

# The News - Banner

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TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 2024

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## Contract with Chamber of Commerce up in air

### Private negotiations turn to public arguments after ultimatum

By HOLLY GASKILL

A contract between the Wells County Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development and local governing bodies remains in limbo after an extensive debate between the parties.

Wells County had refrained from renewing its contract last August after the Chamber announced it would be changing its bylaws, removing the board seats reserved for county elected officials. The negotiation has since grown to include a series of debated key performance indicators detailed in the prospective contract.

Chamber Board President Patty Randall submitted a revised contract Monday morning with an ultimatum attached — if not approved that evening, the partnership would cease. Due to the nature of the late changes, the County Commissioners refused to sign the document during their meeting that night.

“And I’ll be damned if I’m held hostage,” said Commissioner President Jeff Stringer. “And that’s exactly where I feel I am now.”

The meeting held considerable debate between local officials and members of the Chamber’s board.

While all parties desired to reach a consensus and were “so close” to one, the commissioners passed a motion only to have Bluffton Common Council member Scott Mentzer negotiate on their behalf. There were also multiple concluding statements

that Economic Development should not be housed under the Chamber of Commerce.

A copy of the KPIs provided to The News-Banner included a series of revisions, received by the county Friday, regarding if or how often local governing bodies should receive updates regarding Economic Development activity. This version deleted requirements to provide Economic Development’s financial reports or include officials in specific meetings. It also revised expectations of a monthly status report to a quarterly report and who would receive a monthly business attraction report.

The county pays \$100,000 annually to support Economic Development through the Chamber. According to Stringer, the city of Bluffton also pays \$68,424.30 annually, Ossian \$13,340.90, Markle \$5,135.30, Zanesville \$777, Poneto \$700.90, Uniondale \$519.90 and Vera Cruz \$207.80.

Instead of an annual contract, Stringer advised the county has been paying as needed while negotiation continued.

“We’re not going to dictate everything you do, but we pay the bill (and) we need to be at the table,” Stringer said.

Josh Barkley, Ossian Town Council member, later echoed this. “Anything that’s tied to taxpayer money should be tied to an elected official,” he added.

Many officials also took issue with the sudden deadline declaration, given how many months the negotiation has already taken.



Commissioner Jeff Stringer (left) lifts up a copy of the revised key performance indicators he was sent while he discussed the back-and-forth with the Wells County Chamber of Commerce board. Commissioner Mike Vanover sits at right. (Photo by Holly Gaskill)

“I feel like we’re so close to the finish line that it feels crazy to draw a line in the sand now,” said Mayor John Whicker.

Chad Kline, Economic Development executive director, recognized this thought but advised he could not continue activities in good faith, not knowing if Economic Development would have funding secured.

Subsequently, Chamber Board Member John Stauffer asked if the county could consider a fee-for-service agreement for several

months, saying the current negotiation was like a “gun pointed at our head.” He continued, “There isn’t the lack of interest in resolving it, but we have a fiduciary responsibility to (Economic Development), and to the Chamber, and all of the folks that we represent.”

Commissioner Mike Vanover motioned to this extent, saying the county would financially commit through June with the intent to resolve negotiations in the coming weeks, and

(Continued on Page 2)



### Bingo With Lisa

Bingo with Jason may have been missing Jason, but it still went on strong as over 20 people showed up to afternoon bingo at the Wells County Public Library main branch. Lisa Powell-Sabinske, pictured right, hosted the event. In the above photo, from left to right, Victoria Culp, Karen Reinhard and Diana Shaw all anxiously await the next number. (Photos by Jonathan Snyder)



## Key issues hang in the legislative balance with deadline looming

By LESLIE BONILLA MUÑIZ, CASEY SMITH and WHITNEY DOWNARD  
Indiana Capital Chronicle

Indiana’s lawmakers have just days to finalize legislation in key areas like health and education — from literacy and antisemitism to ambulances and a Medicaid shortfall. And some continued attempts to increase legislative oversight of the executive branch are on track for passage, but others appear dead.

“A lot got accomplished (but there’s) stuff still to be done as we work through the last remaining issues,” House Speaker Todd Huston told reporters Thursday. “... Look for a strong week next week, and hopefully (we’re) wrapping it up by some point on Friday.”

“(There are) lots of things still in the air,” Senate President Pro Tem Rodric Bray said. “... There’ll be plenty of conversations ... as well as we try to get some of those things across the finish line, but (there’s been) lots of progress between us and the House right now on some of those outstanding issues.”

Talks still ongoing for multiple education bills

On the education front, lawmakers pushed a major literacy overhaul bill across the finish line last week. Senate Bill 1 — which drew pushback over a provision that’s likely to require thousands more reading-deficient third graders to be held back a year in school — is the standout measure of the 2024 session, Bray said Thursday.

Another contentious measure, Senate Bill 202, is also headed to Holcomb.

The bill seeks to push speech in college classrooms toward “intellectual diversity” and requires university boards of trustees to establish policies that prevent faculty from receiving tenure or promotions if they have not encouraged “free expression” and intellectual diversity, or if they teach students political views unrelated to their discipline.

Multiple other bills are still in negotiations — or headed that way.

That includes House Bill (Continued on Page 2)

## Vice President Harris hosts Israeli war Cabinet member

### U.S. pushes to get more aid into Gaza

By AAMER MADHANI and SEUNG MIN KIM

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris met on Monday with a member of Israel’s wartime Cabinet who came to Washington in defiance of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as the Biden administration intensifies its efforts to push more

humanitarian aid into war-battered Gaza.

White House officials said Benny Gantz, a centrist political rival of Netanyahu, requested the meeting and that the Democratic administration believed it was important that Harris sit down with the prominent Israeli official despite Netanyahu’s objections.

President Joe Biden, Harris and

other senior administration officials have become increasingly blunt about their dissatisfaction with the mounting death toll in Gaza and the suffering of innocent Palestinians as the war nears the five-month mark.

“The president and I have been aligned and consistent from the very beginning,” Harris said in an exchange with reporters shortly before meeting with Gantz. “Israel has a right to defend itself. Far too

many Palestinian civilians, innocent civilians have been killed. We need to get more aid in, we need to get hostages out, and that remains our position.”

The White House, in a statement following the meeting, said Harris and Gantz discussed the urgency of completing a hostage deal to free more than 100 people believed still to be in captivity in Gaza following Hamas’ Oct. 7 attack on Israel. She also reiterated the administration’s

support for a temporary extended cease-fire that would facilitate the release of hostages and allow for a surge of humanitarian assistance throughout Gaza.

Although Gantz holds many of the same hardline views as Netanyahu, he has been seen as more open to compromise on critical issues, including the increased delivery of humanitarian assistance.

The meeting comes after the (Continued on Page 2)

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### Outside



Rain and thunderstorms today, cool and windy

Today	Wed.	Thursday
High 64	High 52	High 54
Low 43	Low 37	Low 42

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## Chamber of Commerce

(Continued from Page 1)

with Mentzer leading those negotiations.

Representing the board, Chamber Board Vice President Julie Thompson said she could not speak on the board's behalf and would bring the proposal to them.

At this statement, open arguments between board members and officials boiled over. Chamber Board Past President Sam Haifich questioned why the officials couldn't commit and continue the revision process regardless, saying that the agreement should be considered a "living document." Stringer proceeded to question why Economic Development insisted on operating in such secrecy.

Kline, who had largely remained in the background of the conversation, was visibly stressed and frustrated with the matter.

"At what point in time do we say 'Enough is enough?' And just say, 'We're not going to reach an agreement?'" Kline asked. "We got this document two weeks ago. We thought we were going to have an agreement in December, and here we are in March, and we've been tabling, tabling, tabling, tabling (a decision)."

"On both sides," Vanover said. "Right? But we're the ones getting all the blame here, and that's not appropriate," Kline added.

"I don't agree with that," Stringer countered.

"You can not agree all you want, but that is not appropriate for all the blame

to be on the Chamber," Kline said.

Stringer continued to say officials have received a number of phone calls with accusations about their intentions or character. Several others present had also alluded to ongoing gossip and arguing between the parties.

"We need to quit the brawling," Thompson said. "The negotiators have to hear each other. And not everybody is going to get, I'm going to say, their way, because that's the only word that's coming to mind right now. But we're all here for one thing, and it's Wells County. And quite honestly, I want this all over with."

Vanover then revised the motion, and he, Stringer and Commissioner Blake Gerber voted in favor of continuing negotiation with Mentzer as the primary representative and the intention to resolve the matter by their next meeting, 5 p.m. March 18.

Directly following this decision, the commissioners discussed a joint contract with the city of Bluffton for continued Economic Development consultation from Cheryl Morphew of Johnson County. Morphew also played a key role in compiling the KPIs under discussion.

Mentzer said he had written a list of KPIs in October and, hearing nothing from the Chamber, sought Morphew's help. He then tied in the county and later town officials with the effort. Previously, each governing body would approve its own contract with the Chamber.

Mentzer proposed the consultation from Morphew could be beneficial

in helping the city and county understand more about economic development. "And we think it's a tool to assist (Kline), not to take over for (Kline)," Stringer added.

Gerber interjected that he didn't feel comfortable deciding at this time, since he had only received the proposal Friday evening. Mentzer said the same matter will appear before the Board of Works at 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 5.

Multiple attendees then left in apparent frustration, continuing murmured conversations in the hallway outside of the meeting room in the Carnegie Annex.

County Council member Brandon Harnish likened the situation to issues with authority and advisory boards at the Wells County Health Department. "It's designed to fail," he said. "It's designed for a communication breakdown."

This mirrored an earlier sentiment from Stringer, who stated he believed Economic Development should be separate from the Chamber.

"I've seen people walk out frustrated, and there's some anger," Stringer said. "This is what it's about. This is what government is supposed to do. You're supposed to have an open forum. You're supposed to disagree."

Following the meeting, the commissioners advised they did not know whether or not the Chamber would accept the temporary solution or continue in severing ties.

holly@news-banner.com

## Legislative balance

(Continued from Page 1)

1137, dealing with religious instruction and school chaplains. The bill originally required schools to release students for up to two hours of weekly religious instruction at their parents' request.

The Senate education committee added a provision from a separate bill to also allow chaplains to serve as school counselors. Under the latest draft, they can only provide secular guidance, except for emancipated minors or with a parent's permission, however.

Legislation that would define and ban antisemitism at Indiana's public education institutions must receive a Senate vote by Monday's deadline. But even if it clears the chamber, the bill is likely headed to a conference committee, where further deliberations over the bill will take place.

Despite their previous support for the legislation, many members of Indiana's Jewish community withdrew their approval after a definition of antisemitism adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance was removed from House Bill 1002 by the Senate education committee.

"We obviously passed that bill out unanimously," House Speaker Todd Huston said of the earlier draft of the House GOP priority measure, which included the IHRA definition of antisemitism. "We pass legislation that are priorities for our caucus, and (the Senate) has their opinions, too, and we'll work through it. Maybe sometimes we get through it, other times we don't."

Senate Bill 282, focused on chronic absenteeism, is also up for a Monday vote in the House. The proposal requires school districts to prohibit habitually truant students — those who have 10 or more unexcused absences — from participating in extracurricular activities.

Under the bill, school officials must additionally report habitually truant students to the prosecutors' office. Prosecutors would then have to notify parents that they've filed affidavits related to their students' absenteeism.

Closed-door debate is meanwhile underway for a broad higher education measure requiring the state education department to offer an online option for all Indiana College Core courses by 2027.

Senate Bill 8 would fur-

ther require colleges and universities to offer three-year degree programs.

Other language in the bill allows Indiana's attorney general to sue state higher education institutions that fail to report any contracts of value with or gifts from foreign "sources" located in foreign adversaries, like China, Iran, North Korea or Russia.

A Senate chamber vote is also expected Monday for House Bill 1001. The work-based learning proposal — which builds off a massive 2023 bill that put in motion statewide career-centered education and training programs — would allow high school graduates to use money from the 21st Century Scholars program and Frank O'Bannon grants for training such as apprenticeships, rather than traditional college degrees. If passed, the bill still needs final approval from the House.

And amid what some Hoosier education officials have called an ongoing school counselor "crisis," the General Assembly has yet to finalize House Bill 1243, which guarantees that school counselors will have more time to provide services for students that are increasingly in demand.

The provision appeared earlier in a different bill and has been amended multiple times as lawmakers attempt to ease concerns from school district officials.

The latest draft requires that for the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 academic years, schools must ensure that at least 60% of a school counselor's aggregate time on the clock is devoted to providing direct services to students. That increases to 85% beginning with the 2026-2027 school year.

**Health language added to Senate funds bill**

Several smaller health care issues remain outstanding — including legislation on nurse training, health care mergers and reimbursements for ambulances. Most have filed motions to concur or saw minor changes in their non-originating chamber and will likely cross the finish line.

The biggest looming issue in the health care sector is legislative action on the \$1 billion Medicaid shortfall and additional reporting requirements for the overseeing agency, the Family and Social Services Administration.

After announcing the \$1 billion "variance" in the Medicaid budget, FSSA proposed

several program changes — the largest of which would transition 1,622 disabled children from attendant care to Structured Family Caregiving (SFC). For families, who have rallied at the Statehouse repeatedly in protest, that would mean a significant cut in payments.

House lawmakers used Senate Bill 256, a state funds bill, as a jumping off point for a slew of bipartisan amendments related to FSSA and attendant care.

On top of committee amendments, Rep. Jeff Thompson spearheaded an additional wave of amendments from the House floor. The Lizton Republican authored language mandating that 80% of state funds used to pay providers under SFC go to families, with 20% reserved for administrative expenses.

"As we've heard, there's some cases where families are receiving less than half the amount of dollars. I don't think that's the way to operate," Thompson said.

**Assistance with majority of the individual's daily living tasks**

Two life-saving medical devices or interventions, such as assistive devices for coughing, a cardiac monitor, a suction machine, a feeding pump, oxygen support, medication for uncontrollable seizures or chest percussion therapy.

To pay families providing such care, FSSA could establish an additional tier of payments under SFC and/or apply for a federal waiver to expand the state's attendant care program.

The Arc of Indiana, which advocates on behalf of Hoosiers with disabilities, called the amendments a win for the disability community in a release.

"We greatly appreciate that members of the House have heard the cries of families seeking action to help them continue to care for loved ones with significant disabilities at home. We now call on members of the Senate to support those efforts and support families across the state," said Kim Dodson, the organization's CEO.

But Thompson acknowledged the bill likely won't get a concurrence vote from the Senate, which would send it to a conference committee. Doing so would open negotiations between the two chambers to find middle ground but could strip out all of the changes made by House lawmakers.

"... We're getting a lot of reports — and I mean a lot of reports — and I think (FSSA's) full-time job there is going to be compiling reports," Thompson said on the House floor Thursday. "... my guess is some of these things — a lot of them — won't come through in the conference committee report. But at least we have it on the table as a fair discussion."

**Oversight proposals see mixed progress**

Legislation offering limited oversight measures over the state's opaque economic development agency is likely dead this session, legislative leaders say — but they're moving forward with other proposals increasing legislative branch control over the governor and executive branch agencies.

Senate Bill 295 would've required the Indiana Economic Development Corp. to tell counties or municipalities about land buys larger than 100 acres ahead of closing. It also would've added two lawmakers to the quasi-public agency's board as non-voting advisory members.

It sailed through the Senate on a 44-5 vote, but didn't secure a House committee hearing before a Tuesday deadline. The state's top two lawmakers said they didn't know if they'd revive it.

Asked where the language could land, House Speaker Huston simply replied, "Not sure."

Senate President Pro Tem Bray said there are "lots of real conversations about that."

"I don't know if we'll see that resurrected or not," he added.

Lawmakers are still on track for some other flexing over the executive branch.

Senate Bill 234 puts new limits on disaster emergencies declared by the state's leader. It's in reaction to a slew of pandemic-era executive orders by Republican Gov. Eric Holcomb.

Holcomb is term-limited, but lawmakers have said they want to show the state's next leader "where the parameters are." Numerous candidates are currently vying to succeed him.

The legislation still needs to pass the House, and after that, the chambers will have to agree on a final version for the bill. That's because House lawmakers weakened it last week by allowing more time and fewer strings attached on initial declarations and renewals.

## Weather

Tuesday, March 5, 2024

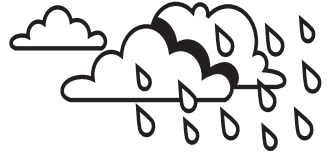
(24-hour observations at 9:53 p.m. Monday)

High: 72; Low: 51; Precipitation: None

Wabash River Level (at the Main Street bridge): 1.66 feet at 8:45 p.m. Monday

## Wells County forecast

**Today:** Rain and thunderstorms likely, mainly before noon. Cloudy, with a high near 64. South wind 10 to 15 mph becoming west in the afternoon. Winds could gust as high as 25 mph. Chance of precipitation is 70%. New rainfall amounts between a tenth and quarter of an inch, except higher amounts possible in thunderstorms.



**Tonight:** A 20% chance of rain before 10 p.m. Cloudy, with a low around 43. North wind around 10 mph.

**Wednesday:** Mostly cloudy, with a high near 52. Northeast wind 10 to 15 mph.

**Wednesday Night:** Mostly cloudy, with a low around 37. Northeast wind 10 to 15 mph.

**Thursday:** Partly sunny, with a high near 54.

**Thursday Night:** A 20% chance of showers after 1 a.m. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 42.

**Friday:** Showers likely, mainly after 1 p.m. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 59. Chance of precipitation is 70%.

**Friday Night:** Showers. Low around 43. Chance of precipitation is 80%.

**Saturday:** A 50% chance of showers. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 49.

**Saturday Night:** A chance of rain and snow showers. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 30. Chance of precipitation is 30%.

**Sunday:** A slight chance of rain and snow showers. Mostly sunny, with a high near 43. Chance of precipitation is 20%.

**Sunday Night:** Partly cloudy, with a low around 29.

**Monday:** Sunny, with a high near 48.

## Vice President

(Continued from Page 1)

U.S. on Saturday carried out the first of what are expected to be ongoing airdrops of humanitarian aid into Gaza.

The moment is reflective of the increasingly awkward dynamics in the U.S.-Israel relationship, with the U.S. forced to fly badly needed aid past its close ally as it looks to ramp up assistance for desperate civilians in Gaza. The first airdrop occurred just days after more than 100 Palestinians were killed as they were trying to get food from an Israel-organized convoy.

The White House agreed to the meeting with Gantz even as an official from Netanyahu's nationalist Likud party said Gantz did not have approval from the prime minister for his meetings in Washington. Netanyahu gave Gantz a "tough talk" about the visit — underscoring a widening crack within Israel's wartime leadership.

"We have been dealing with all members of the war Cabinet, including Mr. Gantz," White House national security spokesman John Kirby said. "We see this as a natural outgrowth of those discussions. We're not going to turn away that sort of opportunity."

In addition to his talks with Harris, Gantz met with White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan and National Security Council Middle East coordinator Brett McGurk. Gantz was met with Senate Minor-

ity Leader Mitch McConnell and on Tuesday will sit down with Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

Gantz, just before the start of his White House meetings, told a reporter with Israel's public broadcaster Kan: "There will be an open and honest conversation between two friendly and important countries and partners."

Biden is at Camp David, the presidential retreat just outside Washington, until Tuesday as he prepares to deliver the annual State of the Union address later this week.

Over the weekend, Harris issued a forceful call for a temporary cease-fire deal in Gaza, which administration officials say would halt fighting for at least six weeks. She also increased pressure on Israel not to impede the aid that workers are trying to get into the region. The White House has been advocating for that framework deal for weeks.

Israel has essentially agreed to the deal, according to a senior Biden administration official, and the White House has emphasized that the onus is on Hamas to come on board.

Biden faces mounting political pressure at home over his administration's handling of the Israeli-Hamas war, which was triggered when militants in Gaza launched an attack, killing 1,200 people and taking about 250 people hostage.

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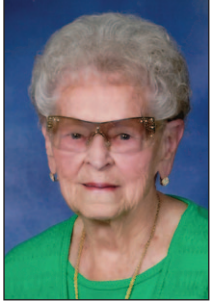
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OBITUARIES

Betty R. Powell, 97

Betty R. Powell, 97, passed away Monday, March 4, 2024, at Christian Care Retirement Community following an extended illness.



Betty was born in Berne on July 2, 1926, to Arnett Stauffer and Neola (Whitehurst), both parents preceded her in death. She married Clifford M. Powell on Dec. 15, 1946, in Bluffton; He preceded her in death April 9, 1987. Betty attended Berne High School and was a member of the First Reformed Church in Bluffton.

She worked as a waitress at the Dutch Mill Restaurant for nine years, served as a greeter at McDonald's in Bluffton for 10 years and also worked alongside her husband on the family farm for 26 years. Betty and two of her sisters sang in the GE choir for many years. She enjoyed traveling to Florida to visit friends, trips to the lake with family, and cruising the countryside in the "Gator" to see the crops. Betty always looked forward to her noon McDonald's lunch group.

Survivors include three sons, Gerry (Patricia) Powell of O'Fallon, Mo., Terry L. Powell and Byron T. Powell both of Bluffton; one sister, Toni Brewster of Berne; four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

In addition to her parents and husband, she was preceded in death by a son, Clifford M. Powell Jr.; and two sisters, Waneta Amstutz and June Dresser.

Visitation will be Friday, March 8, 2024, from 10:00 until 2:30 p.m., at Goodwin - Cale & Harnish Memorial Chapel in Bluffton, followed immediately by a funeral service at 2:30 p.m. Dr. Bryson Gene Bell will officiate. Burial will take place at Elm Grove Cemetery in Bluffton.

Memorials can be made in Betty's memory to First Reformed Church in Bluffton.

Online condolences can be made to [www.goodwin-calehamish.com](http://www.goodwin-calehamish.com).



Erica Bennett (left), manager of the Bluffton branch of First Bank of Berne, presents the donation check to Jean Wesly Alcin, project and partner development coordinator of Loving Shepherd Ministries. (Photo submitted)

FBB donates to Loving Shepherd Ministries

First Bank of Berne made a \$1,000 donation to Loving Shepherd Ministries.

LSM provides adoption resources, helping families in the U.S. save time and money in the adoption process. For severely vulnerable children who don't get adopted, LSM creates in-country Homes of Hope to foster long-term redemption stories for individual vulnerable children, as well as their communities. For children who still have at least one parent, but whose families are in dire need of business training and other assistance, LSM provides Family Preservation in Haiti and Ethiopia. They also provide technical education and practical skills through LSM Technical Education, as well as job opportunities in the broader communities we serve through Business Operations. Finally, LSM's U.S. Programs provide counseling and essential tools for American adoptive and foster parents.

These funds were going to help purchase auction items for their benefit on March 2 at the Wells Co. 4-H Building.

Donations can be made on their website, [loving-shepherd.org](http://loving-shepherd.org), or by contacting LSM at 260-824-9000.

United Way opens for impact grant applications

United Way of Wells County is thrilled to announce that its Community Impact Grant Allocations are now open until April 1. This is the chance to secure funding for Wells County programs and initiatives by non-profit, 501(c)(3) organizations.

The application and further information is available online, at [form.jotform.com/240503664719155](http://form.jotform.com/240503664719155).

As a funded agent, grant recipients are expected to participate in future community Funded Partner Meetings, participate in our annual campaign by helping the executive director present during our 2024/2025 campaigns across Wells County in the Fall of 2024 and 2025. We also require quarterly updates be submitted through Jotform on these dates: July 15, Oct. 15, Jan. 15 and April 15 if funding is approved.

The following documents are necessary for an application: agency funding form with contains program funding requests; budgets for both agency and each program submission; current by-laws and mission statement; current board list with names, addresses, and term expiration, and a list of board officers; 501(c)(3) determination letter; most current audit and form 990; agency conflict of interest policy, agency policy on diversity, equity and inclusion, including non-discrimination; success story for each program submitted; agency and program budgets using excel spreadsheet; and memorandum of understanding and anti-terrorism certifications provided in initial email.

Please direct any questions to United Way of Wells County, 260-824-5589.

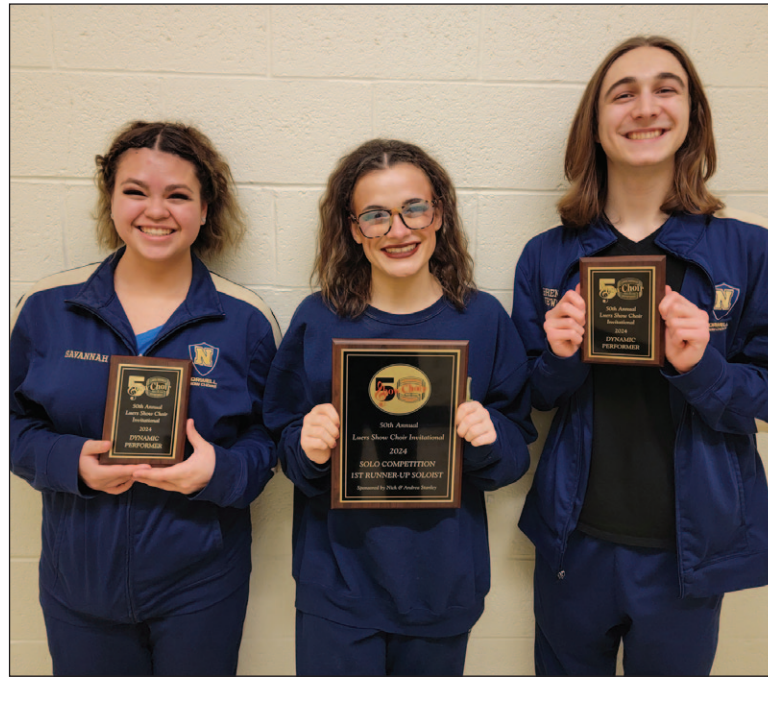


The singing Knights

This past weekend the Norwell Show Choirs competed at the 50th Anniversary Bishop Luers Midwest Show Choir Invitational. On Friday night, Norwell Middle School's Knight Sounds, pictured at top, earned 5th Runner Up and eighth grade student Phoenix Whitsitt was named the group's outstanding performer.

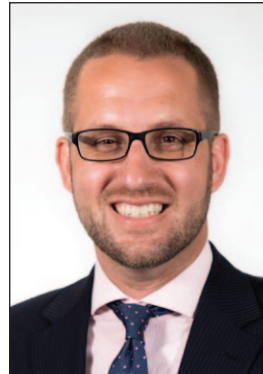
Saturday, Knight Stars was awarded 5th place in the Univoice division and Sophomore Savannah Bosworth was named outstanding performer. Knight Moves earned 3rd place in their division with junior Brenner Newsom named outstanding performer. Senior Emily Edmiston was named 1st Runner Up in the solo competition. At left, pictured left to right, Savannah Bosworth, Emily Edmiston, Brenner Newsom.

Norwell will spend this weekend hosting groups from around the Midwest for the 2024 Norwell Show Choir Invitational. Doors open for spectators at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, March 9, with full day tickets costing \$20. (Photo provided)



Ossian Rotary to hear from Justin Woodward with F&M Bank

At its regular weekly meeting on Thursday, March 7, Ossian Rotary will hear from Justin Woodward, Regional Retail Manager with F&M Bank. He is responsible for supporting offices in Allen, DeKalb and Steuben counties, and will be discussing trends in banking behavior from the past two decades and how that is shaping the future.



Justin Woodward

Woodward's banking career began with IAB Financial Bank in 2016 and he has worked in Markle, Ossian, New Haven, Leo, and Decatur. His experience touches retail, commercial, and mortgage banking. With a background

in education, he is passionate about developing people and helping customers understand their banking experience. Outside of work he is a father of two and volunteers with Honor Flight Northeast Indiana and the USO.

Anyone is welcome to attend Ossian Rotary this Thursday morning, at 7:30 at First Baptist Church of Ossian, 1001 Dehner Drive.

For more information, please contact Jeremy Penrod, Ossian Rotary President, at [jeremy.penrod@edward-jones.com](mailto:jeremy.penrod@edward-jones.com).

Please note that Ossian Rotary will

cancel when Norwell Community Schools has a delay or cancellation due to weather.

Next Thursday, March 14, Ossian Rotary will hear from Barb Lehrman of the Adams County Emergency Management Agency discussing the upcoming solar eclipse.

Ossian Rotary is a small part of a larger organization, Rotary International, which was founded almost 120 years ago in Chicago. Ossian Rotary is a group of people with a desire to meet new people, network, get involved and make a difference in Ossian and the surrounding community. Each week we have a different speaker, usually business experts, political and civic leaders, and entrepreneurs, who help us stay informed on topics that are relevant to our community.

Police Notebook

INCIDENTS

**City:**  
 Thursday, 2:20 p.m., 600 block of Beth Avenue. Report of subject stumbling and drooling, possibly on drugs. Welfare check requested for child in the home with subject.  
 Thursday, 3:48 p.m., Walmart. Report of theft.  
 Thursday, 3:53 p.m., 300 block of Premier Avenue. Report of road rage incident where male driver got out and hit a female driver's windows. No physical contact occurred.  
 Thursday, 4:11 p.m., Walmart. Report of theft.  
 Thursday, 4:12 p.m., Walmart. Report of theft.  
 Thursday, 4:28 p.m., West Dustman Road and Toll Circle. Driver warned for misuse of center turn lane.  
 Thursday, 6:38 p.m., Dollar General. Report of parking problem, citation issued.  
 Thursday, 6:57 p.m., Valley Park Apartments. Subject requested to speak to officer regarding issue with non-resident.  
 Thursday, 7:29 p.m., 500 block of West Miller Street. Report of possible animal abuse.  
 Friday, 2:56 p.m., 200 East South Street. Report of theft of a trailer plate.  
 Saturday, 2:12 a.m., Ind. 1 and East 300 North. Driver arrested for possession of marijuana and operating while intoxicated.

Saturday, 5:24 a.m., 800 block of Avondale Drive. Report of subject attempting to get into car. Driver advised it was hers.  
 Saturday, 11:25 a.m., Capri Court and North Main Street. Report of a subject operating a moped with a baby. Officer noted subject was on an electric bike, not a moped.  
 Saturday, 12:18 p.m., 200 block of East Townley Street. Caller reported daughter was missing and possibly in Decatur.  
 Saturday, 3:45 p.m., 400 block of West Wabash Street. Caller reported girlfriend stole his wallet and then drove past him to throw it at him. He cannot locate the wallet, later located his ID and debit card on the ground outside.  
 Saturday, 7:35 p.m., 1200 block of Lancaster Street. Report of vandalism on vehicle from possible paintball gun.  
 Saturday, 10:53 p.m., 500 block of East South Street. Report of a bat trapped in a sack. Bat released outside.  
 Sunday, 1:07 a.m., Wells County Jail. Report of a suspicious subject.  
 Sunday, 1:43 p.m., Hampshire Court Apartments. Caller reported domestic issue.  
 Sunday, 2:34 p.m., 900 block of West Wabash Street. Caller reported unwanted subject on property.

Sunday, 3:11 p.m., 1200 Lancaster Street. Report of theft of a motorcycle.  
 Monday, 12:45 p.m., East Spring Street and Elm Drive. Report of a black lab barking up the wrong roadway.  
**County:**  
 Friday, 2:37 p.m., Wells County Jail. Warrant served to Gisela Gonzalez at the jail.  
 Friday, 4:29 p.m., Wells County Jail. Caller requested deputy to stand by for custody exchange.  
 Friday, 5:53 p.m., South 300 West and West S.R. 218, Bluffton. Driver cited for speeding 70 in a 55 mph zone. Driver was warned for operating with expired plates and updated her registration on her phone before the interaction ended.  
 Friday, 10:42 p.m., Wells County Jail. Protective order served to Ryan Smithley.  
 Saturday, 9:10 a.m., 400 block of Countryside Drive, Markle. Report of an improperly parked vehicle. Vehicle wasn't blocking anything but the caller's view.  
 Saturday, 10:13 a.m., 500 block of Countryside Drive, Markle. Report of an egged vehicle.  
 Saturday, 12:26 p.m., 500 block of Countryside Drive, Markle. Report of a neighbor recording caller.  
 Saturday, 5:04 p.m., 1500 North 700 East, Bluffton. Caller reported unsafe shooting practices.  
 Saturday, 8:34 p.m.,

10000 South 200 West, Keystone. Caller reported a suspicious vehicle at vacant house next door. Officers located four subjects in vehicle along with several large glass bongos on the floorboard, several containers of a substance believed to be marijuana, an empty bottle of vodka, and a total of seven vape pens. All four subjects detained and relayed over to their parents.  
 Sunday, 6:28 a.m., Memorial Gardens. Subject pulled over for two active warrants for arrest. Jose Angel Martinez Jr. arrested for probation violation for charge of methamphetamine and failure to appear.  
 Sunday, 11:36 a.m., 3000 block of West Cherry Street, Liberty Center. Welfare check requested for dogs in back yard. One dog was tightly leashed. Owner fixed the leash and advised all dogs are cared for.

(Continued on Page 10)

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## The dawn of artificial intelligence

It seems one can't pick up a newspaper or journal without seeing a major piece on artificial intelligence. Until perhaps a year or so ago, I hadn't even heard the term except in science fiction and now it gets more Google hits than Taylor Swift's antics at a Kansas City Chiefs football game — the Taylor Swift phenomenon being something else I hadn't heard of until recently. I don't really live in a cave but I would like to.



Mark Franke

To illustrate, "Bad Chatbots Pose New Threat on Web"

was a recent headline in the Wall Street Journal. I didn't read the article, not wishing to send myself even deeper into my personal Luddite purgatory.

### Hoosier Opinions

It's everywhere. Even my word processor automatically inserted "intelligence" as soon as it recognized I was typing "artificial." How did it know it was the next word I had in mind? Is my thinking so transparent or is the adjective artificial no longer used in any other context? I know the latter can't be true because my long-time friend, the best man at my wedding, just got an artificial knee replacement. But he is of my generation so perhaps we geezers still have literary rights to the adjective since we would never use it to modify the noun "intelligence."

In the interest of full disclosure, I am writing this on a laptop computer wirelessly connected to the internet. My document is automatically saving itself to the cloud, wherever that might be. Maybe there are Biblical legions of angels sorting out all the nonsense we humans write or calculate into spreadsheets. I hope so, because at my age I need all the artificial support I can get . . . although my knees are still working naturally.

As much as I want to hide from this all, I realize that it presents a real and present danger to our civilization if it gets into the wrong hands and is used for the wrong purposes. Human history does not provide comfort regarding that probability. For every altruistic humanitarian in the world, one can't but fear there is a demented, hate-driven sociopath seeking an opportunity. Reading too much history can be depressing.

I am privileged to serve as a judge each year at the American Legion's national oratorical contest for high school students. This requires that I go through sexual abuse training before being approved for this year's contest, the training focusing largely on recognizing when physical abuse might be occurring. That training is depressing enough, knowing that our children are threatened with potential physical abuse, but now AI becomes another tool in these predators' toolbox. How do we protect our children from that?

Am I an alarmist, a twenty-first century Chicken Little? I try to stay optimistic but I have young grandchildren who will live with this after I depart this mortal coil. I can't protect them from the grave, or can I?

While we certainly should strive to keep our children safe, I wonder if we are going about all wrong. The term "helicopter parent" isn't heard much anymore but a "no risk" parenting approach still exists. It goes beyond participation trophies for the littlest ones; it continues into adolescence as kids are faced with a choice between over-structured, adult-supervised activity or excessive isolated screen time on digital devices. Kids can't be kids like we were back in the Eisenhower years. We improvised unsupervised play using anything that was to hand, creatively imagining whatever caught our fancy.

Did we get hurt? On occasion, yes. But never seriously other than one broken arm which gave my neighbor bragging rights for about a month. He lived.

As politically incorrect as this statement is, children who grow up in a traditional family with mother and father are much more likely to get there — there being a wholesome life filled with enough resilience to overcome the stuff that hits the fan. Provided, of course, these parents allow their children to learn to face adversity and overcome it.

Author Greg Lukianoff touched on this issue in his book "The Coddling of the American Mind." He posits three great untruths that have retarded the development of the younger generations. One he calls the untruth of fragility, a belief that any challenging situation is to be avoided at all costs rather than confronted and resolved. It prevents children from maturing through experience and therefore leaves them unequipped to face the uncertainties of adulthood.

Lukianoff wrote this in 2018 before the advent of AI and I am not aware of his addressing the AI threat in any recent books. I am sure others have and will; Barnes & Noble will soon have a whole shelf devoted to this topic if not already. A quick search of the B&N website produced over 5,000 hits including the title "Artificial Intelligence for Dummies."

I think that says it all.

Mark Franke, an adjunct scholar of the Indiana Policy Review, is formerly an associate vice chancellor at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne.

# MR. AMERICA PAGEANT



## Crybaby conservatives vs. self-appointed democracy savers

Somewhere over the rainbow, happy little bluebirds fly and troubles melt like lemon drops. In morose America, however, frustration is accumulating like steam in a boiler.

Voters wonder: How did the nation saddle itself with a selection process for presidential candidates that has produced *this*? Here is how.

In tumultuous 1968 — war, urban disorder, assassinations — two Democratic senators, Eugene McCarthy and Robert F. Kennedy, competed in primaries for the nomination that would be conferred at the convention in Chicago. But as rioters battled police in Grant Park, the nomination was won by Vice President Hubert Humphrey, who had entered no primaries. (There had been only 15.) He came, however, within a whisker of winning in November.

Determined that never again would nominations be decided by professional politicians in "smoke-filled rooms," the Democratic Party (with the Republican Party following it) democratized the nominating process by the proliferation of primaries: "The people" would decide. So, in 1972, the reformed process nominated George McGovern, who in November lost 49 states, winning just 37.5 percent of the popular vote.

In 1920, the phrase "smoke-filled room" entered America's political lexicon when Republican politicians in a Blackstone Hotel room two blocks from Grant Park bestowed the nomination on Ohio's Sen. Warren G. Harding. His 26.2 percent margin of victory in the popular vote is the largest since widespread popular voting began in the 1820s. Evidently "the people" liked the candidacy hatched in the smoke.

This year, Republicans might, for the first time, give a third consecutive nomination to the same candidate. The GOP is a plucky party, undaunted by the fact that its hero has lost the popular vote twice, the second time by 7 million votes as he was losing six of seven swing states: Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin — all but North Carolina, which he carried by 1.3 percent.

Time was, contested states were more numerous. Michael Barone, principal author of the "Almanac of American Politics," has noted: "In 1960, 19 states went for one candidate or the other by less than 5 percent of the popular vote and another 13 states by between 5 and 10 percent. The corresponding numbers in 2020 were 8 and 6 states." In 1960, 19 states, with 248 electoral votes, were targeted by both can-



George Will

didates. In 2020, the eight targeted states had 123 electoral votes. If the immediate future resembles the recent past, this year in 42 states the presidential campaign will be of anesthetizing boredom. Lucky them.

The nation seems likely to have an excruciatingly long campaign that will turn on small vote differences in a small number of states. Political homogenization accompanies polarization: Only five sitting senators belong to the party whose nominee their state rejected in the 2020 presidential election.

Donald Trump is playing the Republican nominating electorate as skillfully, if not as melodiously, as Yo-Yo Ma plays the cello.

With a chip on his shoulder the size of a cello, Trump has transformed the GOP from a party for optimistic strivers into a gloomy conglomeration of crybaby conservatives. It is wresting from Democrats the role as the woe-is-me party of victims who feel put upon by society's big battalions (Big Tech, globalizing manufacturing corporations, manipulative media, the education establishment, etc.).

Today's Democratic Party says it must save democracy from Trump in November. (If Democrats cannot save it by getting the Supreme Court to permit states to ban him from their ballots.) The party might, however, try to save democracy from him next January if, in November, democracy produces a result offensive to democracy's Democratic saviors. Northwestern University law professor Steven Calabresi, blogging for the Volokh Conspiracy, wonders:

Suppose Trump again wins an electoral vote majority while losing the popular vote. Would a Democratic-controlled House count Trump's electoral votes? Many of its members will consider today's Supreme Court illegitimate and will regard the electoral college as an affront to democracy.

Although it is unknown which party will control the House on Jan. 6, it is probable that Kamala D. Harris will be Senate president. Would she do as the Senate president (Vice President Mike Pence) did on Jan. 6, 2021? Would she, against the passions of her party, count the electoral votes as they are certified by the states?

The Electoral Count Reform Act of 2022 clarifies that the Senate president performs a merely ministerial function. But is obeying the ECRA more important than "saving democracy"? Harris should be asked, *now*.

georgewill@washpost.com

## Joe Biden's inane war on packaging

Joe Biden has met the enemy, and it is smaller packaging for foodstuffs.

The White House is targeting the practice known as "shrinkflation," or companies keeping the nominal price of a product the same while decreasing the amount. This, naturally, is just another way of charging more. If the price is the same, but you're getting only 14 ounces of Wheat Thins instead of 16, you are paying more for your whole-wheat crackers.

President Biden slammed shrinkflation in a Super Bowl video featuring various offending snacks, including Doritos, Tostitos and Oreos. He called it a "rip off," and declared that "the American public is tired of being played for suckers." He may revisit the theme in his State of the Union address.

This has to rank as one of the most economically illiterate and juvenile presidential crusades in recent history.

Shrinkflation is a symptom of inflation, not a cause. And to the extent it is fooling anyone about higher prices, it is helping Biden, whose economic record has been blighted by persistently high prices, especially for food.

A company that is raising its prices can either charge more or reduce the size of its product. What Biden is suggesting is that the former is the best option and companies should always increase their sticker prices.

If he were being cogent, Biden should have held up a bag of Doritos



Rich Lowry

in his Super Bowl video and said, "I don't care what Frito Lay says — this bag should be .50 ounces bigger and more expensive than it is now. How dare corporate America deal with the stubbornly high inflation the last few years by trying to hide from people how they are paying more for food."

Of course, Biden's goal is to shift blame, yet complaining about smaller bags is only another way of complaining about higher prices. He might as well be pointing out that beef now costs an ungodly \$8 a pound, or that the price of baby food has increased nearly 9% over the past 12 months.

According to a report in The Wall



Street Journal, consumers are spending the highest proportion of their disposable income on food since 1991.

The focus on shrinkflation is a variant of the corporate-greed argument advanced by Elizabeth Warren and other progressives. It maintains that inflation is an artifact of companies arbitrarily deciding to raise prices to boost their profits. There is a basic implausibility in this theory. It

assumes that for several decades during the long period of low inflation in the U.S. corporations didn't use this pricing power. Then, they suddenly decided to wield it beginning in 2021, coinciding with a period of supply-chain disruptions, loose monetary policy and extravagant federal spending — all of which one would expect to be drivers of inflation.

As for shrinkflation, even the consumer advocate who has been briefing the White House on this trend, Edgar Dworsky, admits that "these tactics tend to become more prevalent during times of high inflation," in the words of a CNBC report.

The causes of higher food prices, by the way, aren't a mystery. Why is the price of beef elevated? The supply of cattle has declined. What's up with the more expensive Oreos? Cocoa prices, The Wall Street Journal reports, recently passed a 46-year record. And labor costs have gone up with increases in the minimum wage in states across the country.

Still, The New York Times reports that the White House is considering new executive actions to crack down on shrinkflation. Assuming it's within the power of the presidency to influence the size of bags, boxes and bottles of food and drink, forcing them to stay larger would only render the underlying price increases more plain.

One might think that the nation's chief executive would have more important things to worry about than the size of Gatorade bottles, but such is the White House's political desperation on food prices that nothing is too inane or nonsensical.

Rich Lowry is on Twitter @RichLowry

## The News-Banner

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1,000 BOOKS BEFORE KINDERGARTEN



Several children recently completed the 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten Program at the Wells County Public Library by reading and listening to 1,000 books with the help of family members.

At left, Hannah Stauffer (holding her prize book "Color Zoo") is pictured with her grandmother, Letty, and her mom, Renelle.



At right, Kuyper and Vera Schrock (holding their prize books "Animals: Making Homes" and "Five Little Monkeys") are pictured with their sister, Emery, and mom, Hannah.



At left, Eloise and Charlotte Richeal (pictured left to right holding their prize books "One Snowy Morning" and "The Very Hungry Caterpillar") are pictured with their parents Samuel and Morgan.

The 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program is sponsored by the United Way of Wells County, the Wells County Foundation, and the Friends of the Library. The program not only helps prepare children for school, but instills the value of reading and life-long learning. For more information visit the Wells County Public Library's website at [www.wellscolibrary.org](http://www.wellscolibrary.org) and click on the "Children" section.

Area students earn spot on Manchester University Fall 2023 Undergraduate Dean's List

Congratulations to Manchester University students who have earned a place on the Fall 2023 Dean's List for their academic achievements. At the end of each semester, the Office of Academic Affairs publishes the list.

Undergraduate students earning a semester grade point average of 3.5 or higher who have completed at least 12 semester hours with no more than three hours of Pass/Not Pass grades are included on the Dean's List. Students with more than one hour of Incomplete (I) or Not Recorded (NR) grades at the end of the semester are not eligible for the Dean's List.

Students from the area who made Manchester University's Fall 2023 Dean's List include:

- Colleen Caylor of Ossian, studying Environmental Studies
- Reece Colclessor of Roanoke, study-

- ing Exercise Science & Fitness
- Connor Hamilton of Bluffton, studying Biology-Chemistry & Chemistry
- Alexis Jones of Hartford City, studying Criminology
- Cayden Nash of Markle, studying Marketing
- Alexandra Oden of Markle, studying Psychology
- Andrew Pressler of Montpelier, studying Exercise Science & Fitness
- Chase Walker of Ossian, studying Nursing
- Anna Wilson of Bluffton, studying Exercise Science & Fitness
- Kylee Wilson of Ossian, studying Business Management & Marketing
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Controlling your acid reflux with both short- and long-term solutions

*Question: My doctor says that I have GERD and has put me on medication that reduces my stomach acid. What else can I do to stop the pain and nausea that I feel after eating?* — Greg T., Moline, Illinois

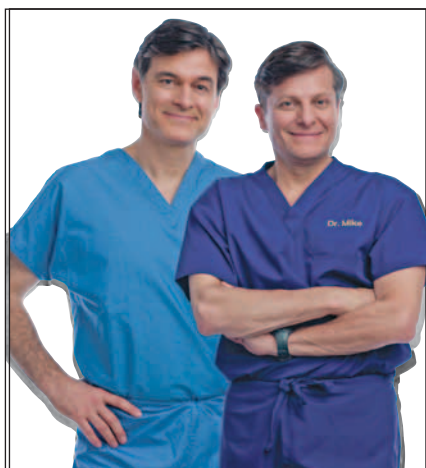
**Answer:** GERD requires prompt and effective treatment. It can increase your risk for ulcers in the lining of the esophagus, difficulty swallowing, and cancer; trigger breathing problems, sore throat and coughing; and affect voice quality. This happens when the flap at the end of your esophagus — your lower esophageal sphincter — doesn't close tightly after you swallow food or liquid, allowing stomach acid to enter the esophagus.

For most folks with GERD, prescription and over-the-counter proton pump inhibitors are the go-to remedy. The country's bill for the pill? Twenty billion annually. But, according to a 2022 study, \$14 billion of that is spent unnecessarily. And, we might add, unwisely.

The American Gastroenterological Association guidelines say PPIs should be taken at the lowest dose and for the shortest amount of time possible. Why? One example: A recent study in Neurology found that taking PPIs for 4.4 years or longer increased the risk of dementia by 33 percent. But taking PPIs for a shorter amount of time didn't increase the risk.

Non-prescription H2 blockers (Pepcid and Zantac, for example) also reduce stomach acid, but they can interfere with other medications and you shouldn't take them if you're pregnant, breastfeeding or with certain medical conditions.

So, talk to your doctor about minimizing the damage from GERD with a combination of (supervised) medication and lifestyle changes,



Mehmet Oz, M.D. and Mike Roizen, M.D.

such as losing weight, quitting smoking, avoiding foods that trigger reflux and elevating the head of your bed when sleeping.

If medication and lifestyle treatments don't ease your GERD, you may be a candidate for Nissen fundoplication — a laparoscopic surgery that tightens the junction between your stomach and esophagus, preventing reflux.

For more information on managing GERD, check out the iHerb.com blog: "GERD: 'What It Is, Foods + Supplements That May Help, + More.'"

\*\*\*

*Question: Since I started a high-pressure job last year, my belly has gotten bigger and bigger. I don't think I'm eating any more than I did, maybe even less because I have less time in the day. What is going on? And how can I reverse it?* — Stephanie R., Jacksonville, Florida

**Answer:** You have brought up a problem that affects millions of Americans — the accumulation of metabolically active fat that builds

up in your torso, blanketing the liver, kidney, pancreas, intestines and stomach. This visceral fat causes chronic inflammation and increases your risk of everything from metabolic syndrome, arthritis, diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and stroke to dementia, asthma, and precancerous intestinal polyps.

You may accumulate visceral fat from a diet loaded with ultra-processed foods, sugars and syrups, and lack of physical activity. But one major cause that often gets overlooked is stress. That's why you may be seeing your belly expand even if your calorie count hasn't.

Chronic stress promotes belly fat because it floods your body with the hormone cortisol — which elevates your blood sugar, increasing insulin production and insulin resistance. It also alters your metabolism.

How do you trim down belly fat?

- Try eating more soluble dietary fiber — available in the supplement psyllium or oat bran, barley and quinoa. According to a study in Obesity, every 10-gram increase in intake of soluble fiber correlates with around a 4 percent decrease in the rate you accumulate visceral fat.
- Combine a fiber-rich diet with physical activity. A daily routine of walking and a bit of aerobics helps control cortisol levels and increases stress-relieving endorphins. And because visceral fat is more metabolically active than fat right under your skin, you can shed it in your sweat and urine. With a healthy diet and regular exercise, you should see it start — and then continue — to disappear in two to three months.
- Follow the science-backed exercise and nutrition routines at [LongevityPlaybook.com](http://LongevityPlaybook.com).

Easter Walk at Southern Wells Community Church

The Southern Wells Community Church is hosting a free Easter Walk on Sunday, March 17, from 5:30 to 8 p.m., at the church located at 9450S 300W, Poneto.

A 20 minute guided tour will take visitors to hear the "incredible story of Jesus during his final days on earth."

Pancake and sausage brunch

Poe Volunteer Fire Department pancake and sausage brunch will be held Sunday, March 24, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Poe Firestation. Brunch cost is \$8 for adults, \$4 for children 6-12, and free for children under 6. Carry-out is available. This event helps maintain the building, fire equipment, and purchase new equipment when needed.

Easter Egg Hunt at First Reformed Church

First Reformed Church will be hosting a Community Easter Egg Hunt on March 16 starting at noon.

There will be a free lunch followed by an egg hunt for children ages 3-11.

The church is located at 301 West Cherry Street in Bluffton.

Coffee concerts at Crescendo by 'the Phil' groups

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

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

FW's Civic Theatre offers 'Six Degrees of Separation'

Next up for Fort Wayne's Civic Theatre will be "Six Degrees of Separation" from March 15-24.

There will be 7:30 p.m. performances on the Fridays and Saturdays of March 15, 16, 22, 23 and 2 p.m. ones on the Sundays of March 17, 24.

Tickets are \$25 adults, \$20 seniors and \$15 for those 23 and younger. This production is rated R. To arrange for tickets call 260-424-5220.

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# Decisions made by prospects could impact NFL combines

By **MICHAEL MAROT**

**AP Sports Writer**

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — The NFL scouting combine's evolution from hidden gem into the league's second-most anticipated offseason event has come with all sorts of twists.

The question is whether this year's new ones could affect future combines.

All-American receiver Marvin Harrison Jr. skipped media interviews, while Heisman Trophy-winning quarterback Caleb Williams took the highly unusual step of opting out of the medical exams — a primary reason for holding the combine each year.

Harrison and Williams are both expected to be selected in the top five of April's draft. And while their rankings are unlikely to be affected by their opt-outs, it could raise questions with teams. The Chicago Bears hold the No. 1 overall pick.

It also will force Williams to endure multiple exams.

"I'll be doing the medical stuff, just not here in Indianapolis," Williams said Friday, who like Harrison does not have an agent. "I'll be doing them at the team interviews. Thirty-two teams cannot draft me, there is only one of me, so the teams I go to for my visit, those teams will have the medicals. That's it."

There are also the potential long-term ramifications for Williams.

Teams invest significant resources into evaluating players, particularly quarterbacks, and refer to those scouting reports when considering free agent deals or trades.

Franchises without Williams' initial medical reports could be missing a key component for those future decisions — should his career not work out with whatever team drafts him.

"You want to have a thorough evaluation on all the players because you go back to those, and you look at those evaluations as those guys grow in the league and go through free agency," Bears coach Matt Eberflus said last week.

But will it become a trend? Combine organizers, team executives and coaches won't know till everyone returns to Indy next winter.

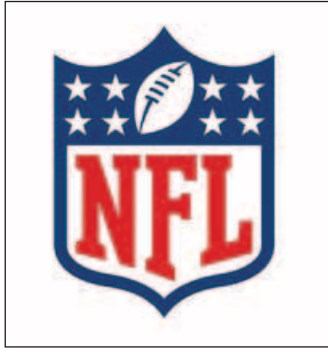
## STOCK RISING

Xavier Worthy's record-breaking 4.21-second, 40-yard dash Saturday night provided the weekend's most electrifying moment.

But the former Texas star wasn't the only big winner in Indy — or even among this crowded group of talented receivers.

Brian Thomas Jr. of LSU and Devontez Walker of North Carolina both showed their speed by running 40s in 4.33 and 4.36 seconds. Rome Odunze of Washington was impressive on the field — and during his media interviews.

National championship game quarterbacks J.J. McCarthy of Michigan and Michael Penix Jr. of Washington threw well, and offensive tackle Joe Alt of Notre Dame



matched the top-10 hype.

Cornerbacks Nate Wiggins of Clemson (4.28 seconds) and Quinyon Mitchell of Toledo (4.33) had strong 40s, while former Texas defensive tackles Byron Murphy II and T'Vondre Sweat cemented their status as two of the top players at their position.

## STOCK FALLING

Edge rusher Bralen Trice arrived nearly 30 pounds lighter than his playing weight at Washington, but didn't look any more athletic without the extra weight.

Receiver Troy Franklin of Oregon didn't help himself during the "gauntlet" drill by weaving near the 30-yard line rather than hugging the line as he should have and Keon Campbell of Florida State ran the second-slowest 40 of any receiver, 4.61 seconds.

Penn State cornerback Kalen King also needs to perform better at his pro day after posting the same 4.61 as Coleman.

## LEADERS AND RECORD BREAKERS

Michigan followed its title run by sending a record 18 players to the combine.

In addition to McCarthy, running back Blake Corum, receivers Cornelius Johnson and Roman Wilson and a bevy of defenders including linebacker Junior Colson and defensive tackle Kris Jenkins, the Wolverines also had six offensive linemen get invites.

"It's pretty wild, actually. You can only start five on the offensive line, right?" said Drake Nugent, one of the six. "It's just a credit to who we were as a whole room, not just the starting five but Trente Jones as the sixth man, he had to deal with that tight end role the first three quarters of the year."

## INJURY WATCH

Quarterback Jordan Travis of Florida State, guard Zak Zinter of Michigan and cornerback Cooper DeJean of Iowa did not work out as they recover from injuries. Running back Rasheen Ali of Marshall sat out with a ruptured biceps he suffered at the Senior Bowl.

NFL Network also reported several others were injured in Indy.

Former Penn State offensive tackle Olu-muyiwa Fashanau hurt his right thigh and former Georgia offensive tackle Amarius Mims hurt his right hamstring on Sunday. Wiggins pulled out of the workouts following Friday's 40 with a bad hip flexor.

Doctors also diagnosed injuries to two players during their medical exams. Cornerback Kool-Aid McKinstry of Alabama was found to have a fractured foot and they found receiver Ainius Smith of Texas A&M had a stress fracture in his left shin.

## UP NEXT

With the Senior Bowl and combine now complete, scouts, coaches and team decision-makers head into a busy pro day and free agent season. Teams can officially start signing new players March 13, and the NFL draft will be held April 25-27 in Detroit.

## High School Calendar

### TUESDAY, MARCH 5

No events scheduled.

### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6

No events scheduled.

### THURSDAY, MARCH 7

No events scheduled.

### FRIDAY, MARCH 8

No events scheduled.

### SATURDAY, MARCH 9

TRACK & FIELD (CO-ED): Norwell at Bulldog Invite at Indiana Tech (Warrior Park), 10 a.m.

### MONDAY, MARCH 11

No events scheduled.

### TUESDAY, MARCH 12

No events scheduled.

### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13

No events scheduled.

### THURSDAY, MARCH 14

No events scheduled.

### FRIDAY, MARCH 15

TRACK & FIELD (CO-ED): Bluffton, Norwell at Taylor University Qualifier, 5:30 p.m.

## Detroit Red Wings captain and leading scorer Dylan Larkin is out two weeks with injury

DETROIT (AP) — Detroit Red Wings captain Dylan Larkin will miss roughly the next two weeks because of injury, an absence that will test the team over its upcoming road trip and beyond.

Coach Derek Lalonde said Monday that Larkin would be out with a lower-body injury, which occurred in the team's loss to Florida over the weekend. Joe Veleno moves into the top-line center spot between Alex

DeBrincat and Patrick Kane to temporarily fill in for Detroit's leading scorer.

"It's going to be probably more minutes for Joe," Lalonde said after practice. "A good challenge for us. Everyone goes through injuries. We didn't handle it very well the last time Dylan was out. I think we'll respond a little better this time around."

The Red Wings lost three of the four games Larkin missed in December, though as Lalonde pointed out that was also when they were dealing with injuries to several other players at the same time.

"We've been fortunate with our depth all year long, and this will be tested again and

I'm confident in the group," Lalonde said. "These are the bumps. You want to stay in that battle, you want to get over that line, you've got to fight through some of these things and this is our opportunity."

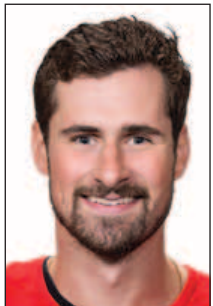
Larkin, 27, has 26 goals and 28 assists for 54 points in 55 games this season. The Red Wings hold the first of two Eastern Conference wild-card spots and are on track to return to the playoffs and end a seven-year drought going back to their most recent appearance in 2016.

Lalonde called Larkin a driver for Detroit because of the stability he provides playing big minutes at even strength, on the power play and the penalty kill. It won't just be on Veleno to fill the void.

"Everyone's got to do a little bit more," Lalonde said. "I think they understand the task."

The Red Wings head out to visit Colorado on Wednesday, Arizona on Friday and Vegas on Saturday before wrapping up their stretch of road games next Tuesday, March 12, at Buffalo. Larkin could also miss additional home games against the Coyotes and Sabres and at Pittsburgh that are within this two-week span.

Tied with Tampa Bay in the standings but having played two fewer games, Detroit leads the New York Islanders by six points, Washington by seven and New Jersey by eight in the playoff race.



Dylan Larkin

## Cavaliers All-Star guard Donovan Mitchell to miss more time with knee injury

By **TOM WITHERS**

**AP Sports Writer**

CLEVELAND (AP) — The Cavaliers have thrived with Donovan Mitchell in their lineup. They'll have to survive without him for a while.

Cleveland's All-Star guard will miss at least three more games — and possibly more — after receiving treatment for a bone bruise in his left knee.

Mitchell, who is averaging 28.0 points per game and career-highs in several other categories, has missed the past two games with the injury sustained in a Feb. 28 win at Chicago. The Cavs initially only said he was dealing with soreness.

On Monday, Mitchell received a platelet-rich plasma injection to treat the bone bruise. He's been ruled out for games this week against East-leading Boston, Atlanta and Minnesota. His status will be reevaluated this weekend, the team said.

The Cavs aren't close to

being the same team without Mitchell, who played exceptionally well and moved into league MVP consideration while guard Darius Garland (broken jaw) and forward Evan Mobley (knee surgery) were out for an extended period with injuries.

With Mitchell leading the way, Cleveland went 23-5 leading into the All-Star break and climbed to No. 2 in the East behind the Celtics. The Cavs are currently third, one-half game behind the Milwaukee Bucks.

Mitchell also recently missed two games after the break with an unspecified illness. Cleveland has gone 7-6 without him.

He sat out Sunday night's home loss to New York, which lost All-Star guard Jalen Brunson in the first minute. However, the Knicks, who are missing three other starters, got major contributions from their bench.

The 27-year-old Mitchell is averaging 6.2 assists, 5.4

rebounds and 1.8 steals — all career bests. Cleveland acquired him in 2022 after he spent five seasons in Utah.

Mitchell has said he deserves MVP consideration, but per league rules he has to appear in 65 games to be eligible.

The Cavs will have to tap into their depth to offset Mitchell's absence, and Garland may have to carry more of the scoring load.

The 24-year-old Garland seems to have finally shaken off the rust and gotten back his strength following his six-week layoff. When his jaw was wired, Garland was restricted to a liquid diet and lost more than 10 pounds.

Garland made eight 3-pointers in a win at Detroit on Friday night, and he's connected on 20 3s in his past three games.

The Cavs will also be without guard Max Strus for Tuesday's nationally televised matchup with the Celtics. Strus strained his knee against the Knicks.

## A flurry of trades are expected with NHL playoff berths at stake

By **STEPHEN WHYNO**

**AP Hockey Writer**

Last Friday's game between the Philadelphia Flyers and Washington Capitals had the potential to upend not only the playoff race in the Eastern Conference but the NHL trading market with the deadline coming up fast.

Despite the 5-2 Capitals win, Washington is now expected to sell after falling flat in a loss to Arizona two days later. The Flyers could do some deals because it is unexpectedly in a playoff spot with less than six weeks to go in the regular season.

With many teams in limbo, the weekend provided some much-needed clarity around the league one year after the 2023 trade season featured a ton of big-name players changing places well before the deadline. Expect a flurry of activity as the week goes on ahead of the Friday 3 p.m. EST deadline.

"Everybody's kicking tires," Coyotes general manager Bill Armstrong said Sunday. "I think there were some big guys that went early and everybody's trying to put some pieces together on their team that will help it and people are trying to look for the best value possible."

There is value to be found at just about every position for Stanley Cup contenders looking for an upgrade.

Need a scoring winger? How about Pittsburgh's Jake Guentzel. A No. 1 goaltender? Calgary's Jacob Markstrom is signed through 2026. A do-it-all fourth-line center?

Washington's Nic Dowd is under contract for two potential playoff runs. Defensemen? Philadelphia has three pending free agents in Sean Walker, Nick Seeler and Marc Staal.

"We're still open," Flyers GM Briere said Friday night in Washington. "There's been a lot of discussions. There's a lot going on. You've seen what's happened in the market. There's obviously a lot of defensemen that are gone now, so we're getting a lot of calls on our guys."

Dallas last week got arguably the best defenseman available in acquiring Chris Tanev from the Flames and didn't have to give up a first-round pick to do it. Calgary's Noah Hanifin could also still be traded, along with Capitals veteran Joel Edmundson, among others at the position.

What might start the dominos falling? Pittsburgh lost at Calgary and Edmonton on back-to-back days, which could push GM Kyle Dubas closer to being a seller after he said their play would determine how he approaches the deadline.

By the time bitter rivals face off Thursday in Pittsburgh, the rosters of the Capitals and Penguins could look drastically different.

"Our priority would be the future of our club," Capitals GM Brian MacLellan said. "All decisions will be based on (that). It's not, 'Hey, we're going to go out and rent a guy for the playoffs.' We're not in that game. We're here to look for

opportunities to find more young players, add more young players to our roster and compete."

While the Capitals and Penguins, and to some extent the St. Louis Blues, are among the recent champions looking to tweak their rosters, the list of those competing for the Cup this season include Toronto, Detroit, Vegas, Colorado, Dallas, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Vancouver, Boston, Florida and the New York Rangers.

They are expected to be the league's biggest buyers, looking for the right combination of rental players and those signed beyond this year.

"There's people calling on everything right now," Armstrong said Sunday, pumping the brakes on the rental market because recent seasons have made his colleagues rethink the process. "People are understanding how important the draft is and probably more now just trying to hold onto their picks and not give up as much on the trade deadline."

Teams worth watching include the Capitals, who may trade at least Edmundson and Anthony Mantha; New Jersey, which could decide the future of Tyler Toffoli; Anaheim, which may trade Adam Henrique and perhaps All-Star Frank Vatrano; and the San Jose Sharks offloading a handful of players in their lost season.

## MLB market heating up for pitchers Snell and Montgomery

By **DAVID BRANDT**

**AP Baseball Writer**

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (AP) — Scott Boras claims the free agent market is intensifying for two-time Cy Young Award winner Blake Snell and left-hander Jordan Montgomery with opening day 3 1/2 weeks away for most teams.

"I think there's a pitching panic going on in Major League Baseball right now," the agent said Monday.

Boras was at the San Francisco Giants' training facility with third baseman Matt Chapman, a four-time Gold Glove winner who signed a three-year deal that guaranteed \$54 million. Chapman and Chicago Cubs center fielder Cody Bellinger signed agreements after spring training had started.

Boras says the market for Snell and Montgomery has been changing as teams get into spring training games and realize they don't have needed mound depth.

"We've got so many starting pitchers who are now compromised — maybe short-term, but some long-term," Boras said. "The calls for elite starters are certainly starting to increase."

Boras, baseball's most prominent agent, also has designated hitter J.D. Martinez remaining on the market. The Los Angeles Dodgers and San Diego open the season March 20 and 21 in Seoul, South Korea,



with the other 28 teams scheduled to start March 28.

Bellinger and Chapman both signed unusual contracts that give the player opt-outs after the first two seasons and the ability to try free agency again if they think that's financially advantageous.

Boras said he doesn't have a preference between short-term or long-term deals, adding every situation is different for players and teams.

Boras said Snell and Montgomery have been working out and would still be ready for opening day if signed soon.

Montgomery won a World Series with Texas last year, going 3-1 with a 2.90 ERA in five starts and one relief appearance. Snell is 4-3 with a 3.33 ERA in 10 postseason starts and two relief appearances, including a 2.70 ERA in a pair of 2020 World Series starts for Tampa Bay.

"These men have proven capacities at the biggest moments, at the biggest times, of getting a club to the World Series and getting a championship," Boras said. "When you have that kind of thing in your resume, and you want to be competitive, you're not just talking about the season, you're talking about the ability to achieve the ultimate objective — getting No. 1 performances by No. 1 pitchers in big moments."



News-Banner Scoreboard

BASKETBALL

High School

Boys' Basketball Regional Schedule 4A
East Chicago Central vs. Mishawaka
Fort Wayne North Side vs. Fort Wayne Wayne

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for various teams like Duke 79, NC State 64, Jacksonville 92, Kennesaw St. 86.

Women's AP Top-25

- 1. South Carolina (29-0)
2. Stanford (26-4)
3. Iowa (26-4)
4. Ohio St. (25-4)

Women's Basketball Scores Monday, Mar. 4

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for basketball games like Coppin St. 65, SC State 33.

College

- Men's AP Top-25
1. Houston (26-3)
2. UConn (26-3)
3. Purdue (26-3)
4. Tennessee (23-6)

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for NBA Eastern Conference teams like Boston, New York, Philadelphia.

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for NBA Western Conference teams like Milwaukee, Cleveland, Indiana.

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for Pacific Division teams like Oklahoma City, Minnesota, Denver.

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for Pacific Division teams like L.A. Clippers, Sacramento, Phoenix.

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for Sunday's Games like Philadelphia 120, Dallas 116.

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for Monday's Games like Minnesota 119, Portland 114.

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for Tuesday's Games like Orlando at Charlotte, Atlanta at New York.

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for Wednesday's Games like Orlando at Washington, Cleveland at Brooklyn.

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for Thursday's Games like Brooklyn at Detroit, Minnesota at Indiana.

HOCKEY

NHL

Table with columns GP, W, L, OT, Pts, GF, GA for NHL Eastern and Western Conference teams.

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Table with columns W, L, Pct for National League teams like Los Angeles, Cincinnati, Washington.

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for National League teams like Philadelphia, New York, Colorado.

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for National League teams like San Diego, St. Louis, Miami.

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for National League teams like San Francisco, Boston, Baltimore.

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for National League teams like Toronto, Detroit, Tampa Bay.

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for National League teams like Atlanta, Houston, Oakland.

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for National League teams like San Francisco, Chicago, Seattle.

Seattle (ss) vs Texas at Peoria, Ariz., 3:10 p.m.
Arizona vs San Diego at Scottsdale, Ariz., 3:10 p.m.

Wednesday's Games
Houston vs N.Y. Mets at West Palm Beach, Fla., 1:05 p.m.

Chicago Cubs vs L.A. Angels (ss) at Mesa, Ariz., 3:05 p.m.
Chicago White Sox vs L.A. Dodgers at Phoenix, 3:05 p.m.

Atlanta Braves vs Miami (ss) at Jupiter, Fla., 1:05 p.m.
Washington vs Miami (ss) at West Palm Beach, Fla., 1:05 p.m.

Houston 5, N.Y. Mets 2, 6 innings
Oakland 5, Texas 2
Kansas City 7, Cincinnati 3

Atlanta Braves — Ousted RHPs Allan Winans, Darius Vines, Ian Anderson, Doybal Hernandez and LHP Dylan Dodd to Gwinnett (IL).

Los Angeles Dodgers — Placed LHP Clayton Kershaw on the 60-day injured list.

Philadelphia Phillies — Agreed to terms on a three-year contract with RHP Zach Wheeler for 2025-2027.

National Football League
Detroit Lions — Re-signed TE Shane Zylstra to a new contract.

Kansas City Chiefs — Officially placed the franchise tag on CB L'Jarvis Snead.

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for American League teams like Dallas, Colorado, Nashville.

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for American League teams like St. Louis, Minnesota, Arizona.

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for American League teams like Chicago, Vancouver, Edmonton.

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for American League teams like Los Angeles, Vegas, San Jose.

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for American League teams like Arizona 5, Washington 2, Los Angeles 5.

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for American League teams like Montreal at Nashville, Seattle at Winnipeg.

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for American League teams like Chicago at Arizona, Dallas at San Jose.

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for American League teams like Toronto at Detroit, Minnesota at Indiana.

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for American League teams like Miami at Dallas, Toronto at Phoenix.

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for American League teams like Chicago at Golden State, San Antonio at Sacramento.

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for American League teams like Brooklyn at Detroit, Minnesota at Indiana.

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for American League teams like Philadelphia at Brooklyn, L.A. Clippers at Houston.

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for American League teams like Memphis at Philadelphia, Chicago at Utah.

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for American League teams like Milwaukee at Golden State, Oklahoma City at Portland.

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for American League teams like Buffalo at Toronto, Detroit at Colorado.

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for American League teams like Calgary at Tampa Bay, Edmonton at Columbus.

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for American League teams like Montreal at Pittsburgh, Buffalo at Nashville.

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for American League teams like Minnesota at Arizona, Vancouver at Vegas.

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for American League teams like Toronto at Boston, Washington at Pittsburgh.

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for American League teams like Philadelphia at Florida, St. Louis at New Jersey.

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for American League teams like Toronto at Boston, Washington at Pittsburgh.

Table with columns W, L, Pct, GB for American League teams like Toronto at Boston, Washington at Pittsburgh.



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Agriculture

New ARS Freeze Date Tool helps pinpoint planting

By AGDAILY

Agricultural Research Service climatologists have developed a first-of-its-kind Freeze Date Tool. Operated by the Midwestern Regional Climate Center at Purdue University, the Freeze Date Tool is a publicly accessible zone map that pinpoints temperature changes for growers and planters at the county level.

"Now we have a website that provides the ability to click on a location where growers can see how spring and fall temperature cutoff dates have been changing since 1950," said Dennis Today, climatologist and director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Midwest Climate Hub in Ames, Iowa.

"For farmers and planters, the Freeze Date Tool answers the question, 'What is the range of time from the last spring freeze to the first-fall freeze?' We did not have the ability to do that before," he said. "It does have an impact on perennials and that there now is a longer growing season to work with."

Currently, the Freeze Date Tool's temperature data centers on the Midwest, North Central, and Northeast regions of the United States.

"These are the areas of the country where the freeze dates are changing the most," said Today.

The tool displays freeze dates by trend, decade, and growing season. In addition, it provides freeze date and growing season tables indicating temperature changes

from 1950 to the present for each county.

"We're also working to augment the Freeze Date Tool with additional pieces of information because certain crops have different vulnerabilities to freeze dates," Today said. "That's very important, depending on what kind of crop you're growing. As temperatures change, the freeze-frost zone map gives growers the ability to access the direction of those changes."

The Midwest Climate Hub, located at the National Laboratory for Agriculture and the Environment, initially developed the temperature data in conjunction with state climatologists.

"We were able to incorporate a lot of feedback from regional partners during the development of the Freeze Date Tool," said Today.

"We are trying to develop even more tools and data for farmers and growers to try and explain how climate is changing around them."

His team at the Midwest Climate Hub is continuing research to discover what may be causing some differences in the freeze/frost temperature dates across the United States.

"We are trying to understand the regional nature of the temperature changes," Today said. "Northern areas of the country, immediately adjacent to the Great Lakes for example, are consistently seeing longer growing seasons, whereas areas further south, are not as consistent."

"Determining more specifically why these areas are different is part of our research related to this project."

John Deere introduces new S7 series combines

By CJ MILLER
Hoosier Ag Today

If you were at Commodity Classic in Houston, you couldn't help but notice—not one, but two huge new combines on display by John Deere.

Their new S7 Series of combines was officially introduced last week during Commodity Classic.

Bergen Nelson, John Deere go-to-market manager for harvesters, says their new S7 Series is designed to be even more productive while using far less fuel.

"We're really happy to show our producers the improved efficiencies that we're bringing with new power systems," says Nelson. "Also, the 20-percent productivity increase that we're going to see through new harvesting automation technology including predictive ground speed automation and harvest settings automation. Our customers are also going to see a 10-percent improvement in their fuel efficiency. We know that really impacts their bottom line, so we're

excited to see how those new engines perform in the field."

The John Deere S7 Series features four different models:

- S7 600: 333hp/249kw rated power; 367hp/274kw max power
• S7 700: 402hp/300kw rated power; 460hp/343kw max power
• S7 800: 473hp/353kw rated power; 540hp/402kw max power
• S7 900: 543hp/405kw rated power; 617hp/460kw max power

The new John Deere S7 Series combines will be equipped with either the JD14 13.6L engine, or the JD9 9L engine, both in Final Tier 4 configuration, from John Deere Power Systems. Designed to produce higher power at lower RPMs, these powerhouses offer improved all-conditions performance and advanced diagnostics capabilities.

In addition to power, the S7 Series combines also features some new technology from John Deere.

"Predictive ground speed automation is using two new cameras on the

front of our cab looking 28 feet out in front of the cutter bar and it's looking at crop height and crop density," he says. "Then we're using a predictive yield layer map on top of that. With that information we can proactively speed up and slow down the combine throughout the field to make sure that we're taking advantage of the capacity of the machines with the new S7 series. That's bringing that 20-percent productivity increase through that technology."

The S7 Series combines also offer a new high-efficiency residue management system. Featuring straight knives, a mechanical tailboard drive, and the available Premium PowerCast™ tailboard, the S7 Series combines can more consistently size and spread fine- or extra-fine cut residue up to 45 feet, while drawing up to 15 fewer hp for residue management functions.

Your local John Deere dealer will be taking orders later this year and you'll

begin seeing these S7 Series combines in the fields for 2025.

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Balancing family loyalties

Dear Annie: My daughter has a 13-year-old son by her first husband and a 14-month-old by her new husband. She and the new husband have been living together for over seven years.

She moved eight hours away with our grandson, then 6, and the boyfriend immediately moved there and moved in. He stated many, many times that he never wanted kids and it was obvious he was jealous of my grandson's need for his mom's attention.

Recently, they came for a week and my daughter got sick, which led to everyone here visiting to get sick. The au pair was not here and stayed well. They all were mostly recovered when the 13-year-old got worse with a fever, sore throat and cough.

That night, his fever spiked to 103.6, and his dad stayed home the next day and took him to the doctor. He was alone the rest of the week as he recovered from what turned out to be the flu.

I feel like this is child abuse or neglect. I am horrified that my daughter went along with this. Her husband seems to control everything, even though she's the successful one.

My ex-son-in-law will make sure we are always in my older grandson's life. If I don't say anything, I feel like I'm sacrificing my older one to stay in the life of the younger one, and I can't live with myself if I do that.

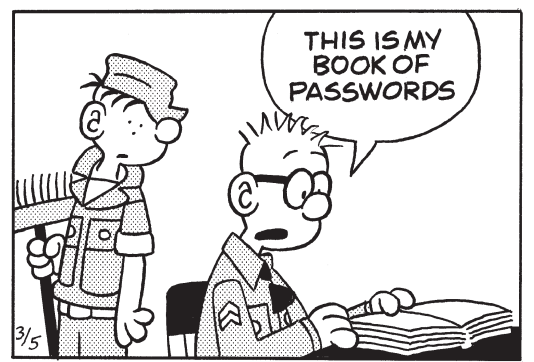
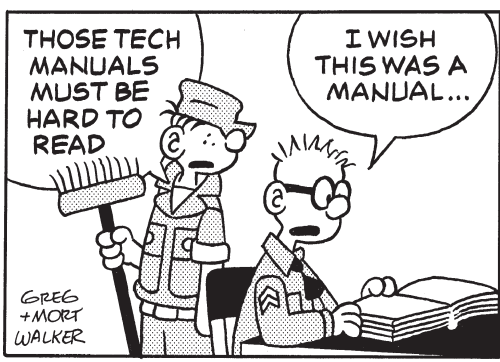
Dear No-Win Situation: Your letter is so sad. The way that your daughter is treating her older son is cold, to say the least.

Send your questions for Annie Lane to dearannie@creators.com. © 2024 CREATORS.COM

Dear Annie



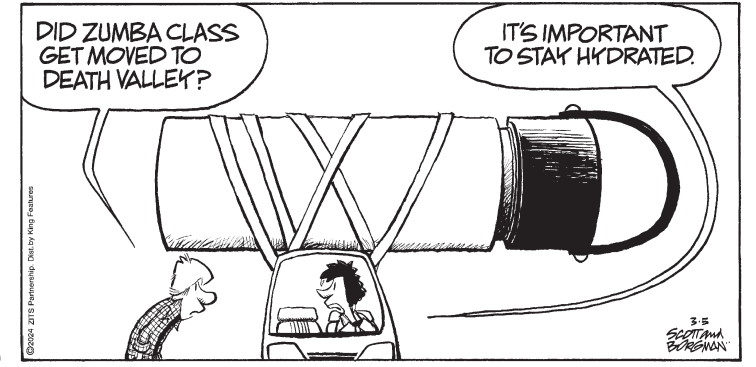
BETLE BAILEY



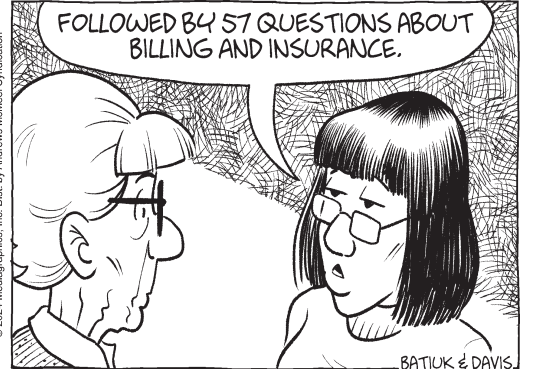
BLONDIE



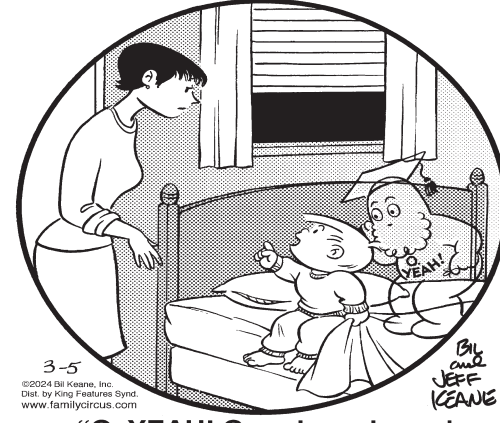
ZITS



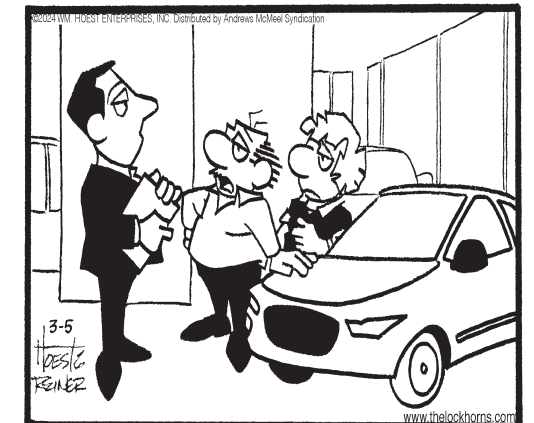
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THE FAMILY CIRCUS



The LOCKHORNS



My Answer

By Dr. Billy Graham



The Bible says that we were made for God

Question: There have been so many celebrities die young by their own will: overdosing, committing suicide, drinking themselves to death, etc.

Answer: The Bible says that we were made for God. When we refuse to give Him His rightful place, things go wrong and our lives become distorted.

When people live for themselves and feed their

desires, they will eventually find themselves empty. This is the case with so many who "appear" to be fulfilled. King Solomon penned the thought-provoking book of Ecclesiastes.

He wrote, "Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure. ... Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done ... and indeed all was vanity" (Ecclesiastes 2:10-11, NKJV).

seek filling the emptiness of life through things that can never satisfy. Only God can give life to the fullest extent (see John 10:10).

An old song says, "All to Jesus, I surrender, all to Him I freely give." Surrendering our lives to Jesus is of utmost importance. He will empower us to let loose of what the world offers so that we can be filled with what really matters — to do the will of God.

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

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Table with columns for time slots (03:05 to 12:30) and various TV channels (WINM, CBS WANE, etc.) listing programs and their start times.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS 38 "Come as my guest" 5 German river 8 Fore-head 12 Nullify 13 Fan's cry 14 Quotable Berra 15 Sledding locale 17 Survey 18 Author Fleming 19 Mandered 21 Nome home 24 Hotshots 25 Union jack? 26 Carnival attraction 30 Superlative suffix 31 Winning time 32 Notable time 33 Final contest 35 Vague handles 36 Jug eggs

Crossword grid with letters filled in for the crossword puzzle.

- DOWN 3 "Bad" 4 "I'm Rock" 7 Actor Jared 9 Leeway 10 Leer at 11 Untamed guy 16 — Paulo, Brazil 20 Pundit's piece 21 "The — of March" 22 Spew forth 28 Pickle holders 39 "Alternately," in a text 40 "— Rock" 44 Miner's quest 45 Rage 46 Freedom, for short 47 Part of UNLV

Table with columns for time slots (12:30 to 1:00) and various TV channels (WIMB, FOX WFTF, etc.) listing programs and their start times.



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## SUDOKU

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

### King Classic Sudoku

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

Difficulty: ★★

3/5

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### Lottery Numbers

**Monday's Drawings HOOSIER LOTTERY**  
**Cash 5** — 05-14-39-40-44  
**Cash4Life** — 13-36-41-49-55, Cash Ball: 01  
**Quick Draw Midday** — 01-02-06-14-31-32-33-35-38-41-49-50-51-55-58-61-63-67-69-79, BE: 06  
**Daily Three-Midday** — 06-05-03, SB: 09  
**Daily Three-Evening** — 01-07-09, SB: 01  
**Daily Four-Midday** — 01-00-02-06, SB: 06  
**Daily Four-Evening** — 07-04-01-03, SB: 01  
**Quick Draw Evening** — 05-13-14-23-30-31-33-37-40-42-43-44-45-48-52-54-60-67-69-70, BE: 42  
**Hoosier Lotto** — Estimated jackpot (for Wednesday): \$5.9 million  
**MEGA MILLIONS** Estimated jackpot (for Tuesday): \$650 million  
**POWERBALL** XXXXX Powerball: X; Power Play: X

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

**HELOISE HINT:** Keep work problems and issues private. Do not share or post information about work dilemmas online. This can end up backfiring on you. Email [HELOISE@Heloise.com](mailto:HELOISE@Heloise.com).

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### Read & recycle

## This Week's Garage Sales

Clip & Save

**GIGANTIC GARAGE SALE** March 7 & 8, 9-5, March 9, 9-2, sack sale, Forgotten Children WorldWide, 650 N. Main Street, Bluffton. Gently used clothes, Easter decor, tools, toys, couch & loveseat, drop-leaf table, end tables, antique dresser, office desk, flower girl dresses, luggage, carpet cleaner, wireless headphones, Vera Bradley purses, crafts, home decor, much more.

**HELOISE HINT:** If you are hosting a garage sale. Be friendly and helpful to everyone who drops by. Chat with your customers and help them find what they're looking for. Fax Heloise @ 210-HELOISE (435-6473).

## Public Sale Calendar

**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. Sale manager, Brandon Steffen, *The Steffen Group Inc.*, [www.steffengrp.com](http://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](http://kjauction.com).  
**MARCH 14 - 6 p.m. - Denver Neuschwander Estate, sellers.** Lehman Park, 212 Park Ave., Berne. 135+/- acres available. Selling in 3 tracts, as a combination or whole unit. Tract 1: 39+/- acres along SR 116, tillable/woods. Tract 2: 48+/- acres along 1000 S, tillable. Tract 3: 48+/- acres along 1000 S, tillable. *Heartland Auction & Realty, Inc.*, 260-724-3499, [heartlandauctionrealty.com](http://heartlandauctionrealty.com).  
**MARCH 17-25 - (Online Only Auction) - Various consignors, seller.** Antiques, primitives, Lionel trains and train items, modern furniture, vintage advertising, household items, patio furniture. Auction Preview: March 19 and March 21 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., 118 East Craig St., Ossian, IN. *The Steffen Group Inc.*, 260-824-3006, [www.steffengrp.com](http://www.steffengrp.com).  
**SATURDAY, MARCH 23 - 10 a.m. - Various owners represented.** Location: Farmers Grain & Ag LLC, 1257 St. Rd. 33, Willshire, OH. Tractors, combines, heads & carts, harvest equip., Grain carts, wag-

ons, trucks, trailers, pickups, construction, manure equipment, livestock equipment, hay equipment, planters, no-till drills, sprayers, NH3 bars, farm related, miscellaneous, mowers & ATVs, toys, native lumber. Questions, call: Farmers Grain & Ag, LLC, 419-495-2338. Auction managers: Ritter Cox, 800-451-2709, 260-609-3306 & Tim Kreider, 260-413-8008. *Schrader Real Estate and Auction Company, Inc.*, 260-244-7606, 800-451-2709, *SchraderAuction.com*.  
**MARCH 23-30 - (Online Only Auction) - The Estate of Sandra McCay and others, seller.** 2007 Dodge Caliber SXT sedan, 1999 Ford F250 with dump bed, 2013 12' utility trailer, primitives, Turn of the Century cast iron riding horse, quilts, large qty. of crocks, antique furniture, Fenton, Carnival and other glassware. Preview: March 21, March 28 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., 816 S. 11th Street, Decatur, IN. *The Steffen Group Inc.*, 260-824-3006, [www.steffengrp.com](http://www.steffengrp.com).  
**APRIL 7-14 - (Online Only Auction) - Unique Blue Bar and Grill (Formerly Stag Bar), seller.** Ongoing needs. Outstanding collection of beer signs, neon signs, beer taps, collectibles, tools, much more. Preview: April 4 and April 11 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., 205 W. Market St., Bluffton, IN. *The Steffen Group Inc.*, <http://www.steffengrp.com>, 260-824-3006.

### SUDOKU ANSWER

S/E	Difficulty	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★★	★★★★★★★	★★★★★★★★
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0
9	6	1	8	7	9	8	2	7	9
2	8	9	2	6	9	1	7	8	9
7	8	9	8	6	1	7	9	8	9
9	1	8	2	9	7	6	2	8	8
6	7	2	9	8	2	9	8	1	9
1	9	6	2	9	8	7	8	2	9
8	2	7	6	1	9	2	9	8	9
8	9	2	7	2	8	1	9	6	8

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 Apr. deadline is Tues., Mar. 26!



# Police Notebook

(Continued from Page 3)

Sunday, 7:28 p.m., 6500 East U.S. 224, Craigville. Caller reported vehicle parked on their property.  
 Sunday, 10:50 p.m., 2400 South 800 East, Bluffton. Caller reported someone was possibly in their home and left an item. Officer described the item as resembling a condom.  
 Sunday, 11:30 p.m., East Spring and South Main streets, Bluffton. Officer located object passed out behind the wheel at intersection. Driver advised he was working long hours and had to go pick up his daughter. Did not appear intox-

icated.  
 Monday, 8:16 a.m., Norwell High School. Report of damaged property near school doors. Officer located vehicle that was swerving through parking lot recklessly at Walmart.  
 Monday, 9:31 a.m., 400 West 300 South, Bluffton. Report of fraud.  
**Ossian:**  
 Friday, 3:59 p.m., North 750 East and 750 North, Ossian. Report of several unbothered horses in the roadway.  
 Saturday, 10:40 a.m., 11000

North 600 East, Ossian. Report of an aggressive dog.  
 Sunday, 3:21 p.m., 7100 North 650 East, Ossian. Caller reported someone breaking into property.  
**FIRES**  
**City:**  
 Monday, 1:34 p.m., 3800 West Oak Road, Bluffton. Report of a grass fire.  
 Sunday, 6:33 p.m., 400 block of Stillwater Drive. Report of fire in garage from propane tank.  
**County:**  
 Saturday, 12:43 p.m., S.R. 116 and North 200 West. Report of a

car fire, everyone out of the car.  
**ARRESTS**  
 Timothy James McPherson, 46, Bluffton; confinement, a Level 5 felony, strangulation, a Level 6 felony, and domestic battery, a Class A misdemeanor. Bond set at \$40,000.  
 Kyle Aaron Davis, 33, Bluffton; domestic battery, a Level 5 felony, domestic battery causing bodily injury and strangulation, both Level 6 felonies, and domestic battery, a Class A misdemeanor. No bond set.  
 Eileen Lauretta Wagner, 32, New Palestine; operating while

intoxicated, a Class A misdemeanor, possession of marijuana, a Class B misdemeanor, and operating with a controlled substance in body, a Class C misdemeanor. Bond set at \$2,500.  
 Brad Alan Ehle, 59, Bluffton; battery, a Class B misdemeanor.  
 Angel Lavon Mills, 23, Hartford City; Operating with no financial responsibility, a Class C misdemeanor.  
 Johnell Damar Watkins, 34, Bluffton; operating without ever obtaining a license, a Class B misdemeanor.

## Supreme Court restores Trump to ballot, rejects attempts to ban him

**By MARK SHERMAN**  
**Associated Press**  
 WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Monday unanimously restored Donald Trump to 2024 presidential primary ballots, rejecting state attempts to ban the Republican former president over the Capitol riot.  
 The justices ruled a day before the Super Tuesday primaries that states cannot invoke a post-Civil War constitutional provision to keep presidential candidates from appearing on ballots. That power resides with Congress, the court wrote in an unsigned opinion.  
 Trump posted on his social media network shortly after the decision was released: "BIG WIN FOR AMERICA!!!"  
 The outcome ends efforts in Colorado, Illinois, Maine and elsewhere to kick Trump, the front-runner for his party's nomination, off the ballot because of his attempts to undo his loss in the 2020 election to Democrat Joe Biden, culminating in the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol.  
 Colorado Secretary of State Jena Griswold expressed disappointment in the court's decision as she acknowledged that "Donald Trump is an eligible candidate on Colorado's 2024 Presidential Primary."  
 Trump's case was the first at the Supreme Court dealing with a provision of the 14th Amendment that was adopted after the Civil War to prevent former officeholders who "engaged in insurrection" from holding office again.  
 Colorado's Supreme Court, in a first-of-its-kind ruling, had decided

that the provision, Section 3, could be applied to Trump, who that court found incited the Capitol attack. No court before had applied Section 3 to a presidential candidate.  
 The justices sidestepped the politically fraught issue of insurrection in their opinions Monday, but some Trump critics pointed to the silence on that topic as a victory of sorts because the court failed to absolve him of responsibility for the Capitol riot.  
 The court held that states may bar candidates from state office. "But States have no power under the Constitution to enforce Section 3 with respect to federal offices, especially the Presidency," the court wrote.  
 While all nine justices agreed that Trump should be on the ballot, there was sharp disagreement from the three liberal members of the court and a milder disagreement from conservative Justice Amy Coney Barrett that their colleagues went too far in determining what Congress must do to disqualify someone from federal office.  
 Justices Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan and Ketanji Brown Jackson said they agreed that allowing the Colorado decision to stand could create a "chaotic state by state patchwork" but said they disagreed with the majority's finding a disqualification for insurrection can only happen when Congress enacts legislation. "Today, the majority goes beyond the necessities of this case to limit how Section 3 can bar an oathbreaking insurrectionist from becoming President," the three

justices wrote in a joint opinion.  
 It's unclear whether the ruling leaves open the possibility that Congress could refuse to certify the election of Trump or any other presidential candidate it sees as having violated Section 3.  
 Derek Muller, a law professor at Notre Dame University, said "it seems no," noting that the liberals complained that the majority ruling forecloses any other ways for Congress to enforce the provision. Rick Hasen, a law professor at the University of California-Los Angeles, wrote that it's frustratingly unclear what the bounds might be on Congress.  
 Hasen was among those urging the court to settle the issue so there wasn't the risk of Congress rejecting Trump under Section 3 when it counts electoral votes on Jan. 6, 2025.  
 "We may well have a nasty, nasty post-election period in which Congress tries to disqualify Trump but the Supreme Court says Congress exceeded its powers," he wrote.  
 Both sides had requested fast work by the court, which heard arguments less than a month ago, on Feb. 8. The justices seemed poised then to rule in Trump's favor.  
 Trump had been kicked off the ballots in Colorado, Maine and Illinois, but all three rulings were on hold awaiting the Supreme Court's decision.  
 The case is the court's most direct involvement in a presidential election since Bush v. Gore, a decision delivered a quarter-century ago that effectively handed the 2000

election to Republican George W. Bush. And it's just one of several cases involving Trump directly or that could affect his chances of becoming president again, including a case scheduled for arguments in late April about whether he can be criminally prosecuted on election interference charges, including his role in the Capitol riot. The timing of the high court's intervention has raised questions about whether Trump will be tried before the November election.  
 The arguments in February were the first time the high court had heard a case involving Section 3. The two-sentence provision, intended to keep some Confederates from holding office again, says that those who violate oaths to support the Constitution are barred from various positions including congressional offices or serving as presidential electors. But it does not specifically mention the presidency.  
 Conservative and liberal justices questioned the case against Trump. Their main concern was whether Congress must act before states can invoke the 14th Amendment. There also were questions about whether the president is covered by the provision.  
 The lawyers for Republican and independent voters who sued to remove Trump's name from the Colorado ballot had argued that there is ample evidence that the events of Jan. 6 constituted an insurrection and that it was incited by Trump, who had exhorted a crowd of his supporters at a rally outside the White House to "fight

like hell." They said it would be absurd to apply Section 3 to everything but the presidency or that Trump is somehow exempt. And the provision needs no enabling legislation, they argued.  
 Trump's lawyers mounted several arguments for why the amendment can't be used to keep him off the ballot. They contended the Jan. 6 riot wasn't an insurrection and, even if it was, Trump did not go to the Capitol or join the rioters. The wording of the amendment also excludes the presidency and candidates running for president, they said. Even if all those arguments failed, they said, Congress must pass legislation to reinstate Section 3.  
 The case was decided by a court that includes three justices appointed by Trump when he was president. They have considered many Trump-related cases in recent years, declining to embrace his bogus claims of fraud in the 2020 election and refusing to shield tax records from Congress and prosecutors in New York.  
 The 5-4 decision in Bush v. Gore case more than 23 years ago was the last time the court was so deeply involved in presidential politics. Justice Clarence Thomas is the only member of the court who was on the bench then. Thomas has ignored calls by some Democratic lawmakers to step aside from the Trump case because his wife, Ginni, supported Trump's effort to overturn the 2020 election results and attended the rally that preceded the storming of the Capitol by Trump supporters.

## Trillions of gallons leak from aging drinking water systems, stressing U.S. cities

**By TAMMY WEBBER,**  
**Associated Press**  
 Trillions of gallons are lost from aging drinking water systems across the U.S., underscoring an economic and public health reckoning after decades of deferred maintenance and disinvestment that leave some communities struggling to provide reliable service.  
 The problem is especially acute in older industrial and rural areas in the eastern half of the country that have experienced significant population and industrial decline that leave behind poorer residents, vacant neighborhoods and too-large water systems.  
 In the Detroit enclave of Highland Park, where the population halved in the past 20 years, an estimated 70% of the water is lost from pipes up to 120 years old. Several Chicago suburbs likely are losing more than 40% of water. And some Georgia systems are losing more than 80% of their treated drinking water, said Sunil Sinha, a water researcher at Virginia Tech.  
 A January cold snap caused water line breaks in dozens of communities, including Memphis, Tennessee, and an Arkansas town that was without water for two weeks. But systems crack and leak year-round.  
 Jackson, Mississippi's system almost collapsed in August 2022, leaving many of the 150,000 residents without water for weeks. Even before that, it was losing an estimated 65% of water, including millions of gallons gushing from broken pipes for years, said Ted Henifin, the water system's federally appointed third-party manager.  
 "The waste and cost to ratepayers if you're losing 50 or 60 percent of your water, it's enough to make your blood boil," said Eric Oswald, drinking water director at Michigan's Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy. He said water loss affects many shrinking and older Michigan communities.  
 Yet water loss has drawn less scrutiny than issues like

lead service lines and overflowing sewers, although it has serious consequences: Communities buy or treat far more water than they otherwise would; water in oversized systems can become stagnant, requiring lines to be flushed; and loss of pressure from pipe breaks can allow contamination to enter the system.  
 Experts say investment often is deferred because raising water rates is unpopular, but also because it's difficult to borrow money and struggling communities must spend scarce resources on other needs, such as fire protection and police.  
 Such communities often are "between a rock and a hard place," said John C. Young, who helped manage Flint, Michigan's recovery efforts after its lead crisis. He now oversees the water and sewer board in Prichard, Alabama, — which loses about 60% of its treated water — after it was sued for defaulting on a \$55 million loan.  
 There is no comprehensive accounting of water loss nationally, and no federal regulations require communities to control it, said Virginia Tech's Sinha, who along with the U.S. Geological Survey is studying the nation's water loss.  
 It's often called "non-

revenue water," meaning it goes unbilled, like water used for firefighting. But in many older towns, most lost water is probably seeping from the system, experts said.  
 About a dozen states require water systems to report losses, including Georgia, where some communities lose 85% or more, Sinha said. Limiting losses to 10% or less is a reasonable goal, he said.  
 Illinois officials want to hire staff to ensure communities using Lake Michigan water annually report use and loss. The state has no certified records after 2017, when several communities reported significant nonrevenue water — up to 52% in Maywood, west of Chicago.  
 "It's a huge problem because infrastructure is rapidly deteriorating," said Loren Wobig, director of water resources at the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.  
 Yet struggling communities often are at a disadvantage when seeking funding.  
 They can't rely solely on higher water rates, because shrinking population and industry leave too few customers, and those who remain usually are poorer and minority.  
 In Prichard, which has lost 60% of its population,

water users saw a 22% rate increase last year that hasn't generated enough revenue to run the system, let alone fix it, said Young, the receiver.  
 Struggling communities' leaders say obtaining funding is difficult, including when matching funds are required.  
 Communities also suffer when bond ratings are downgraded, making it difficult to borrow money for infrastructure. And some have variable interest rates that can hurt them in the long run, said Saqib Bhatti, co-executive director of the Action Center on Race and the Economy.

"It's really a downward spiral," Bhatti said. "For cities where the population is shrinking and there are high rates of poverty — predominantly black and brown cities — it becomes really hard to actually come up with the money for those investments."

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