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TUESDAY, MARCH 12, 2024 BLUFFTON, INDIANA • Wells County's Hometown Connection \$1.00

Ossian adds event to local solar eclipse line-up

By SYDNEY KENT

Hundreds of people are expected to gather in Wells County for the upcoming lunar eclipse on April 8. The entirety of the county lies within the path of the eclipse, which will be visible from the U.S. for the last time until 2045.

The Ossian Parks Department, in conjunction with Horizon Events, plans to hold an event on the day of the eclipse at Archbold-Wilson Park. Park Board Vice President Jay Esparza requested \$150 towards the cost of a DJ for the event at Monday's Ossian Town Council meeting. Council member Jeff Kemper offered to sponsor the event on behalf of Kemper Flooring.

Police Commissioner President Caleb Chichester presented a letter of resignation written by new officer Samantha Oliver today. Chichester said Oliver decided the career was not for her and her resignation would be effective the next day. Oliver had not yet completed training. Chichester advised conversations would be ongoing, however, the process of hiring a new officer to replace Oliver would likely begin again soon.

Chad Kline, executive director of Wells County Economic Development, asked the council to sign a master plan for the town. Kline said that the EDC previously did not get enough support from other communities as they did not have funding from grants.

Kline said he intends to receive more grants based on previous conversations.

"What most of this work will be," Kline explained, "(there will be) a lot of community meetings, discussions, identifying opportunities for projects, things you want to see in the community and what the community wants to see in the community."

"If we agree to this, does this hook us into the 2030 plan without any discretion?" asked Kemper.

"No, this is specific to your community," Kline clarified. "This is your plan and things that are in here for your community are your decision. The goal currently is to get every community in Wells County a plan that doesn't have one currently."

Kline said Markle signed a master plan for around \$40,000 and Zanesville signed a plan for over \$10,000. He requested not to exceed \$4,000 from the council, which was unanimously approved.

New officers were also appointed during the brief redevelopment meeting. Kemper was appointed as president, Dennis Ealing as vice president and Glen Werling as secretary.

During a public hearing before the council meeting, several residents asked questions regarding the rate ordinance for unmetered users. Jim Breckler with Engineering Resources answered various ques-

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A mark of spring

The Indiana Department of Transportation began the process of crack sealing State Road 1 on Monday. They will be working from the Main Street Bridge to the south city limits this week. (Photo by Holly Gaskill)

Wells RSD considers new building and possible hire

By JONATHAN SNYDER

The Wells County Regional Sewer District board heard back from Mick Cupp about a potential building to purchase at 820 South Bond St. on Monday.

On Feb. 12, the RSD board gave specifications for the new building, including a place to park a vehicle inside and a small office space. It also needs to be about 2,000 square feet.

Cupp, of Cupp Real Estate, came back with the location on South Bond Street, which he owns. Cupp and RSD Supervisor Lewis Brown toured the facility, which was about 2,400 square feet and a garage near the back of the property along with an office space. Cupp said the building would cost about \$139,000.

However, the RSD's main concern was the flood risk of the area.

Brown and Roger Cash, Ossian, mentioned that in 2005 significant rainfall caused the lowlands to flood. However, since then another catch basin has been installed in the parking lot which should ease the issue. Brown further invited the district members to take a look at the location for themselves.

The district also took time to celebrate the progress they had made throughout the past year. They discussed some of the new homes being built in their project areas and how homes that were formerly discharging into a side ditch on County Road 400 North are now connected to the main line, making for a cleaner environment. Board member

Andy Stoller mentioned that it's nice to get a look at the full picture for the year.

In his report, Brown said the RSD should look to hire a part-time helper to transition into a full-time position in the future.

Brown put together a list of requirements for the new hire, which included being good with people, having a driver's license, being able to lift 100 lbs., being able to fit in grinder stations and not being afraid of getting dirty. Brown then advised the district to put together their own list of requirements and to start looking for any candidates available, with a suggestion to look at high-school kids looking to go into trades.

Additionally, Brown said that the flow meter has been giving lower readouts compared to the actual amount of flow coming through their system. All three stations in Murray, Liberty Center and Craigville are not reading correctly, which prompted Brown to enlist the help of Ferguson Plumbing in Fort Wayne to look into the issue.

Brown further notified the district that the Craigville project only has punch list items left to do. Brown estimates that 40 customers have not connected to the line out of 130 customers in the area. Liberty Center has five more people yet to connect and the Murray project has two people left to connect.

The Kingsland project is also going strong, with the gravity sewer system being

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Health Board appoints Huggins as health officer

By HOLLY GASKILL

In a unanimous 5-0 vote, the Wells County Board of Health approved Dr. Brandon Huggins as the new health officer.

The board's appointment will now be considered for certification by the County Commissioners. Their next scheduled meeting is at 5 p.m. on March 18 in the meeting room of the Wells County Carnegie Annex.

Huggins is an orthopedic spine surgeon with the Lutheran Health Network, including Bluffton Regional Medical Center. He received his undergraduate and medical degree from Indiana University. He is also a Norwell graduate.

On Monday, the board interviewed Hug-

gins during an executive session in the large conference room of the Wells County Public Library and made their appointment in a following special session. The appointment was the only item on the agenda.

Board members Chris Esterling, Steve Bales, Dr. Mary Donley, Ann McNabb and Molly Hoag voted in favor of the appointment; board members Dr. Bart Hott and Tamara Troutt were absent.

Should the appointment be certified, Huggins will take over from Dr. Kay Johnson, who voluntarily resigned from the position in an agreement with the county in February. Johnson will continue in the role in the interim.

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Governor signs 67 bills from reading to bobcat hunting

By NIKI KELLY

Indiana Capital Chronicle

More third graders will be retained due to lack of reading proficiency under a bill Gov. Eric Holcomb signed into law Monday.

Senate Enrolled Act 1 was among 67 bills he approved. Others include cracking down on xylazine, creating a bobcat hunting season and election changes.

The new reading law seeks to remedy Indiana's literacy "crisis" by requiring schools to administer the statewide IREAD test in second grade — a year earlier than current requirements — and directing new, targeted support to at-risk students and those struggling to pass the exam.

But if, after three tries, a third grader can't meet the IREAD standard, legislators

want school districts to retain them.

That number could reach into the thousands according to recent data. Last year, 13,840 third-graders did not pass IREAD, according to test data. Of those students, 5,503 received an exemption and 8,337 did not. But about 95% of students without an exemption moved onto 4th grade and just 412 were retained.

While much of the rest of the bill has received bipartisan support, the retention language has been passionately debated in both chambers.

Republicans have repeatedly said the proposal is not a "retention bill," and holding Hoosier kids back in school should "be a last resort." They maintain, too, that if litera-

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Al-Qaida's Yemen branch says Khalid al-Batarfi is dead

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The leader of Yemen's branch of al-Qaida is dead, the militant group announced late Sunday, without giving details.

Khalid al-Batarfi had a \$5 million bounty on his head from the U.S. government over leading the group, al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, through years that saw him imprisoned, freed in a jailbreak, and governing forces in Yemen amid that country's grind-

ing war.

Though believed to be weakened in recent years due to infighting and suspected U.S. drone strikes killing its leaders, the group known by the acronym AQAP has long been considered the most dangerous branch of the extremist group still operating after the killing of founder Osama bin Laden.

Al-Qaida released a video showing al-Batarfi wrapped in a white funeral shroud and al-Qai-

da's black-and-white flag.

Militants offered no details on the cause of his death and there was no clear sign of trauma visible on his face. Al-Batarfi was believed to be in his early 40s.

"Allah took his soul while he patiently sought his reward and stood firm, immigrated, garrisoned, and waged jihad for His sake," the militants said in the video, according to the SITE Intelligence Group.

The group made the announcement on the eve of Ramadan, the Muslim holy fasting month that Yemen will begin Monday.

In the announcement, the group said Saad bin Atef al-Awlaki would take over as its leader. The U.S. has a \$6 million bounty on him, saying al-Awlaki "has publicly called for attacks against the United States and its allies."

The Yemen branch of al-Qaida has been seen by Washington as

the terror network's most dangerous branch ever since its attempt in 2009 to bomb a commercial airliner over the United States. It claimed responsibility for the 2015 deadly attack in Paris on the French satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo. But their overseas operations have waned in recent years.

"Although in decline, AQAP remains the most effective terrorist group in Yemen with intent to con-

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Outside



Sunny and warmer today, cool and breezy tonight

Today	Wed.	Thursday
High 67	High 65	High 66
Low 47	Low 50	Low 48

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Online

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TUESDAY
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Regional Sewer District

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fully installed and tested, along with all grinder stations installed. Wessler Engineering's Levi Morrison noted that grouting, filling the casing with sand, carrier pipes underneath the railroad and manhole lining is what's left to complete. Additionally, Brown said the new truck will need new tires before winter.

Morrison also suggested that the RSD and VTF Excavation should look into having the Wells County Highway Department chip and seal all the roads in Kingsland for a new road surface. Morrison mentioned that the current state of the roads is "inadequate," and a conversation with Highway Supervisor Shawn Bonar suggested that they

would be interested in the project. There were eight SRF claims approved by the RSD. The biggest claim was paid to VTF totaling \$874,909. Three of these were for recording fees, which total \$433. Two \$2,700 claims were also approved, one for Brown's acquiring of easement payments while

he was part-time and one for preparation of grinder easements. An SRF claim paid to Choice One Engineering totalled \$1,840, while another claim paid Wessler Engineering \$12,127. Leon Berning, Bruce Stinson and Jon Shady were also present at Monday's meeting.
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Governor signs bills

(Continued from Page 1)
cy supports and remediation in the law are properly implemented, no children will have to be retained. Exceptions are carved out for students who have been retained in third grade before, special-education students, certain English language learners, and students who pass the math portion of the statewide assessment and receive remedial reading instruction. Schools will also be required to offer summer school to struggling readers starting this year, although the final version of the bill does not force students to attend.

The retention provision takes effect for the test taken during the upcoming 2024-2025 school calendar.

Here are some of the other bills that were signed into law. Most go into effect July 1.

Senate Enrolled Act 241 requires the Indiana Department of Natural Resources to establish a bobcat hunting season. Bobcats – Indiana's only native wild cat – were considered endangered for decades but they were taken off the state's endangered species list in 2005, and their population has grown. Supporters said the bill will help manage Indiana's growing population of bobcats. But opponents said they would rather see more comprehensive data about the animal's population before allowing a hunting season.

Senate Enrolled Act 5 seeks to more quickly replace lead drinking

water pipes across Indiana. A priority measure for Senate Republicans, it would expedite the replacement of thousands of lead service lines, and at a lower cost. Specifically, the legislation requires landlords to enroll in a program to replace the lead pipes they own through their water utility or be forced to pay for it themselves.

Senate Enrolled Act 185 requires that all public and charter schools create a policy for phones and other wireless devices. Hoosier students could still use their phones or tablets for educational purposes, if teachers deem it necessary. They can also use the devices if there is an emergency or for health reasons.

House Enrolled Act 1025 puts the increasingly popular liquor-based pre-mixed beverages under a wine license, allowing beer wholesalers to sell them. Supporters said it creates competition within the wholesale tier by allowing all license holders to sell the mixed ready-to-drink beverages. Opponents said it helps beer wholesalers who already have competitive advantages.

House Enrolled Act 1090 allows juries hearing civil lawsuits related to car accidents to hear whether the victim was wearing a seat belt and use the information to reduce damages. Currently under Indiana law, a jury isn't allowed to know if a plaintiff in a case was wearing a seat belt or not some believe doing so takes the focus off who is at fault for causing the acci-

dent. Supporters, though, said if injuries were worse because an adult didn't wear a seat belt, it should be allowed to be considered. A judge still would have the discretion on that decision. The legislation says the information is only allowed for those who are age 15 or older.

House Enrolled Act 1203 makes possession of xylazine, a cheap animal sedative, a misdemeanor that can be increased with multiple convictions. Dealing in xylazine would be a felony. Overdoses have been linked to fentanyl laced with xylazine.

House Enrolled Act 1264 creates new requirements for first-time voters, proof of citizenship and more. It also would allow state election officials to pay for commercially available data – likely Experian's TrueTrace – and let county voter registration offices use the information for voter list maintenance. Supporters called it an election security bill while opponents said it adds unnecessary hoops for eligible voters.

Senate Enrolled Act 182 limits drone use near correctional facilities. The Indiana Department of Correction reported over 30 drone sightings in 2023 and over a dozen confirmed drone drops of contraband inside state correctional facilities, according to a news release. One report detailed the recovery of a drone and package containing tobacco, six cell phones, four chargers and marijuana.

For a full list of Monday's 67 signed bills, visit the governor's website.

Weather

Tuesday, March 12, 2024
(24-hour observations at 10:08 p.m. Monday)
High: 58; **Low:** 27; **Precipitation:** None
Wabash River Level (at the Main Street bridge): 6.16 feet at 8:45 p.m. Monday

Wells County forecast

Today: Mostly sunny, with a high near 67. Southwest wind around 15 mph, with gusts as high as 25 mph.

Tonight: Partly cloudy, with a low around 47. Southwest wind 10 to 15 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

Wednesday: A 20% chance of showers after 2 p.m. Partly sunny, with a high near 65. Southwest wind around 10 mph.

Wednesday Night: A chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 50. South wind around 5 mph. Chance of precipitation is 40%.

Thursday: Showers likely, then showers and possibly a thunderstorm after 11 a.m. High near 66. Chance of precipitation is 80%. New rainfall amounts between a tenth and quarter of an inch, except higher amounts possible in thunderstorms.

Thursday Night: Showers and possibly a thunderstorm. Low around 48. Chance of precipitation is 80%.

Friday: A 40% chance of showers. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 55.

Friday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 37.

Saturday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 54.

Solar eclipse

(Continued from Page 1)
tions about the rates.

Breckler explained that the town applied for a grant from the Indiana Department of Transportation for improvements along Meadow Lane, a residential-use roadway in Roseanne Heights. The project would alleviate safety concerns during what Breckler called "large rain events" in the area. He requested \$50,600 towards the improvements. Breckler also asked the council to approve a payment to Ottenweller Contracting LLC of \$68,165.64 for work completed on a mechanical bar screen replacement project. Both requests were approved.

Clerk-Treasurer Angie Ealing submitted her resignation, effective in October. The council reluctantly

accepted her resignation and thanked her for her ongoing efforts.

The council also:
• Approved a motion to appoint a council member to sign documents from SRF pending approval of funding.

• Approved a motion to pay Engineering Resources \$1,295 for work completed for the town.

• Approved an ordinance to increase the pay of an employee who recently earned a difficult certification and will soon take on more work.

• Approved a request from Oak Lawn Cemetery to extend the road on 900 North. The project will involve the placement of a 15-inch culvert underneath the road to assist with drainage.
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Khalid al-Batarfi

(Continued from Page 1)
duct operations in the region and beyond," a recent United Nations report on al-Qaida said.

Estimates provided to the U.N. put AQAP's total forces as numbering between 3,000 and 4,000 active fighters and passive members. The group raises money by robbing banks and money exchange shops, as well as smuggling weapons, counterfeiting currencies and ransom operations, according to the U.N.

Al-Batarfi took over as the head of the branch in February 2020. He succeeded leader Qassim al-Rimi, who was killed by a U.S. drone strike ordered by then-President Donald Trump. Al-Rimi had claimed responsibility for the 2019 attack at the U.S. Naval Air Station Pensacola in which a Saudi aviation trainee killed three American sailors.

Under al-Batarfi, AQAP fell further under the influence of al-Qaida fighter Saif al-Adl, now believed to have led the militant group after the killing of Ayman

al-Zawahiri in a U.S. drone strike in Afghanistan in 2022. That came as Yemen has been locked in a war between the Houthi rebels, who hold the capital, Sanaa, and a Saudi-led coalition backing the country's exiled government based in Aden.

"Since 2020, Saif al-Adel has been able to convince al-Batarfi of his strategic approach, focused on confronting Western states and their allies in Yemen — the Saudi-led coalition, the Aden-based government, the United Arab Emirates and its allies — rather than confronting the Iranian-backed Houthi movement," a 2023 report by the Sanaa Center for Strategic Studies said.

Al-Adl is believed to be in Iran, part of a longtime al-Qaida presence in the Islamic Republic. That's long been denied by Tehran but backed up by documents seized in the 2011 U.S. raid in Pakistan that killed bin Laden, who orchestrated the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the U.S.

Al-Batarfi's ties to al-Adl had strained relations in

AQAP, experts say. However, it has seen the militants become armed with bomb-carrying drones — something the Houthis now use to target shipping in the Red Sea amid the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip.

AQAP "developed unmanned aerial systems capabilities, establishing a specialized drone unit, with operational training from the Houthis," a U.N. report from January says. "It prioritizes liberating its prisoners to replenish ranks; in September, the Houthis released several AQAP members and explosives experts."

The Shiite Zaydi Houthis have previously denied working with AQAP, a Sunni extremist group. However, AQAP targeting of the Houthis has dropped in recent years while the militants continue to attack Saudi-led coalition forces.

Yemen's history and tribal structure long has seen alliances rapidly shift, something its late strongman President Ali Abdullah Saleh referred to as "dancing on the heads of snakes."

Al-Batarfi, born in

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, traveled to Afghanistan in 1999 and fought alongside the Taliban during the U.S.-led invasion. He joined AQAP in 2010 and led forces in taking over Yemen's Abyan province, according to the U.S.

In 2015, he was freed after an AQAP raid that saw the militants capture Mukalla, the capital of Yemen's largest province, Hadramawt, amid the chaos of the war. A photo at the time showed al-Awlaki with a Kalashnikov rifle, posing inside a government palace there.

AQAP was later pushed out of Mukalla but has continued attacks and been the target of a U.S. drone strike campaign since the administration of then-President George W. Bush.

In 2020, there had been claims that al-Batarfi had been detained, which later were denied. In 2021, he appeared in a militant video and referred to the Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol as "only the tip of the iceberg of what will come to them, God willing."

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Bluffton, Indiana

OBITUARIES

James Karlton Hill, 76

James Karlton Hill, 76, of Decatur, passed away Sunday, March 10, 2024, at his residence.

He was born on July 19, 1947, in Fort Wayne, to the late Voyle and Marcile (Walters) Hill. On June 3, 1972, Jim married Rosie Braun.

Jim attended St. Mary of the Assumption Catholic Church. He served his Country in the U.S. Army Reserves. He was also a member of the Masonic Lodge 571 F & AM, Fort Wayne Valley of the Scottish Rite 32 Degree, and served as board Secretary for the Adams Central Scholarship Foundation.

Jim was a farmer for most of his life but also had a variety of employment opportunities. He worked for 17.5 years at International Harvester, Fleetwood of Indiana, Appraisal Research Corp, was elected Kirkland Township Trustee, and the Adams County Auditor and Treasurer, both offices for two terms, RCIS Crop Insurance 13 years, and sold seed for Garst Seed Co. for 29 years.

He loved his family and enjoyed watching his grandchildren in sports and school activities. Jim coached little league for both boys and girls for 21 years. He was a lov-



ing, caring husband and father, and an honest and hardworking man, hoping to pass these traits to the next generation.

Jim is survived by his wife of 51 years, Rosie Hill of Decatur; three daughters, Christy (Steve) Biberstine of Decatur, Becky (Ben) Joseph of Grabill, and Jenny (Ben) Wagner of Bluffton; grandchildren, Kaitlyn, Avery and Jayla Biberstine, Ethan and Carson Joseph, and Abby, Adrienne and Ainsley Wagner.

He was preceded in death by two brothers, Stanley and Richard Hill.

Visitation will be held from 2-7 p.m. on Friday, March 15, 2024, at Haggard-Hirschy & Zelt Funeral Home and also from 9-10 a.m. on Saturday, March 16, 2024, at the funeral home.

A Masonic Service will be held at 7 p.m. on Friday, March 15, 2024, at Haggard-Hirschy & Zelt Funeral Home. A Funeral Liturgy will be held at 10 a.m. on Saturday, March 16, 2024, also at the funeral home, burial will follow in St. Joseph Catholic Cemetery with Military Honors by American Legion Post 43 Color Guard.

Memorials may be given to the Monroe Youth League, Shriners Hospital, or Decatur Masonic Lodge F & AM 571.

Jed Kline, 79

Jed L. Kline, 79, of Decatur, passed away Wednesday evening, March 6, 2024, at Adams Memorial Hospital.

He was born on Sept. 27, 1944, in Bluffton, the son of the late Herbert H. and Aldine W. (Curry) Kline.

He worked for the Decatur Street Department for nearly 40 years. He also farmed for Paul Reidenbach for many years and enjoyed gardening and being outdoors.

Jed is survived by his son, Matthew J. (Stephanie) Kline of McBain, Michigan; his sister, Debra M. (Steve) Neiferd of Decatur; his close friend, Sara Jean Hinkledire



of Decatur; and four grandchildren, Fiona, Lydia, Dakota and Sophia Kline.

He was also preceded in death by his stepfather, Jimmie G. Harkless; a brother, Neal K. Kline.

A funeral service will be held at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, March 12, 2024, at Haggard-Hirschy & Zelt Funeral Home, with visitation two hours before the service from noon to 2 p.m. Pastor Ernie Suman will be officiating.

Burial will take place in Oakland Cemetery in Craigville.

Memorials may be made to the United Way of Adams County.

Betty J. LeMaster, 99

Betty J. LeMaster, 99, of Ossian, passed away on Wednesday, March 6, 2024. She was born July 4, 1924 to the late John and Ileana (Deel) Isnogle.

Betty enjoyed being a homemaker. She loved cooking, canning food, gardening of all kinds, sewing and making crafts that eventually made their way to the Huntington Pioneer Festival.

Betty is survived by her sons, Jim (Bethany "Dee") LeMaster of Keystone and Jack LeMaster of Fort Wayne; grandchildren, Lance (Patti) LeMaster of Decatur, Laura (Ryan) Lenwell of Berne, Leah (Kyle) Hunt of Bluffton, Lyle (Sarah) LeMaster of St. Cloud, Fla., Jerrie (Brian) Williams of Conneautville, Pa., Julie Boroff of Convoy, Ohio, and Elaine Schwartz of Woodburn,



Ind.; 15 great-grandchildren; and six great-great-grandchildren with one more on the way.

She was also preceded in passing by her husband of 70 years, Donald LeMaster; and siblings, Margaret Wilson and Rolland Isnogle.

A funeral service for Betty will be held at 3:00 p.m. Wednesday, March 13, 2024 at Elzey-Patterson-Rodak Funeral Home, 120 West Mill Street, Ossian, Indiana 46777, with visitation beginning at 1:00 p.m. Burial to follow the service at Oak Lawn Cemetery.

Memorial contributions in Betty's name can be made to Living Water United Church.

Condolences and memories may be shared at www.elzey-patterson-rodak.com.

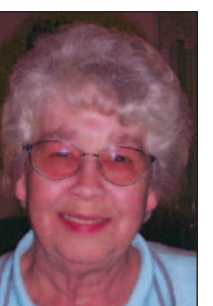
Juanita P. Russell, 92

Juanita P. Russell, 92, of Bluffton, passed away Monday morning, March 11, 2024, at River Terrace Retirement Community.

Juanita was born in Bluffton on Aug. 18, 1931, to Armer and Mabel (Scott) Brown. She married Arthur "Jack" Russell in Flat on July 10, 1948. Jack preceded her in death on May 6, 1990.

Juanita attended Pennville High School and later became a laboratory technician at the Caylor-Nickel Clinic in Bluffton. She was a homemaker, and later volunteered at the Caylor-Nickel Clinic for several years. She attended the Bluffton Wesleyan Chapel. She enjoyed playing games, Bingo, Rummy and especially UNO. She loved going to Cracker Barrel, and spending time with her family. Juanita was full of laughter and always left smiles on the faces of those around her.

Survivors include a daughter, Susan (Tom) Arnold of Shelbyville; a son, Randy



"Joe" (Crystal) Russell of Ossian; 10 grandchildren, Sandy, Jenny, Josie, Nicky, Nate, Jamie, Tera, Lindsey, Amber, and Sara; 24 great-grandchildren; and three great-great-grandchildren, with another one on the way.

In addition to her parents and husband, Juanita was preceded in death by two sons, Rodney and Steven Russell; four sisters, Marilyn Meade, LaVina Davis, Lois Brickley, and Carolyn Young; and a brother, Richard Brown.

Visitation will be held on Thursday, Mar. 14, 2024, from 3:00 until 7:00 p.m., at Goodwin - Cale & Harnish Memorial Chapel in Bluffton. Services will be held Friday, Mar. 15, 2024, at 11:00 a.m., at the funeral home, with one hour of visitation prior to the service. Burial will follow at Fairview Cemetery in Bluffton.

Memorial contributions in memory of Juanita may be made to Alzheimer's Foundation of America.

Police Notebook

INCIDENTS

City:

Friday, 4:35 p.m., All American Airplane. Caller reported a check was found while cleaning.

Friday, 4:44 p.m., 900 block of South Mulberry Street. Report of issue with custody exchange.

Friday, 5:53 p.m., 300 block of West Wiley Avenue. Caller requested officer to stand by for custody exchange.

Saturday, 1:09 a.m., South Main and East Washington streets. Driver cited for distracted driving.

Saturday, 2:35 p.m., PNC. Caller reported ATM ate their card.

Saturday, 2:46 p.m., Beth Avenue and Central Avenue. Report of dog dragging leash.

Saturday, 4:48 p.m., 100 block of East Arnold Street. Report of domestic issue. Hansen Mechling arrested for battery and strangulation.

Saturday, 8:56 p.m., 100 block of Willowbrook Trail. Officer attempted to serve warrant and noted new owners live at this location.

Saturday, 11:03 p.m., West Spring Street and Clark Avenue. Report of kids running across the road.

Sunday, 12:28 a.m., East 100 South and South Adams Street. Report of a white pickup truck sitting in construction area with lights on, found it suspicious. Just a guy doing his job.

Sunday, 4:22 p.m., 100 block of East Arnold Street. Caller requested to get her sons items.

Sunday, 5:53 p.m., 500 block of Eastmoor Drive. Report of a man being aggressive.

Monday, 12:37 p.m., 100 block of Capri Court. Caller stated he called 911 when he realized his phone wasn't working properly due to issue with phone towers and got disconnected.

County:
Friday, 3:30 p.m., Wells County Jail. Subject requested a citizen complaint form for his attorney to fill out regarding a traffic stop.

Friday, 3:56 p.m., Wells County Jail. Two warrants served to Tristen Root.

Friday, 4:38 p.m., 2500 West 800 North, Markle. Caller reported man in gray car asking about cable TV and for credit card info. Man left and no one matching description located in the area.

Saturday, 9:49 a.m., S.R. 124 and North 500 West, Markle. Report of two dogs in the road. One dog trans-

ported to shelter, unable to locate his accomplice.

Saturday, 1:40 p.m., 300 East 200 North, Bluffton. Subject warned for soliciting without permit.

Saturday, 4:11 p.m., South 400 West and S.R. 124, Liberty Center. Driver pulled over to clean up a Diet Mountain Dew gone wrong.

Saturday, 5:05 p.m., S.R. 218 and South 100 East, Poneto. Driver cited for speeding 93 in a 55 mph zone.

Sunday, 4:35 a.m., All American Airplane Express. Employee requested subject be removed.

Sunday, 12:40 p.m., 1135 West Wiley Avenue, Bluffton. Search warrant for DNA on Michael Barnes conducted.

Sunday, 5:27 p.m., Wells County Jail. Warrant served to Keenan Maxwell at the jail.

Monday, 11:33 a.m., Wells County Jail. Warrant served to Cloyd C. Wayne Crow Sr.

Ossian:
Saturday, 12:11 p.m., 1000 North Meridian Road, Ossian. Report of subjects on property without permission.

Saturday, 6:27 p.m., 3700 East 1200 North, Ossian. Report of subject making threats against neighbor, threats were recorded. Michael Mock issued warrant for intimidation, a Class A misdemeanor.

Sunday, 10:30 p.m., All American Ossian Deli. Report of scam calls regarding gift cards.

ARRESTS

Tristen Thomas Root, 39, Fort Wayne; two counts of confinement, a Level 3 felony, strangulation, two counts of domestic battery — serious bodily injury, both Level 6 felonies, and strangulation — aggravated, a Level 6 felony, and two counts of invasion of privacy, a Class A misdemeanor. No bond set.

Hansen Jacob Mechling, 30, Bluffton; strangulation, a Level 6 felony, and domestic battery, a Class A misdemeanor. Bond set at \$50,000.

Jon David Baumgartner, 48, Bluffton; criminal mischief and gives a false report of the commission of a crime, both Class A misdemeanors, and deception — identity, a Level 6 felony. Bond set at \$8,000.

Alyssa Renae Reisgies, 24, Fort Wayne; operating a vehicle with an ACE of .15 or more, a Class A misdemeanor and operating while intoxicated — endangerment, a Class A misdemeanor. Bond set at \$1,500.

Keenan Dakota Maxwell, 25, Ossian; possession of marijuana, a Class A misdemeanor, and possession of paraphernalia, a Class C misdemeanor. Bond set at \$2,000.

Rony Aroldo Hernandez-Cortez, 23, Fort Wayne; false identity statement, a Class A misdemeanor, and operating without ever obtaining a license, a Class C misdemeanor. Bond set at \$2,000.

Cloyd CW Crow, 53, Fort Wayne; driving while suspended — prior suspension within 10 years, a Class A misdemeanor.

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We need reminded about shopping local

The outline on last Monday's Page 1 News-Banner is what caught my eye right away.

"Cutline" is a bit of journalism jargon that you only hear around a newsroom. It's a fancy word for a caption — the words that we write under a picture in the newspaper to explain what's happening in the image that the photographer captured.

The cutline's first two words were the ones that caught my attention: Shopping local.

Those two words were in boldface type next to an image that my colleague Holly Gaskill took March 2 at the Small Town Formal Event Expo that was held at the Wells County Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Centre.

Shopping local.

It's a charge that we try to promote as often as possible to support the businesses in and around Wells County that in turn pour so much back into our community.

My dentist, eye doctor, physician and barber are in Bluffton. When I need my lawnmower and snowblower serviced, I head to Bluffton's north side to drop them off.

Up until Masterson's closed several years ago, all of my sport coats, suits, dress shirts and ties came from there thanks to Dick Mayer's uncanny ability to always help me pick out the best shirt-tie combo. I do my banking in Bluffton. The list could go on and on.

One of the many benefits of shopping local is how personalized the customer care always is — a fact that I was reminded of these past two weeks as my wife and I shopped for a new chair.

We started our search outside of town, as it was late on a Saturday afternoon and the only stores that were still open were located in our neighboring city to the north.

My wife has to have surgery this spring that we were not expecting; she'll need a power reclining chair for several weeks as she recovers from the procedure since lying down in a bed won't be possible.

We haven't quite reached that stage in our lives where we need a power recliner to help us sit back and relax and then get up. After sitting in several of these power recliners earlier this month, however, I think I have fast-forwarded to the stage of life where I like this luxury.

Our 110-pound golden retriever is petrified of the chair, but I'll save that story for another day.

We found the chair we liked but soon discovered that neither store we visited had it in stock. One store said it might be in within a month but that the business could not guarantee anything; the second store said it would likely be much longer but might be able to sell us the model off the floor.

A week later and after several promises to call me back that always ended up with me calling the store back, we still didn't have a chair for Jen's impending surgery.

By this point, we knew what we should have done all along but didn't — shop in Bluffton, which is of course where my family has shopped for furniture since long before I was born.

We found the same chair we had picked out at the other stores, and the employees were glad to sell it to us off the floor. To say we appreciated their kindness and courtesy is an understatement.

Shopping local. You can't beat it.

Our sense of urgency to get a chair quickly on a Saturday afternoon due to Jen's upcoming surgery ended up causing us way more problems than had we just waited to shop local.

Lesson learned.

You won't see us shopping for furniture anywhere else but on Bluffton's north side. And we may be in the market for another one of those power recliners much sooner than I expected for only being in my early 40s.

jdpeeper2@hotmail.com

Today in History

By The Associated Press

Today is Tuesday, March 12, the 72nd day of 2024. There are 294 days left in the year.

Today's highlight in history: On March 12, 1955, legendary jazz saxophonist Charlie "Bird" Parker died in New York at age 34.

On this date:

In 1864, Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant assumed command as General-in-Chief of the Union armies in the Civil War.

In 1912, the Girl Scouts of the USA had its beginnings as Juliette Gordon Low of Savannah, Georgia, founded the first American troop of the Girl Guides.

In 1925, Chinese revolutionary leader Sun Yat-sen died in Beijing.

In 1947, President Harry S. Truman announced what became known as the "Truman Doctrine" to help Greece and Turkey resist Communism.

In 1971, Hafez Assad was confirmed as president of Syria in a referendum.

In 1980, a Chicago jury found John Wayne Gacy Jr. guilty of the murders of 33 men and boys. (The next day, Gacy was sentenced to death; he was executed in May 1994.)

In 1987, the musical play "Les Misérables" opened on Broadway.

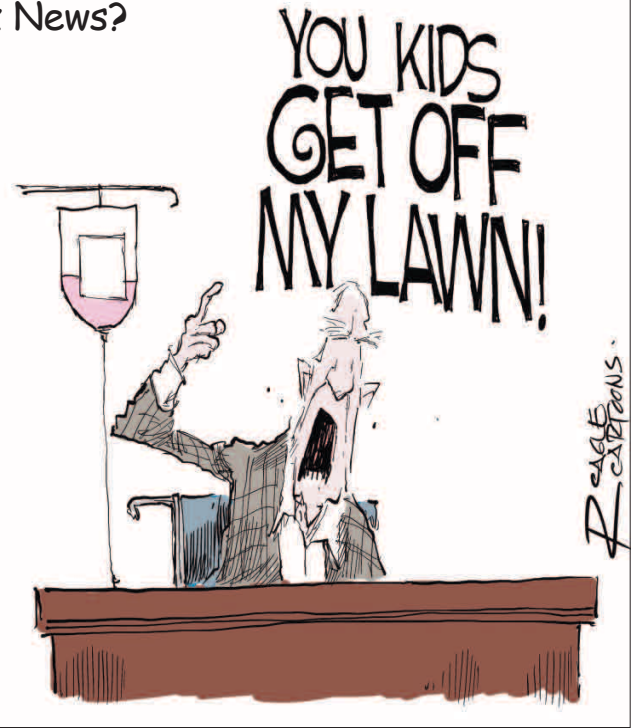
In 2003, Elizabeth Smart, the 15-year-old girl who vanished from her bedroom nine months earlier, was found alive in a Salt Lake City suburb with two drifters, Brian David Mitchell and Wanda Barzee. (Mitchell is serving a life sentence; Barzee was released from prison in September 2018.)



Justin Peeper

Which version of Joe Biden did you observe at the State of the Union speech?

The one portrayed by CNN?
Or the one portrayed by Fox News?



Joe Biden will never be normal again

Joe Biden won the normality test in 2020.

There wasn't anything remarkable about him. He just seemed like a steady hand who had been around for a while, who didn't look or sound like a radical, and who knew how Washington worked.

He wasn't the leader of a movement, wasn't charismatic and wasn't particularly witty or well-spoken. He was, in fact, completely uninteresting and utterly conventional. He was just the most normal guy in the room.

He benefited from a favorable contrast with the magnetic, endlessly interesting, constantly outrageous, norm-busting President Trump, whose theatrical and chaotic governance made him vulnerable to a basement campaign run by a candidate happy, in ice-cream terms, to be vanilla to Trump's rocky road.

If Democrats hope to rerun the 2020 campaign, they will once again have plenty of material to work with against Trump, who provides more of it on a regular basis. It's the other side of the equation that's the problem — the supposed safe alternative is AWOL and never coming back.

That erstwhile Joe Biden, the generic, broadly acceptable president, didn't survive contact with the reality of his presidency.

Of course, he destroyed his reputation as the steady hand with his disastrous mishandling of Afghanistan. It's not just that he kneecapped our allies and abandoned Americans — all accompanied by Fall of Saigon — like images of chaos and desperation on the ground — but that he insisted everything was fine.

After this, it was impossible to look at Biden the same, and indeed his approval rating has never recovered.

Maybe you could say that he was dealt a bad hand in Afghanistan, or, after 20 years, the intervention had to end one way or the other.

The border, however, is even more damning. Biden took a situation that was under control, blew it up, refused to readjust when the consequences became obvious, insisted that the crisis wasn't a crisis as it began to be felt all over the country, and engaged in implausible blame-shifting — all because he was beholden to a new, radical ideology hostile to borders as such.

This wasn't moderate or competent. And it certainly wasn't normal.

Even if Biden's record were unassailable, the way he walks and speaks now would make it impossible for him to be a nothing-to-see-here conventional politician again.

We have never in the modern media age witnessed a president this infirm. It is not what anyone expects from the president of the United States, a role associated with vigor, energy and very often youth.

Watching Biden mumble through speeches, get confused about his stage directions, mix up names and old memories, and walk so stiffly and awkwardly that he seems at risk of stumbling or falling at any time is deeply unsettling.

A president is supposed to reassure the public with his bearing and words; Biden now largely does the opposite.

For most people, he doesn't even meet the most basic standard of seeming capable of performing his duties for the entirety of his term in office if he's reelected. Indeed, that Biden will serve as president until January 2029 may be among the most preposterous things a major political party has ever asked the American public to believe.

Democrats will take comfort from the president's fiery State of the Union performance, but Biden shouting his way through an extensively rehearsed speech on a teleprompter didn't make him seem any younger and won't allay the well-founded concerns about his age.

In the latest New York Times poll, 71% of people agree strongly or somewhat that Biden is "just too old to be president." This is unprecedented territory, and is politically perilous when you hope to be the default candidate arrayed against an unacceptable alternative.

Donald Trump, who in so many ways is an outlier in American politics, is now matched up against another outlier. The normality advantage that Biden enjoyed in 2020 is gone, and defeating his Republican adversary has, accordingly, gotten that much more difficult.

Rich Lowry is on Twitter @RichLowry



Rich Lowry

Are voters recoiling against disorder?

The headlines coming out of the Super Tuesday primaries have got it right. Barring cataclysmic changes, Donald Trump and Joe Biden will be the Republican and Democratic nominees for president in 2024.

With Nikki Haley's withdrawal, there will be no more significantly contested primaries or caucuses — the earliest both parties' races have been over since something like the current primary-dominated system was put in place in 1972.

The primary results have spotlighted some of both nominees' weaknesses.

Donald Trump lost high-income, high-educated constituencies, including the entire metro area — aka the Swamp. Many but by no means all Haley voters there were cast by Biden Democrats. Trump can't afford to lose too many of the others in target states like Pennsylvania and Michigan.

Majorities and large minorities of voters in overwhelmingly Latino counties in Texas's Rio Grande Valley and some in Houston voted against Joe Biden, and even more against Senate nominee Rep. Colin Allred (D-Texas).

Returns from Hispanic precincts in New Hampshire and Massachusetts show the same thing. Biden can't afford to lose too many Latino votes in target states like Arizona and Georgia.

When Trump rode down that escalator in 2015, commentators assumed he'd repel Latinos. Instead, Latino voters nationally, and especially the closest eyewitnesses of Biden's open-border policy, have been trending heavily Republican.

High-income liberal Democrats may sport lawn signs proclaiming, "In this house, we believe ... no human is illegal." The logical consequence of that belief is an open border. But modest-income folks in border counties know that flows of illegal immigrants result in disorder,



Michael Barone

disease and crime.

There is plenty of impatience with increased disorder in election returns below the presidential level. Consider Los Angeles County, America's largest county, with nearly 10 million people, more people than 40 of the 50 states. It voted 71% for Biden in 2020.

Current returns show county District Attorney George Gascon winning only 21% of the vote in the nonpartisan primary. He'll apparently face Republican Nathan Hochman, a critic of his liberal policies, in November.

Gascon, elected after the May 2020 death of counterfeit-passing suspect George Floyd in Minneapolis, is one of many county prosecutors supported by billionaire George Soros. His policies include not charging juveniles as adults, not seeking higher penalties for gang membership or use of firearms and bringing fewer misdemeanor cases.

The predictable result has been increased car thefts, burglaries and personal robberies. Some 120 assistant district attorneys have left the office, and there's a backlog of 10,000 unprosecuted cases.

More than a dozen other Soros-backed and similarly liberal prosecutors have faced strong opposition or have left office.

St. Louis prosecutor Kim Gardner resigned last May amid lawsuits seeking her removal, Milwaukee's John Chisholm retired in January, and Baltimore's Marilyn Mosby was defeated in July 2022 and convicted of perjury in September 2023. Last November, Loudoun County, Virginia, voters (62% Biden) ousted liberal Buta Biberaj, who declined to prosecute a transgender student for assault, and in June 2022 voters in San Francisco (85% Biden) recalled famed radical Chesa Boudin.

Similarly, this Tuesday, voters in San Francisco passed ballot measures strengthening police powers and

requiring treatment of drug-addicted welfare recipients.

In retrospect, it appears the Floyd video, appearing after three months of COVID-19 confinement, sparked a frenzied, even crazed reaction, especially among the highly educated and articulate. One fatal incident was seen as proof that America's "systemic racism" was worse than ever and that police forces should be defunded and perhaps abolished.

2020 was "the year America went crazy," I wrote in January 2021, a year in which police funding was actually cut by Democrats in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle and Denver. A year in which young New York Times staffers claimed they were endangered by the publication of Sen. Tom Cotton's (R-Ark.) opinion article advocating calling in military forces if necessary to stop rioting, as had been done in Detroit in 1967 and Los Angeles in 1992. A craven Times publisher even fired the editorial page editor for running the article.

Evidence of visible and tangible discontent with increasing violence and its consequences — barren and locked shelves in Manhattan chain drugstores, skyrocketing carjackings in Washington, D.C. — is as unmistakable in polls and election results as it is in daily life in large metropolitan areas. Maybe 2024 will turn out to be the year even liberal America stopped acting crazy.

The disorder in America's metropolitan centers and wrecked by illegal and un-deported immigrants on the border and as far afield as Athens, Georgia, seems to be politically overshadowing the sickening disorder wrecked by Trump supporters and tolerated if not encouraged by Trump himself.

Chaos and disorder work against incumbents, as they did in 1968 when Democrats saw their party's popular vote fall from 61% to 43%. It's unfortunate there's not a more fitting political beneficiary of any such recoil than Trump.

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Holly Gaskill, Editor
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A rundown of brain bashing and boosting foods

Also: Reducing your cancer risk

Question: I'm trying to convince my father (age 68) to adopt a healthier diet. If he hears it will help protect his brain, I might be able to get him to stick with it. Suggestions please. — Gregory T., Baltimore

Answer: Becoming healthier in brain and body shouldn't be just about giving up things you enjoy eating. So, here's a rundown of the most brain-damaging foods and a menu of tasty, brain-empowering choices.

- Red and processed meat and full-fat dairy are linked to elevated cholesterol, body-wide, brain-damaging inflammation, and an increased risk of poor circulation (in the brain), according to the Cleveland Clinic.

The MIND Diet — aka the Mediterranean-DASH Diet Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay — eliminates red meats and dairy in favor of a plant-based diet that limits animal protein to fish and poultry. When study participants fully embraced the MIND diet, they had a 53 percent lower rate of Alzheimer's disease compared with those with the lowest adherence to the diet. Find info on a brain-lovin' diet at iHerb.com's blog, "Brain Power." And explore the 40 ways to protect your brain that are explained on LongevityPlaybook.com.

- Anything with added sugar, especially fructose, is bad for brain health. So are artificial sweeteners. A study out of Boston University found that having more than two sugary drinks a day dimmed a person's memory by 11 years! Another study published in the journal Stroke found that having artificially sweetened drinks significantly increases the risk of stroke and dementia. If you want a sweet drink, opt for a berry smoothie or enjoy a mint iced tea.



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

- Fried foods contribute to inflammation of the neurons in the brain and are linked to increased anxiety and depression, according to a study in PNAS. This may be because they trigger inflammation and changes in the gut biome. If you like the crunchy texture of fried foods, try cooking oven-roasted veggies and crispy corn tortillas, and enjoying fresh, crunchy celery and carrot sticks.

Question: It's exciting to hear about all the new ways to treat cancer but I heard that while cancer deaths are decreasing diagnoses are increasing a lot. What can I do to avoid getting cancer in the first place? — Lanie P., Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Answer: There have been astounding strides made in treating cancers — with immunotherapy and other innovations. But, in contrast, there are an increasing number of cases of six of the top 10 cancers. In 2024, it's projected that more than 2 million folks will be diagnosed — and more and more often they're young and middle-aged adults.

The reasons for the increase in cancer cases involve individual and environmental factors. A diet loaded with added sugar, added syrups, and stripped carbs contributes to both overweight/obesity and increased cancer risk. Cancers related to obesity, such as cancer of the pancreas, kidney and postmenopausal breast cancer, are increasing.

Certain environmental chemicals like PFAs/PFOAs (forever chemicals) and toxins in plastics, as well as microplastic pollution also may play a role.

So, what can you do to reduce your risk? It starts with eliminating inflammatory foods from your diet, including red and processed meat, saturated fats, added sugars/syrups and artificial preservatives, colorings, and texturizers. Opt for fresh produce. Choose wild salmon and skinless poultry. Drink plain tea, black coffee and water.

Healthy sleep habits and smart stress management also lower inflammation and reduce your cancer risk. So, exercise, meditate, sleep in a dark, cool room with no digital devices and keep a regular sleep schedule.

Exercise is also a powerful cancer-fighting tool. Aim for 150 to 300 minutes of physical activity and two 30-minute strength-building sessions weekly.

Avoid environmental pollutants — don't handle register receipts or buy upholstered furniture that is stain resistant (that's from forever chemicals) and opt for glass not plastic in products you buy and as storage containers.

If you embrace these healthy options, you will have a younger RealAge or ActualAge and live disease — and disability-free much longer.

Lancaster Elementary teachers receive school supplies from Verizon

The local Verizon TCC took part in the 11th Teachers Rock initiative, designed to show appreciation and support toward the nation's educators, as they collected school supplies for a Wells County school.

A box of items, including pencils, notepads, folders, Kleenex, Clorox wipes and snacks, was presented to the teachers at Lancaster Elementary School during the week of Feb. 12-16.

The Teachers Rock Initiative began as it was noted that 94% of teachers in the U.S. reach into their own pockets to purchase classroom necessities. On average, educators spend somewhere between \$500 and \$750 of their own money every year on school supplies.

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Upcoming Events

Lunch & Learn at Ouabache March 14

Ouabache State Park's Lunch & Learn 2024 programs will begin on Thursday, March 14, at noon at the Lodge by the Lake.

Program presenter will be Bob Mosshammer, IMN who will talk about "The Scoop on Bluebirds. Those attending should bring their own picnic lunch with dessert to be provided courtesy of Corner Depot. Sponsors of the programs are the Friends of Ouabache State Park. Gate fees apply and program donations are accepted.

Saint Joseph Catholic Church annual Fish Fry

The Knights of Columbus Council 7555 will host their annual Fish Fry on Friday, March 15 from 4:00

to 7:00 p.m. at Saint Joseph Catholic Church, 1300 N. Main St. in Bluffton.

The menu for the drive-through event includes Dan's Fish Fry fish, cheesy potatoes, green beans, and dessert. Prices for the dinner are \$13 for adults and \$6 for children 12 and under.

Proceeds will benefit the children of Wells County.

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. performances 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.

In May the Civic will be presenting "Jersey Boys" from May 4-19.

Easter Walk at Southern Wells Community Church March 17

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."

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

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

Koomler Gallery open house

The gallery exhibit "New Beginnings" will feature the work of artist Brian Robertson at the Ruth Koomler Art Gallery in Fort Wayne from March 13th to April 27th.

An opening reception will be held on Saturday, March 16, from 5 to 8 p.m. at the gallery located at 1107 Broadway in Fort Wayne. The public is invited to enjoy the artwork, live music and refreshments.

by Melba Edwards

Zanesville News

Sorry I missed the column last week as I was in the hospital. Seems my blood count was low. I first went to Parkview emergency in Huntington where they discovered the problem but they didn't have my blood on hand, as it is a weird type, so they transferred me to Parkview North where I stayed from Sunday evening until Thursday afternoon. After giving me blood and iron, they felt I was able to go home and now I am getting back to my regular routine. Thanks to all of you who visited and prayed for me. However, with all the tests, they did not find the source of the blood loss!

The Zanesville Community Church of God's Coffee Cafe is still open every weekday morning for anyone to attend. The time is from 7:30 to 10 a.m. and the church is on Marzane Road.

You may have missed some of the Men's Lenten Breakfasts but there is still one more on Saturday, March 23, at the Tower Life Center here in town. This will be the last one as Easter is March 31st.

Easter is really early this year and the Zanesville Lions have to get prepared for our big Easter Egg Hunt and Game Festival. Mark your calendars for Saturday, March 23, and bring the kids to the Lions Park for the hunt beginning at 1 p.m. and stay for a fun time of table games and prizes

until 3 p.m. Bring your family and have a great time. In case of bad weather, the hunt and games will be held the Saturday, March 30.

The Zanesville Town Council will meet at regular meeting time of 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 19, at the Town Municipal Building on Wayne Street. All are welcome to attend.

I have been wanting to take a short drive to the National Veterans Memorial Museum and Shrine on O'Day Road in Fort Wayne. My goal was to see the new monument of the Korean War. I remember when we were in Washington D.C. I was impressed with the

soldier statues and now we have some right here in Fort Wayne.

I did not know, however, until reading the Senior Living that one of those is Zanesville's own Gary Sink. Gary lives a mile west of town and he was seriously injured and left for dead. He was awarded the Purple Heart. The face on the statue of the soldier being helped is that of Gary! Assisting him to walk is PFC William Walters who was assigned to the 506 Motor Pool in Korea. Now I definitely want to see these statues in person. Pick up a Spring Senior Living and read the whole story.

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Colts agree to 3-year, \$70 million deal with WR Michael Pittman Jr.

By MICHAEL MAROT
AP Sports Writer

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Indianapolis Colts general manager Chris Ballard did everything he could to keep receiver Michael Pittman Jr. off this year's free agent market.



Michael Pittman Jr.

He completed the job Monday. Two weeks after promising Pittman would be in Indy next season — one way or the other — the two sides negotiated a three-

year, \$70 million deal with \$46 million in guarantees as one of three big signings, a person with knowledge of the negotiations told The Associated Press.

Indy also has re-signed defensive tackle Grover Stewart and linebacker Zaire Franklin, both starters, to new three-year contracts, the person said.

Stewart will get \$39 million, Franklin \$31.2 million. The person requested anonymity because none of the deals had been announced.

Pittman's deal It was no surprise given Ballard's repeated praise of the receiver's productivity, toughness over the middle and leadership inside the locker room. And at age 26, there's still room for growth, too.

"He wants to win and when you're a good player, part of that is you want the football," Ballard said during the NFL's annual scouting combine. "I don't know if I want to be around a guy that doesn't want the ball. That's OK. There's a way to do it, a right way to do it, but it's one of the things I appreciate about Pitt. The one thing you never have to worry about with that guy is he empties the tank. He absolutely empties the tank."

Incentives could add another \$1.5 million to the deal's total value.

When Pittman last spoke, in January, he said his agent wanted to wait until after the season to resume negotiations.

Ballard, meanwhile, continually said he hoped to complete a fair-market deal with Pittman before free agency officially opens Wednesday. It was Ballard's top offseason priority.

"I know we're going to have a few free agents you're all going to want to talk about and I'm probably going to give you the same answer — I would like to have them all back," Ballard said in January. "But it doesn't work that way. It's just the nature of what we do. Pitt is a good football player for us and hopefully he remains a Colt."

Pittman has 336 catches, 3,636 yards and 15 TDs and 11 carries for 100 yards and four more scores since the Colts drafted him No. 30 overall in 2020.

He's also coming off his best season in Indy. He had 109 receptions and 1,152 yards, both career bests, to go with four TD catches. Pittman became the fourth player in franchise history with 100 receptions in one season while logging his second 1,000-yard season despite missing one full game and part of another following a scary hit that resulted in a concussion and the ejection of Pittsburgh Steelers safety Damontae Kazee.

Still, Pittman wanted to see what he was worth.

"Speaking to the contract stuff, I made it this far so — I've loved my four years here," Pittman said at the end of last season. "But I wouldn't be doing my due diligence if I didn't explore every option and find the best fit."

Yet Ballard remained hopeful of reaching a multi-year deal with the former Southern California star and

the son of a Super Bowl champion.

The deal assures Indy will keep its three most prominent playmakers — quarterback Anthony Richardson, 2021 NFL rushing champion Jonathan Taylor and Pittman — together through at least 2026. Richardson was the No. 4 overall pick in last year's draft.

Last season, injuries limited that trio to only two snaps together.

Taylor opened the season on the physically unable to perform list with a lingering ankle injury.

Richardson only appeared in four games and only finished one because of injuries. He had season-ending shoulder surgery in October and has recently resumed throwing.

Stewart has been a key component to the Colts' run defense in recent seasons. Over his seven-year career, he has 280 tackles, nine sacks, forced one fumble and recovered one fumble. Ballard and Indy coaches believe he's been playing at Pro Bowl level over the past several seasons.

Franklin has ranked among the league leaders in tackles in each of the past two seasons after finally winning the starting job. He finished second last season with 179 tackles despite missing one game with an injury, breaking the single-season franchise record he previously set in 2022 with 167. He also has forced five fumbles, recovered one and has 4 1/2 sacks in his six NFL seasons, all with the Colts.

And Ballard may not be finished.

Pro Bowl cornerback Kenny Moore II, starting safety Julian Blackmon, and running back Zack Moss could all become free agents Wednesday. Moss played a productive role as a backup to Taylor in 2023.



Barkley, Cousins headline Day 1 of NFL free agency

At noon on Monday, the NFL's free agency period began for all players to ink deals with new teams — and it did not disappoint.

From Saquon Barkley heading to the Philadelphia Eagles to Kirk Cousins heading down to Atlanta, big names were tossed around across the league.

Here are all the notable moves made, including free-agent signings, re-signings, trades and more.

Eagles sign RB Saquon Barkley, DE Bryce Huff

The Philadelphia Eagles have agreed to contracts with former New York Giants running back Saquon Barkley and New York Jets defensive end Bryce Huff, according to two people familiar with the deals. Barkley is set to sign a three-year deal for \$26 million guaranteed and \$37.75 million overall, while Huff is getting a three-year deal for \$51 million, according to the people who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because free agents can't officially sign with new teams until Wednesday. Barkley ran for 962 yards and six touchdowns last season in 14 seasons and had 41 catches, including four TDs. Huff has 17 1/2 career sacks, 65 total tackles and one forced fumble in four seasons with the Jets.

QB Kirk Cousins signs 4-year deal with Falcons

Kirk Cousins is leaving Minnesota for Atlanta. He landed another big contract with a well-timed foray into free agency. Cousins agreed to a four-year, \$180 million deal with \$100 million guaranteed, according to a person with knowledge of the terms. The person spoke on condition of anonymity to The Associated Press because the deal can't

be signed until Wednesday when the new league year begins. Cousins is working his way back from a torn Achilles tendon in his right foot that sidelined him because of injury for the first time in his 12-year NFL career.

Browns bolster D-line with Za'Darius Smith and Maurice Hurst

The Cleveland Browns have agreed to re-sign defensive end Za'Darius Smith and defensive tackle Maurice Hurst. That's according to a person familiar with the deals who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the free agents have yet to sign the deals to remain in Cleveland. Both played significant roles on the Browns' defense, which allowed the fewest yards in the NFL. Smith made 16 starts and had 5 1/2 sacks and 27 tackles after joining the team in a May trade with Minnesota. The Browns also added a player from outside the organization, agreeing to a two-year deal with linebacker Jordan Hicks.

Chiefs re-sign All-Pro DT Chris Jones

The Kansas City Chiefs finalized a five-year, \$158.75 million contract with Chris Jones on Monday, keeping the All-Pro tackle in the middle of their defensive line as they chase a record-setting third consecutive Super Bowl title. Jones will make \$95 million guaranteed over the first three years of the deal, a person familiar with the details told The Associated Press on Saturday night, when the framework for the agreement was put in place. The person spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because the financial terms for one of the biggest deals for a defensive player in

NFL history were not disclosed. Jones turns 30 in July.

Packers made splashes with RB Josh Jacobs, S Xavier McKinney

The Green Bay Packers got off to a busy start in free agency, agreeing to deals with running back Josh Jacobs and safety Xavier McKinney, and releasing longtime running back Aaron Jones. Two people familiar with the deals said on condition of anonymity that the Packers will sign Jacobs and McKinney at the start of the new league year on Wednesday. Green Bay traditionally has not been an aggressive team in free agency, but made big moves on the first day of the negotiating window to get two of the top players at their positions on the open market and cutting ties with Jones.

Lions re-sign OL Glasgow, acquire CB Davis and DT Marcus Davenport

The Detroit Lions addressed three pressing needs Monday, two days before the new league year begins. Detroit agreed to a one-year contract with edge rusher Marcus Davenport, according to a person familiar with the deal who spoke on condition of anonymity because it had not been finalized. The Lions also acquired cornerback Carlton Davis from Tampa Bay for a third-round draft

(Continued on Page 7)

BHMS, Red Cross to host swimming lessons in April

Bluffton-Harrison's Middle School pool will be open for lessons through the Red Cross this April.

There are two programs — the Red Cross Level Program and the infant/preschool program.

The Red Cross Level Program requires students to be fairly comfortable with the water and aged five years or older.

Registration night is from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. Monday, March 18. The cost per student and Bluffton-Harrison Township resident is \$30. Per non-resident, the cost is \$40. Checks are payable to BHMSD.

There are two sessions. Session one is from April 1-11 and session two is from April 15-25.

Swimming nights for the Red Cross program are Monday, Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.

The infant/preschool program is for kids six months to four years old. If interested in this program, swim nights are Monday, Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 5:30 p.m.-6 p.m.

The goal for this program is to create "a positive first experience in the water to starting the foundational development of basic water skills."

For more information, contact BHMS at 260-824-3536.

Knights take 1st in Oak Hill MS Invite, NE8 meet this week

Norwell's Middle School swim teams won the Oak Hill Invitational on Saturday.

The Knights scored a 419 to claim the top spot in the standings. Oak Hill followed with 375 points, followed by third place Huntington (217), fourth Lapel (189), fifth McCulloch (49) and sixth Wabash (41).

All of the races were and team scores were co-ed. Individual results were not sent.

Both teams will finish their seasons later this week at the Northeast 8 Middle School Conference meet at Cole YMCA hosted by East Noble. Diving began Monday, while the girls' swim meet starts at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday. The boys start at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday.

High School Calendar

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.
SATURDAY, MARCH 16
No events scheduled.
MONDAY, MARCH 18

No events scheduled.
TUESDAY, MARCH 19
No events scheduled.
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20
No events scheduled.
THURSDAY, MARCH 21
No events scheduled.

Houston, UConn, Purdue remain top AP Top 25

By DAVE SKRETTA
AP Basketball Writer

Houston remained atop the AP Top 25 men's college basketball poll for the third consecutive week Monday while a couple of the game's traditional bluebloods made big jumps as they peak just in time for postseason play.

The Cougars received 52 of 62 first-place votes from a national media panel after a week in which they beat UCF and routed then-No. 14 Kansas to clinch the Big 12 regular-season title in their first year in the league. The three straight weeks Houston has spent at No. 1 matches the school's longest run since the 1967-68 season.

"It's gratifying. I'm happy for everybody," said Cougars coach Kelvin Sampson, whose team will be the top seed in the Big 12 tourney and open play on Thursday. "There's so many people that have an inferiority complex about, 'We're the University of Houston.' This is a damn good school. We live in a damn good city, and we're a damn good basketball program."

Defending national champion UConn, the top seed in the Big East tourney, was second in the poll after picking up six first-place votes, and Purdue — the top seed in the Big Ten tourney — remained at No. 3 after getting four first-place votes.

The big movement came in the rest of the top 10, where North Carolina jumped three spots to No. 4 after beating then-No. 9 Duke and Kentucky vaulted six spots to No. 9 after its win over then-No. 4 Tennessee.

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Pictured in the photo from left are Danielle Thompson of Flagstar Bank, Erica Lehman of Lehman Appraisals, Alyssa Brown of Archbold & Lewis, Shaye Higgins of Steffen Group, Chris Gerber of Edge Manufacturing, Brandon Steffen of Steffen Group, Heather Morgan of National Oil, Cathie Peterson of Steffen Group, Kevin Pritchard of Ruoff Mortgage, Bobby Perry of Steffen Group, Keith Muhlenkamp of First Merchants Bank, Isaac Stoller, Nick Huffman and Pat Carter of Steffen Group, Jayde Ketring of First Bank of Berne, Jessica Beste of Stockton Mortgage, Wells County Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Erin Prible, Cyndee Fiechter of North Eastern Group Realty, Ben Renkenberger of United Way and Rachel Reinhard of the Wells County Chamber of Commerce. (Photo submitted)

Steffen Group named Chamber March Member of the Month

The Wells County Chamber of Commerce staff and Ambassadors had the pleasure of surprising the dedicated team at Steffen Group, located at 215 E. Market in Bluffton, as the March Member of the Month. Brandon Steffen, the owner of Steffen Group since 2000, expressed his gratitude and pride in the recognition.

"We have such a great team at Steffen Group and truly enjoy how involved our agents and company are in the community, supporting many nonprofits and the Chamber of Commerce," said Steffen. "This community gives us a tremendous amount of support, and we want to give back to a community that supports us."

Brandon's journey in the real estate and auction business began in 1996 in Ossian, right after school. His decision to start his own business led to the establishment of Steffen Group in Fort Wayne in 2000. However, his roots in Wells County called him back, and in 2021, Steffen Group opened an office in downtown Bluffton. "I really wanted to get back to Wells County because I grew up here, and we really wanted to grow in the county," he added.

Steffen Group, with locations in Fort Wayne and Bluffton, boasts a total of 16 agents with plans for further growth.

The company specializes in residential real estate, auctions, and commercial real estate management, overseeing approximately 4 million square feet of commercial space from Indianapolis to Laporte, Indiana.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought about significant changes in the auction business, with Steffen Group adapting to conducting 90% of auctions online. Recognizing a community need, the company opened an auction site at Rod's Rustics in Ossian two years ago, catering to small estates, downsizing individuals, and those transitioning.

Due to continued growth and future expansion plans, Steffen Group relocated to the 215 East Market location in 2023. "We had outgrown our space across from the Courthouse and just love our new location," explained Steffen. "We still have a little decorating to do, but it's a work in progress. The off-street parking and all the space down here is a great asset."

Receiving Member of the Month is a significant honor for Steffen Group, who expressed their pride in the work they do and thanked the Wells County Chamber of Commerce for the recognition.

For more information about Steffen Group, visit their website at steffengrp.com.

U.S. pledges additional \$100M for force awaiting deployment to Haiti

By DÁNICA COTO
Associated Press

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Monday announced an additional \$100 million to finance the deployment of a multinational force to Haiti following a meeting with Caribbean leaders in Jamaica to halt the country's violent crisis.

Blinken also announced another \$33 million in humanitarian aid and the creation of a joint proposal agreed on by Caribbean leaders and "all of the Haitian stakeholders to expedite a political transition" and create a "presidential college."

He said the college would take "concrete steps" he did not identify to meet the needs of Haitian people and enable the pending deployment of the multinational force to be led by Kenya. Blinken also noted that the U.S. Department of Defense doubled its support for the mission, having previously set aside \$100 million.

The joint proposal has the backing of Caricom, a regional trade bloc that held Monday's urgent meeting.

"I think we can all agree: Haiti is on the brink of disaster," said Guyanese President Irfaan Ali. "We must take quick and decisive action."

Ali said he is "very confident that we have found commonality" to support what he described as a Haitian-led and -owned solution.

Meanwhile, Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness said the meeting was a work in progress.

"It is clear that Haiti is now at a tipping point," he said. "We are deeply distressed that it is already too late for too many who have lost far too much at the hands of criminal gangs."

Embattled Prime Minister Ariel Henry, who faces calls to resign or agree to a transitional council, did not attend the meeting. He has been locked out of his own country while traveling abroad, due to surging unrest and violence by criminal gangs who have overrun much of Haiti's capital and closed down its main international airports.

Henry remained in Puerto Rico and was taking steps to return to Haiti once feasible, according to a brief statement from the U.S. territory's Department of State.

While leaders met behind closed doors, Jimmy Chérizier, considered Haiti's most powerful gang leader, told reporters that if the international community continues down the current road, "it will plunge Haiti into further chaos."

"We Haitians have to decide who is going to be the head of the country and what model of government we want," said Chérizier.

zier, a former elite police officer known as Barbecue who leads a gang federation known as G9 Family and Allies. "We are also going to figure out how to get Haiti out of the misery it's in now."

The meeting in Jamaica was organized by members of a regional trade bloc known as Caricom, which for months has pressed for a transitional government in Haiti while protests in the country have demanded Henry's resignation.

"The international community must work together with Haitians towards a peaceful political transition," U.S. Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs Brian Nichols wrote on X, formerly Twitter. Nichols will attend the meeting.

Concerns remain that a long-sought solution will remain elusive. Caricom said in a statement on Friday announcing the urgent meeting in Jamaica that while "we are making considerable progress, the stakeholders are not yet where they need to be."

Mia Mottley, Barbados' prime minister, said that up to 90% of proposals that Haitian stakeholders have put on the table are similar. These include an "urgent need" to create a presidential council to help identify a new prime minister to establish a government.

Her comments were briefly streamed by Caricom, in what appeared to have been a mistake, and then were abruptly cut off.

The meeting was held as powerful gangs continued to attack key government targets across Haiti's capital of Port-au-Prince. Since Feb. 29, gunmen have burned police stations, closed the main international airports and raided the country's two biggest prisons, releasing more than 4,000 inmates.

Scores of people have been killed, and more than 15,000 are homeless after fleeing neighborhoods raided by gangs. Food and water are dwindling as stands and stores selling to impoverished Haitians run out of goods. The main port in Port-au-Prince remains closed, stranding dozens of containers with critical supplies.

Late Monday, the Haitian government announced it was extending a nighttime curfew until March 14 in an attempt to prevent further attacks.

Henry could not be immediately reached for comment after Monday's meeting. He landed in Puerto Rico last week after being denied entry into the Dominican Republic, which shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti.

When the attacks began, Henry was in Kenya pushing for the U.N.-backed deployment of a police force from the East African country that has been delayed by a court ruling.

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Keystone Cooperative donates \$40K to Indiana FFA

By AGDAILY

Keystone Cooperative has deepened its commitment to the Indiana FFA Foundation by donating \$40,000 to the organization in 2024. As the farmer-owned cooperative remains centered on the rural communities it serves, this gift signifies its increased commitment to youth agriculture education and leadership across the state.

The \$40,000 gift will amplify efforts to educate youth about the rapidly evolving agricultural industry, including conservation, technology, leadership opportunities, and beyond. Keystone recognizes the immense value of the FFA organization and the many benefits it affords its members. A remarkable number of Keystone employees were once active members of the FFA. Additionally, numerous employees dedicate their time, energy, and expertise to the organization as volunteers, coaches, mentors, and contest judges.

Formed through a recent merger between Ceres Solutions and Co-Alliance, two farmer-owned cooperatives headquartered in Indiana, Keystone Cooperative remains focused on developing opportunities for the next generation of agriculturalists. This \$40,000 support level is a direct benefit of the recent merger.

"The very essence of the coopera-

tive spirit is to work together to provide greater opportunities for those in agriculture, and this \$40,000 donation to the Indiana FFA Foundation is a testament to that. Keystone is committed to the Indiana FFA Foundation and its mission to provide leadership opportunities to those who will excel in the workforce and will become the future leaders of the agricultural industry," says Keystone CEO Kevin Still.

To expand the impact of this donation even further, Keystone industry partner Syngenta is matching the \$40,000 by giving \$40,000 to the National FFA Foundation on Keystone's behalf.

"The agriculture industry is evolving at a record pace, and aligned with that growth is Syngenta's commitment to the FFA organization. We believe there is no other youth organization that teaches such leadership skills, and we're thrilled to partner with Keystone on this momentous contribution to the National FFA organization," said Vern Hawkins, President, Syngenta Crop Protection.

The Indiana FFA Foundation recognizes the impact this donation will have. "Indiana FFA is grateful for the partnership of Keystone Cooperative to influence positive growth in agriculture education and career development for more than 13,000 FFA members

in Indiana", said Tim Hoberty, Indiana FFA Foundation Board Chairman. "FFA depends on industry partners to be able to sustain these programs. Keystone Cooperative's increased level of support of FFA demonstrates a commitment to agriculture for today and for the future."

This level of commitment to the FFA organization coincides with Keystone's recent launch of SEED (Securing Experience & Employee Development), a two-year program in which recent high school graduates can be hired full-time at Keystone to explore the cooperative's diversity, resulting in rewarding, fulfilling long-term employment opportunities.

This program is strategically designed for non-college-bound graduates who are ready to get to work rather than report to a classroom.

SEED employees will rotate through all business areas (Agronomy, Energy, Grain, Swine and animal Nutrition, and Corporate) to find a place where they can build a promising career in agriculture and energy. SEED employees will receive full-time benefits and pay and have any accreditations required for the job paid for by Keystone. After their two-year experience, they will work with the SEED program manager to evaluate their fit within the company and find the best opportunity for them personally.

Exploring turbine foot claims in livestock, wildlife

By AGDAILY

Wind turbines are a common sight across rural America. Texas, which in 2022 generated more than 25 percent of all U.S. wind-sourced electricity, led the country for the 17th consecutive year.

However, there have long been concerns about wind turbines, particularly about whether there is a negative impact on wildlife and livestock, not to mention people. In 2006, Dr. Nina Pierport coined the term "Wind turbine syndrome" as part of a study that surveyed 38 people living near wind turbines. The individuals studied noted symptoms such as sleep disorders, headaches, tinnitus, dizziness, nausea, visual disorders, heart failure, and problems with concentration and memory.

In 2021, a French court recognized "turbine syndrome" claims by a Belgian couple living near a wind farm. The plaintiffs were awarded more than €100,000 in compensation by the judge in Toulouse for the damages they claimed nearby turbines had on their health. The claim was initially dismissed by the court of Castres in 2020.

So what about in relation to animals. There is definitely worry among some farmers and ranchers:

"Wind turbines are killing birds. The sound is killing whales. A Stud farm in Texas, also proved this. His foals got turbine foot. Damage to the developing cartilage on all his foals as they grew. A new field full of turbines on his perimeter. He then imported a foal not from his stock, healthy vet checked. It started getting turbine foot. The vibration and hum was recorded. All possible contaminants rules out. He won the case."

This was said in a Facebook post by Jamie Murray on March 7, which has now been shared over 7,700 times.

Although commenting on the post appears to have been turned off, reactions citing the "research" on social media have been strong. And it's no wonder — turbines dot the landscape in rural America with their massive structures, noise, and size. The perceived negative impacts on lifestyles and the environment have left many questioning their impact.

Reports blame turbines when no other causes are found

Taking a few minutes to read the documents about wind turbine syndrome, here's what we discovered:

First, the "study" referenced in the Facebook post was written up as a master's thesis titled Acquired flex-

ural deformity of the distal interphalangeal joint in foals.

The paper was submitted at the College of Veterinary Medicine in Lisbon, Portugal (not Texas) in 2012 — 12 years ago. Although the information provided was likely presented for a grade, it is not a research paper presented in a peer-reviewed format by a veterinarian or Ph.D. candidate.

The subjects under question included 11 Lusitano horses between 0 and 48 months old. Nine horses were born at the farm, and two were purchased from a different breeder.

According to the paper, flexural deformities were not noted in horses on the farm before 2008. However, after 2008, the breeder observed a "marked hyperflexion of the distal interphalangeal joint occurring in the same sagittal plane." Essentially, the horses experienced equine flexural limb deformities, otherwise known as boxy foot, or club foot.

Although the stud farm said that the diet and nutrition provided to the young horses did not change before 2008, ELFD can be caused by various factors, such as congenital, nutritional, infectious diseases, and trauma. In young horses, EFLD typically follows the inability of the deep digital flexor tendon to follow bone growth during rapid growth periods during the foal's first years of life.

The appearance of abnormalities coincided with installing wind turbines built on the land adjacent to the stud farm.

But, as we know, correlation does not necessarily equal causation, and the author of the paper explains, "In the present study no reliably scientific data were found about the natural frequencies of the cells of horses that could safely infer about the effect of noise in the immediate vicinity of the stud with the cellular changes of these animals."

Anecdotal reports from livestock farmers worldwide have raised concerns about wind turbines. No matter the species, reports blame wind turbines when no other cause is found.

For example, beginning in 2012, two French farmers located near a wind farm in Louire-Atlantique reported problems with their livestock, including reduced milk yields, poor quality, behavior problems, and increased mortality.

ANSES, the French Agency for Food, Environment, and Occupational Health and Safety, investigated and concluded that the "timeline of the disorders is incompatible with the peri-

ods when the wind farm was built and commissioned."

In the Penghu region of Taiwan, farmers became concerned when 400 goats died on farms near wind turbines in 2009.

Then again, in Ontario, Canada, another goat farmer noted that 20 of their nanny goats miscarried or had kids that died after birth.

In Poland, a five-week study was conducted, which involved dividing 40 geese into two separate groups. Group one was situated 50 meters from the turbines, while Group two was 500 meters away. The geese from group one exhibited less weight gain and showed a higher cortisol concentration in their blood than those in group two. Additionally, there were reported changes in behavior among the geese in group one.

In 2016, rumors surrounding dead or stranded whales on New England beaches coupled with offshore turbines built off of Rhode Island and Virginia resulted in lawsuits from community groups seeking to cancel the projects.

"With whale strandings along the Northeast earlier this year in places like New Jersey, the reality is that it's not from offshore wind," said Aaron Rice, a marine biologist at Cornell University.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reported that 40 percent of whale carcasses showed evidence of death caused by fishing gear entanglement or being hit by boats.

Wind turbines responsible for killing and wounding eagles

In 2022, ESI Energy Inc. was sentenced in Cheyenne, Wyoming, for violations of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

ESI pled guilty to three counts of violating the MBTA, each based on the documented deaths of golden eagles due to blunt force trauma from being struck by a wind turbine blade at a particular facility in Wyoming or New Mexico, where ESI had not applied for the necessary permits.

ESI further acknowledged that at least 150 bald and golden eagles have died since 2012 across 50 of its 154 wind energy facilities. 136 of those deaths have been affirmatively determined to be attributable to the eagle being struck by a wind turbine blade.

ESI agreed to a deal in which they must pay a fine of \$1,861,600 and compensate \$6,210,991 for damages. They're also on a five-year probation and must follow the Eagle Management Plan. This plan requires them to spend up to \$27 million to protect

eagles during probation, even more so if they extend it.

If they harm or kill bald or golden eagles, they must pay \$29,623 per eagle. Over the next three years, ESI must apply for permits for any harm they might cause to eagles at 50 of their facilities.

Why wind power?

Wind power isn't new. It has been harvested for centuries, propelling ships, milling grain, and pumping water. However, the widespread use of utility-scale wind turbines began only 30 to 40 years ago and has been growing rapidly.

A wind turbine harnesses energy by utilizing the aerodynamic force generated by its rotor blades. As the wind passes over the blades, it prompts the rotor to rotate, which drives a generator to produce electricity. This electricity is then transmitted to end-users via an extensive network of transmission and distribution lines spanning the state.

Most large-scale wind turbines feature a horizontal axis configuration, with typically three blades affixed to a towering structure ranging from 300 to 415 feet in height. As of 2022, newly installed turbines boasted an average capacity of 3 MW. These turbines are often clustered together to form wind farms, comprising numerous individual turbines spread across expansive areas.

As of May 2023, the U.S. Geological Survey's Wind Turbine Database recorded more than 72,731 turbines in the U.S. with a total rated capacity of 142.2 GW.5 Wind is the fourth-largest source of electricity generation in the country, with enough power to serve the equivalent of 46 million homes.



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Making peace with family estrangement

Dear Annie: Sixteen years ago, I separated from my wife, as we were headed toward a divorce. Her father, "Bob," just lost it; he was so angry over the divorce. He swore to me that he would do everything he could and spend his last dime to take my sons away from me.

My oldest son texted me five years ago to say his life was better off without me, and he has not spoken to me since. My younger son comes around when it's his birthday or Christmas, but only to collect his gifts.

I have finally come to terms with something my current wife said. "People treat you exactly how they feel about you," and, "No one is required to be in your life." Even if they are your children or your brother or your sister or your parents.

We see so many movies and TV shows where family is number one, but in real society, that just doesn't seem to be the norm.

To those who have suffered hurt by those who should love you, you deserve better. You are worth knowing and loving, just the way you are. There are plenty of people who would appreciate you for the person you are. Find them. Build relationships with them. One of the most wonderful people in my life was a lady who had no blood relationship to me, but I was honored to call her "Grandma" for well over 30 years.

Dear Still Loving Life: I'm glad that you were able to come to terms

with the hurt from your past, but don't keep trying to show your love for your sons. Maybe someday there will be a heartfelt reconciliation.

Dear Annie: At age 72, after living a very sedentary life, my doctor finally got me walking, and I've been doing my "10,000 steps" almost every day for the past seven years. That means I have clocked over 23 million steps.

When I travel, I do some of my walking in airline terminals, where airline personnel often ask me if I require a wheelchair. I smile, thank them for their concern and show them the step count on my phone while reminding them of the story of the tortoise and the hare.

I'm 79 now. I may look tottery, but I'm still walking. — The Tottery Tortoise

Dear Tottery Tortoise: Congratulations! Ten thousand steps a day takes dedication and commitment. The payout is tremendous. Keep up the good work. I hope your story inspires others to get moving.

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

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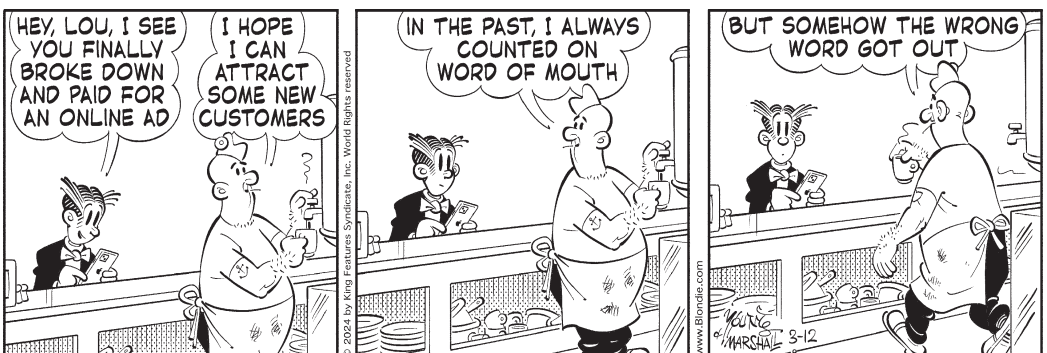
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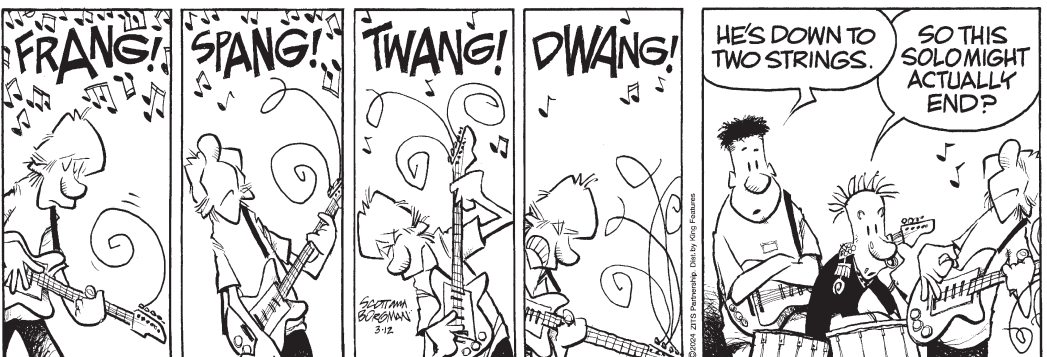
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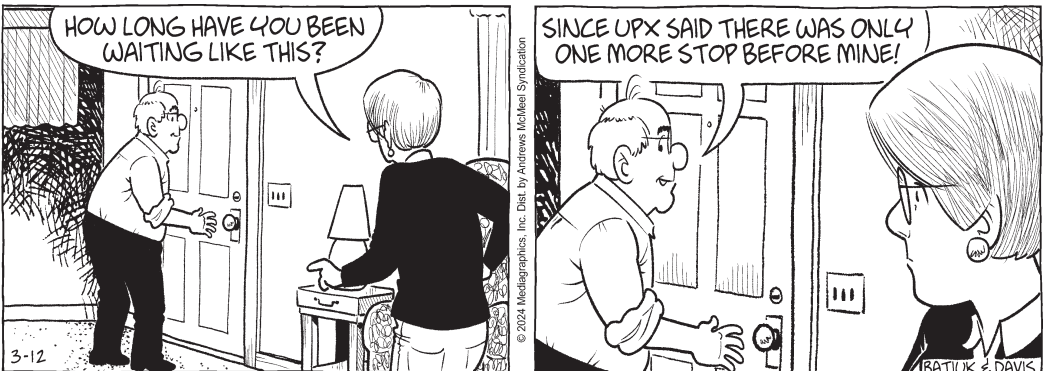
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My Answer

By Dr. Billy Graham



Energy out of control is dangerous

that was often used to describe an animal that had been tamed to obey the command of its master. A strong animal like a horse or ox, able to do a great deal of work, is not "weak" — but through training is made "meek," obedient to the will of its owner.

That is a vivid picture of what Jesus means by "meekness." When we are apart from Christ, we are — in a sense — like a wild animal. We live according to our own desires and wishes, obeying our own instincts and ruling our

own lives. But when we come to Christ, our goal is different. Now we want to live for Him and do His will. This, after all, is God's will for us: to be obedient. He has given us His Word to help us do this. The Bible says, "Receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21, NKJV). When our lives are marked by true meekness, we will know true happiness.

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

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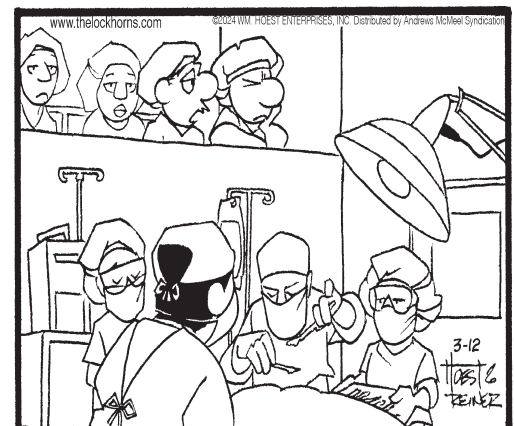
THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane



"Is soup pollution bad for the environment?"

The LOCKHORNS



"THEY WERE ALL OUT OF ANY OTHER THEATER TICKETS."

Question: A popular TV show is portraying a rather meek Jesus Christ, easygoing and loving, as though there is nothing He would condemn. Is this an accurate portrayal? — E.J.

Answer: Many people confuse the word meek with weak. While they may rhyme, these are two very different words that bear scrutiny in order to clarify the meaning of Bible verses that speak of meekness.

The dictionary says that the word meek means "mild, submissive, and compliant." William Barclay points out that the Greek word for meek was the word

Table with 24 columns (Time slots) and 48 rows (Channels). Lists TV programs and their start times.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words.

Solution to the crossword puzzle, showing the filled-in grid.

Yesterday's answer grid for the crossword puzzle.

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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

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

Difficulty: ★★

3/12

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Monday's Drawings HOOSIER LOTTERY
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Cash4Life — 07-13-16-26-27, Cash Ball: 02
Quick Draw Midday — 03-10-13-24-27-28-29-33-34-38-44-56-59-67-68-70-72-73-77-78, BE: 56
Daily Three-Midday — 04-02-02, SB: 09
Daily Three-Evening — 03-00-09, SB: 08
Daily Four-Midday — 09-07-07-05, SB: 09
Daily Four-Evening — 06-02-03-02, SB: 08
Quick Draw Evening — 02-05-08-11-12-14-20-24-29-38-1-47-48-51-52-56-57-66-73-77, BE: 12
Hoosier Lotto — Estimated jackpot (for Wednesday): \$6.3 million
MEGA MILLIONS Estimated jackpot (for Tuesday): \$735 million
POWERBALL 01-03-07-16-66 Powerball: 05; Power Play: 5X

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Help Wanted

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Help Wanted

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/ 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.

HELOISE HINT: If your job has been eliminated. Be sure to handle the situation professionally. Accept it and try to go out on a high note. This can help you get a good recommendation from your supervisor, which is important when applying for your next job. Email HELOISE@Heloise.com.

Pets

HELOISE HINT: If your dog has bad breath. This might be a buildup of plaque or a sign of gum disease. If it's really bad, take your pup to the vet for a good cleaning. You can then buy doggy toothpaste and brush their teeth regularly. There are also dental sprays available in stores or online. Email HELOISE@Heloise.com.

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Public Sale Calendar

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! Pickup March 18 and 19, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., 3121 S. Walnut St., Muncie, large items can be picked up by appointment only up to 10 days. *Krueckeberg Auction & Realty LLC*, 260-724-7402, kjauction.com.

MARCH 14 - 6 p.m. - Denver Neuenschwander 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.*, heartlandauctionrealty.com, 260-724-3499.

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.

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

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.

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21/E	★ ★	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
9	7	2	4	1	6	8	5	3
8	9	6	7	5	9	2	1	4
6	8	4	2	7	9	1	2	9
7	9	1	8	2	7	9	6	5
5	2	9	6	9	1	7	4	8
9	6	7	1	4	5	9	8	2
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