tigers up 42-35 with 2:51 to play.

Cohen Bailey made back-to-back threes to bring the Knights within one with 1:06 left.

After the Tigers turned it over, Ashton Federspiel was fouled with 33 seconds to go. He made his first attempt to tie the game, but missed the second.

With the Tigers playing for the last shot, Roettger drove baseline, was cut off, nearly fell down, and threw an under-handed pass barely above the floor out to Potts on the wing. Potts got the shot off just before the buzzer sounded.

"Give our kids credit to get themselves back into it," McBride said. "We tied it up,

and it was unfortunate we didn't get the free throw to take the lead. Just kind of a lucky break went their way. That's just how it went."

The Knights got 15 points from Cohen Bailey and 12 from Cade Shelton in their final high school games. Adam McBride added eight and Federspiel had seven.

Roettger topped the Tigers with 17 while Ross had 13.

The postseason can be an unforgiving time of year for basketball teams, which is why McBride is pleased with what his team accomplished over the past few months.

Norwell went 11-3 in games decided by fewer than 10 points and won all three of its games that went to overtime.

"I think we exceeded a lot of people's expectations," he said. "Our kids competed really hard, and I thought our seniors were really good."

The Knights will graduate Bailey, Shelton, Federspiel and Trace Moser.

"Trace didn't really get a chance to play due to an injury from football," McBride said. "Cohen Bailey was outstanding; he had a great career at Norwell. I loved coaching Cohen, he brought it every night. Cade Shelton, great athlete, was glad to have him back on the court this year. Ashton Federspiel was our leading scorer all year and did a lot for us."

"I can't thank our four seniors enough for what they did," he continued. "It was unfortunate that we weren't able to advance to the Friday night game, but when you get a tight game like this, sometimes those things happen, and unfortunately, we were the ones on the wrong end tonight."

ryan@news-banner.com

PERU 45, NORWELL 42 At Mississinewa

NORWELL (14-9): Cade Shelton 5-8 2-4 12, Caiden Petrie 0-0 0-0 0, Garry Riley 0-0 0-0 0, Kaedyn Quintanilla 0-3 0-0 0, Adam McBride 3-8 0-0 8, Owen Wallis 0-1 0-0 0, Cohen Bailey 5-10 2-2 15, Nick McBride 0-0 0-0 0, Ashton Federspiel 2-13 2-4 7, Drew Jolley 0-0 0-0 0, Ryne Thornton 0-0 0-0 0. **TOTALS:** 15-43 6-10 42.

PERU (13-10): Ian Potts 2-7 0-0 6, Ben Wynkoop 0-0 0-0 0, Gavin Eldridge 1-4 0-0 3, Zion See 0-0 0-0 0, Alex Ross 5-7 1-2 13, Reis Bellar 0-1 0-0 0, Matthew Roettger 8-15 1-1 17, Xavier Turner 3-5 0-0 6, Jaxon Manriquez 0-0 0-0 0, Oliver Rabe 0-0 0-0 0, Isaac Braley 0-0 0-0 0, Jackson Boswell 0-0 0-0 0, Treson Ambrose 0-0 0-0 0, Talin Douglass 0-0 0-0 0, Jacob Boswell 0-0 0-0 0, Ryne Butt 0-0 0-0 0. **TOTALS:** 19-39 2-3 45.

Norwell 18 5 4 15 — 42
Peru 12 15 9 9 — 45

Three-point Field Goals: Norwell 6-19 (Bailey 3-6, Adam McBride 2-7, Federspiel 1-3, Quintanilla 0-2, Wallis 0-1), Peru 5-18 (Ross 2-4, Potts 2-6, Eldridge 1-2, Roettger 0-4, Bellar 0-1, Turner 0-1). **Rebounds:** Norwell 20 (Federspiel 7, Shelton 6, Adam McBride 4, Quintanilla 1, Wallis 1, Bailey 1), Peru 21 (Ross 7, Roettger 7, Potts 2, Eldridge 2, Bellar 2, Turner 1). **Turnovers:** Norwell 10, Peru 13. **Fouls:** Norwell 9, Peru 10. **Fouled out:** None. **Technical:** None.



Cade Shelton goes coast to coast after a steal in the fourth quarter Wednesday against Peru in game three of Sectional 23 at Mississinewa. (Photo by Glen Werling)

Bishop Luers finish Bluffton's strong season

By RYAN WALKER

In a sectional where five of the seven schools are ranked among the top-20 in 2A, the Bluffton Tigers faced the top-ranked No. 5 Bishop Luers Knights. And the Knights proved that rank, topping the Tigers 68-37 on their own floor to end their season.

Bishop Luers' (19-5) size, length, athleticism and depth was too much for the hosting Tigers (11-12).

Three Knights finished the game in double figures — Dreyln Truesdale and Daniel Kelly with 15 points and Dereon Truesdale with 11.

Bluffton wanted to clog up the scoring lanes with a 3-2 zone defense, hoping it could force deep shots due to Bishop Luers' 31% clip on the year, but that didn't work.

Kelly and Dreyln Truesdale combined for three triples in the first quarter, and the team scored all the rest of their 20 points inside the arc. That led them to a strong 29-16 lead at the break.

"It's hard," Bluffton head coach Craig Teagle said after the game. "We wanted to keep them out of the paint, and I think at halftime we'd given up 18 points in the paint and you can't do that you got to make them beat you by threes."

But then, the Knights got hot from beyond the arc, and they did it with several different players.

Kelly went 3-for-3 in the second half on threes, while Isaac Zay, Carmani Davis, Zachary Calderon and Hunter Meek all added at least one to the tally. For a team that makes about seven per game, Bishop Luers looked like a different team with 11 on Wednesday night.

"You can't," Teagle said about guarding the Knights' depth. "And overall they only shoot 30% from the three, so your goal going in is making them shoot the three ... once they got the lead the basket looks a lot bigger. I've been on that and so the basket look bigger."

For Bluffton, it didn't look like the same team either.

Rarely does their best player get shut out, but Bishop Luers had a game plan for Tucker Jenkins.

The senior forward averages 13.1 points per game and 3.9 rebounds, the Tigers' top player in both categories. He picked up his third foul with 4:45 left in the first half and Teagle had to sub him out. Even before he left the game, he didn't have a shot and didn't touch the ball much.

Teagle said that along with the foul trouble, Bluffton's guards and the coaching staff didn't do a good job finding ways to get their best guy the ball.

A bright spot for the Tigers was their first-year guard, freshman Axton Beste.

He led the team in scoring with 18 and shot a clean 8-for-13 from the floor. He will lead a Tigers' program next year that graduates Jenkins, Hunter Wenger, Eli Garrett and Andrew Hunt.

That will be in year two for Teagle, who led Bluffton to a 11-12 record after the team last season put up a 2-20 record.

His message about the season included wanting to beat Mississinewa last week to end the regular season so that the seniors could go out with a winning record. He emphasized the foundation they left behind



Bluffton freshman Axton Beste, left, drives toward the hoop past Bishop Luers' Brandon Busch in the second half of Wednesday night's sectional game in Bluffton. The Tigers' season ended with a 37-68 loss. (Photos by Chad Kline)

in year one of the new coaching regimen.

"It's tough to buy into a new coach," Teagle said. "(There's a) new way of doing things I felt like they really did, and we've always talked about them being part of the foundation. I had no idea we'd be able to have 11 wins. That tells you how much buy-in we had from them."

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BISHOP LUERS 68, BLUFFTON 37 At Bluffton

BISHOP LUERS (19-5): Daniel Kelly 5-8 0-0 15, Dreyln Truesdale 6-11 2-2 15, Dereon Truesdale 4-9 3-6 11, Isaac Zay 3-4 0-0 7, Zachary Calderon 2-6 0-0 6, Hunter Meek 2-3 0-0 5, Carmani Davis 2-5 0-0 5, George Javins 1-2 0-0

2, Cameron Mitchell 1-3 0-0 2, Brandon Busch 0-0 0-0 0, Benjamin Kiracofe 0-0 0-0 0. **TOTALS:** 26-52 5-8 68.

BLUFFTON (11-12): Axton Beste 8-13 0-0 18, Hunter Wenger 2-5 0-0 5, Tucker Jenkins 2-4 0-0 4, Cameron Williams 1-2 0-0 3, Eli Garrett 1-1 0-0 3, Andrew Hunt 0-3 0-2 0, Nolan Lambert 0-1 0-0 0, Ben Maggard 0-1 0-0 0, Jared Moser 0-0 0-0 0, Marshall Gerber 0-0 0-0 0. **TOTALS:** 16-32 0-3 37.

B. Luers 21 8 20 19 — 68
Bluffton 12 4 9 12 — 37

Three-point FG: Bishop Luers 11-24 (Kelly 5-7, Calderon 2-4, Meek 1-2, Zay 1-2, Dre. Truesdale 1-3, Davis 1-4, Mitchell 0-1, Der. Truesdale 0-1), Bluffton 5-14 (Beste 2-6, Williams 1-2, Wenger 1-1, Hunt 0-2, Jenkins 0-1, Lambert 0-1). **Rebounds:** Bishop Luers 22 (Dre. Truesdale 6, Davis 3, Meek 3, Kelly 2, Jackson 2, Calderon 2, Mitchell 1, Busch 1, Zay 1), Bluffton 14 (Williams 4, Jenkins 2, Grieser 2, Hunt 2, Beste 1, Lambert 1, Moser 1, Gerber 1) **Turnovers:** Bishop Luers 6, Bluffton 19. **Fouls:** Bishop Luers 4, Bluffton 11. **Fouled Out:** None. **Technical:** None.

News-Banner Scoreboard

BASKETBALL

High School

Monday Boys' Scores

IHSAA Sectionals

First Round

Class 1A

50. Triton
Triton 61, Culver 54
Westville 66, Argos 50
56. Blue River Valley
Blue River Valley 68, Union City 45
57. White River Valley
Bloomfield 56, Union (Dugger) 37
N. Central (Farmersburg) 85,
Bloomington Lighthouse 33
58. Bethesda Christian
IMSAA 77, Indpls International 75,
OT
Indpls Metro 101, MTI 36
59. Indpls Lutheran
Greenwood Christian 61, Provi-
dence Cristo Rey 12
60. Edinburg
Jac-Cen-DeI 55, Waldron 44
63. Loogootee
Barr-Reeve 91, Washington Catho-
lic 13
Loogootee 60, Springs Valley 47
Class 2A
33. Bowman
Andrean 58, Bowman 44
37. Bluffton
Ft. Wayne Luers 68, Bluffton 37
Whitko 63, Manchester 42
39. Tipton
Eastbrook 61, Madison-Grant 50
Taylor 51, Blackford 46
40. Alexandria
Wapahani 47, Lapel 31
Wes-Del 66, Muncie Burris 29
44. Greencastle
Greencastle 71, S. Putnam 45
Parke Heritage 85, Riverton Parke

36. 46. Southwestern (Hanover)
Brownstown 83, Henryville 41
Southwestern (Hanover) 56,
Clarksville 47
47. Paoli
Eastern (Greene) 69, N. Knox 58
South Knox 60, Mitchell 40
Class 3A
17. Calumet
Hammond Noll 54, Boone Grove

40. 21. Woodlan
Heritage 50, Ft. Wayne Dwenger

46. Leo 64, Woodlan 54
22. Frankfort
Frankfort 70, Rensselaer 57
W. Lafayette 41, Benton Central 40
23. Mississinewa
Oak Hill 67, Maconaquah 66
Peru 45, Norwell 42
24. New Castle
Delta 46, Frankton 25
New Castle 46, Jay Co. 38
26. Owen Valley
Edgewood 67, Brown Co. 37
Indian Creek 58, S. Vermillion 49,

OT
29. Greensburg
Batesville 49, S. Dearborn 45
Connersville 30, Franklin Co. 25,

OT
30. Scottsburg
Corydon 72, Charlestown 61, OT
Scottsburg 62, N. Harrison 35
31. Princeton
Pike Central 62, Washington 59
Princeton 57, Heritage Hills 52
Class 4A
1. E. Chicago Central
East Chicago Central 60, Mer-
rillville 55
2. Chesterton
Crown Point 68, Kankakee Val-
ley 39
9. Greenfield
Greenfield 50, Anderson 44
Muncie Central 54, Richmond 51
10. Lawrence North
Indpls Attacks 63, Indpls Tech 55
Lawrence North 65, Indpls N.
Central 51
11. Southport
Indpls Ben Davis 64, Indpls Pike 45

College

Men's Basketball Scores

Wednesday, Feb. 28

EAST

American 73, Army 51
Boston U. 64, Lehigh 62, OT
Bucknell 68, Loyola (Md.) 46
Colgate 77, Holy Cross 58
Duquesne 75, La Salle 63
N. Kentucky 70, Robert Morris 60
Navy 62, Lafayette 58
Northwestern 68, Maryland 61

SOUTH

Appalachian St. 89, Old Dominion
64
Arkansas St. 71, Coastal Carolina
60
Austin Peay 83, E. Kentucky 79
Belmont 83, Murray St. 61
Charleston Southern 58, Radford 57
Chattanooga 84, Mercer 75
Duke 84, Louisville 59
ETSU 81, The Citadel 63
Florida 83, Missouri 74
Florida Gulf Coast 79, North Florida
60
Georgia Southern 87, Marshall 73
High Point 100, Winthrop 96, OT
James Madison 84, Georgia St. 78
Lipscomb 90, Bellarmine 74
Louisiana Tech 90, W. Kentucky 84
North Texas 80, Tulane 76
SC-Upstate 74, Presbyterian 72
South Alabama 73, Southern Miss.

MIDWEST

Bradley 86, S. Illinois 67
Creighton 85, Seton Hall 64
Drake 107, Ill.-Chicago 105, 3OT
UNC-Greensboro 100, VMI 58
VCU 88, Rhode Island 67
W. Carolina 85, Furman 77
Wichita St. 74, UAB 66
Wofford 91, Samford 69

SOUTHWEST

Stetson 86, Jacksonville 73
Tennessee 92, Auburn 84
Troy 87, Louisiana-Lafayette 73
UNC-Greensboro 100, VMI 58
VCU 88, Rhode Island 67
W. Carolina 85, Furman 77
Wichita St. 74, UAB 66
Wofford 91, Samford 69

FAR WEST

Colorado 88, California 78

Women's Basketball Scores

Wednesday, Feb. 28

EAST

Boston U. 89, Lehigh 78
Bucknell 74, Loyola (Md.) 56
Colgate 86, Holy Cross 79
Fordham 62, Saint Joseph's 57
Navy 58, Lafayette 49
Saint Louis 78, La Salle 57
Seton Hall 71, Providence 65
Tulsa 76, Temple 67
UConn 67, Villanova 46
UMass 58, St. Bonaventure 45
VCU 69, Rhode Island 59

SOUTH

FAU 80, Tulane 67
George Mason 78, Dayton 53
George Washington 45, Davidson

MIDWEST

Ball St. 75, Akron 41
Buffalo 70, Bowling Green 55

Butler 73, DePaul 70
Cent. Michigan 76, Miami (Ohio)
73, 2OT
Green Bay 70, Fort Wayne 61
Iowa 108, Minnesota 60
Iowa St. 82, Kansas St. 76
Kent St. 76, E. Michigan 64
Ohio 67, W. Michigan 64
Ohio St. 67, Michigan 51
Penn St. 93, Purdue 88
SMU 88, Wichita St. 84, OT
Toledo 74, N. Illinois 61

SOUTHWEST

Oklahoma 71, Texas 59
Southern Miss. 67, Texas St. 59
TCU 73, Texas Tech 52

FAR WEST

Air Force 85, Utah St. 46
Colorado St. 54, Nevada 51

NBA

Wednesday's Games

Dallas 136, Toronto 125
Indiana 123, New Orleans 114
Minnesota 110, Memphis 101
Chicago 132, Cleveland 123, 2OT
Denver 117, Sacramento 96
L.A. Lakers at L.A. Clippers, 10 p.m.

Thursday's Games

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.

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.

Friday's Games

Charlotte at Philadelphia, 7 p.m.
Cleveland at Detroit, 7 p.m.
Dallas at Boston, 7:30 p.m.
Golden State at Toronto, 7:30 p.m.
Indiana at New Orleans, 8 p.m.
Portland at Memphis, 8 p.m.
Sacramento at Minnesota, 8 p.m.
Milwaukee at Chicago, 10 p.m.
Washington at L.A. Clippers, 10:30 p.m.

HOCKEY

NHL

Wednesday's Games

N.Y. Rangers 4, Columbus 1
St. Louis at Edmonton, 8:30 p.m.

Thursday's Games

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.

BASEBALL

Spring Training

Wednesday's Games

Detroit 5, Pittsburgh 3
Washington 4, Boston 3
Baltimore 12, Minnesota 3
Atlanta 7, Philadelphia 7
Toronto 3, Tampa Bay 2
Houston 6, Miami 1
N.Y. Mets 3, St. Louis 0
San Diego 3, Chicago White Sox 1
Oakland 7, San Francisco 4
Texas 6, L.A. Dodgers 4
Arizona 8, Cleveland 6
Colorado 3, L.A. Angels 1
Kansas City 9, Seattle 7
Chicago Cubs 6, Milwaukee 1

Thursday's Games

Boston vs Detroit at Fort Myers, Fla., 1:05 p.m.
St. Louis vs Washington at Jupiter, Fla., 1:05 p.m.
Chicago White Sox (ss) vs Kansas City at Phoenix, 3:05 p.m.

Pacers beat Pelicans to open home-and-home set



By CHRIS GOFF
Associated Press
INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Pascal Siakam had 24 points and 11 rebounds, Tyrese Haliburton added 17 points and 13 assists — four on late consecutive possessions — and the Indiana Pacers beat the New Orleans Pelicans 123-114 on Wednesday night.

The teams will complete the home-and-home set Friday night in New Orleans.

"It's a massively important win," said Indiana coach Rick Carlisle, alluding to his team's 34-26 record with 22 games to play. "This time of year, each game has such great meaning."

Brandon Ingram had 30 points and six rebounds for the Pelicans, who lost for the third time in their past four games. CJ McCollum added 23 points and six rebounds and Zion Williamson also scored 23 points.

Once behind by 20, New Orleans crept within three before Haliburton took over in crunch time. His stepback 3-pointer from the right wing extended the lead to 115-109 with 2:56 to play. Haliburton then assisted on three consecutive baskets by Siakam in the lane, the last a fast-break dunk that put New Orleans behind 121-111

with 1:17 to go, before finding Myles Turner for another basket in the final minute.

"I knew he's a pass-first kind of guy," Siakam said about Haliburton, the NBA's assists leader. "With the gravity that he has on offense, I'm just trying to make the right reads, the right cuts, and I know the ball is going to find me. We've got something special. I'm happy to be on the same team."

Turner finished with 14 points and 10 rebounds for the Pacers, who shot 49% from the field and made 14 3-pointers. Obi Toppin added 16 points and six rebounds, Benne-dict Mathurin scored 16 points, and T.J. McConnell had eight points and nine assists.

Indiana seized control early, finishing a dominant first quarter with a 40-24 advantage. McConnell's unchallenged learner in the lane pushed the gap to 44-24 and

prompted a timeout by New Orleans coach Willie Green early in the second period.

Mixing in some zone defense, the Pelicans slowed Indiana's scoring over the next 10 minutes and cut the deficit to 64-53 at halftime. A 10-point third quarter from Mathurin helped the Pacers carry a 96-86 lead to the fourth.

"Extremely proud of our group under the circumstances," Green said. "This was an extremely tough game. For us to get down 20 and battle back against a really good team, this was a growth moment."

Indiana played without starting wing Aaron Nesmith (sprained right ankle) and reserve forward Doug McDermott (sprained right calf).

Dyson Daniels, one of New Orleans' top perimeter defenders who was tied for 13th in the league in steals per game, missed his eighth straight because of a meniscus tear. Starting center Jonas Valanciunas, averaging 13.7 points and 9.6 rebounds per game, played only seven minutes and did not score.

"We knew we were going to have to go small," Green said. "It allows you to stay in front of them defensively. (Sitting Valanciunas) was the adjustment for us."

February

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RACING NEWS

NASCAR CUP SERIES

Pennzoil 400 presented by Jiffy Lube

Site: Las Vegas.

Schedule: Saturday, practice, 2:05 p.m., and qualifying, 2:50; Sunday, race, 3:30 p.m. (FOX).

Last race: Daniel Suarez narrowly edged Ryan Blaney and Kyle Busch in the closest finish in Atlanta history for his second career victory in the top series.

Next race: March 10, Avondale, Arizona.

NASCAR XFINITY SERIES

The LiUNA

Site: Las Vegas.

Schedule: Friday, practice, 6:35 p.m., and qualifying, 7:05 p.m.; Saturday, race, 5 p.m. (FS1).

Last race: Hill won his second straight race to open the season, surging to the lead on an overtime restart when teammate Jesse Love ran out of gas at Atlanta.

NASCAR TRUCK SERIES

Victoria's Voice Foundation

200 presented by Westgate Resorts

Site: Las Vegas.

Schedule: Friday, practice, 4:35 p.m., qualifying, 5:05 p.m., and race, 9 p.m. (FS1).

Last race: Busch moved to the lead when Grant Enfinger had tire problems with six laps to go and won in the truck series for the seventh time at Atlanta.

Next race: March 16, Bristol, Tennessee.

FORMULA ONE

Bahrain Grand Prix

Site: Sakhir, Bahrain.

Track: Bahrain International Circuit.

Last race: Verstappen completed his third consecutive championship season by winning the season finale in Abu Dhabi, his seventh consecutive victory and season-record 19th in 22 races in 2023.

Next race: March 10, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

INDYCAR

Last race: Scott Dixon won last year's season finale at Laguna Seca, his third win of the season, all in the last four races. The six-time champion gave Chip Ganassi Racing a 1-2 finish in the standings.

Next race: Season opener at St. Petersburg, Florida, March 10.

NHRA DRAG RACING

Next event: March 7-10, Gainesville, Florida.

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Next events: March 3 & 4, Barberville, Florida.

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