

The News - Banner

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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 2024 BLUFFTON, INDIANA • Wells County's Hometown Connection \$1.00

Kline resigns as director of Economic Development

By HOLLY GASKILL
 In a press release Tuesday, the Wells County Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development announced the resignation of Economic Development Executive Director Chad Kline.
 Kline's resignation will be effective April 12. In an email to Chamber members, the Chamber Board of Directors stated the position would not be replaced at this time.
 "We will work with the Wells County Commissioners, city of Bluffton and our

member towns and governmental entities in an effort to have the economic development services historically provided by the Chamber instead be provided with the leadership of local government," the email reads.
 It continues, "In doing so, it will remain the Chamber's primary role to be an effective advocate for its private sector members and, if beneficial to all parties, we are willing to explore the possibility of a new economic development organization for all of

Wells County that represents the interests of both public and private sectors."
 Kline has held the position since 2015.
 "It has truly been an honor to serve as the Economic Development Director for Wells County over the last 8 years," Kline said in the release. "Through the collaboration of a number of entities and individuals, Wells County has seen significant positive investments and will continue to thrive for many years to come."
 The announcement follows several

months of contract negotiations between local municipalities and the Chamber. Tensions boiled over into the commissioners' March 4 meeting after the Chamber board issued an ultimatum to approve the contract. At the time,
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Chad Kline

Caring community

Laughter, chatter, and a long table of donated items filled the room at the 4-H building Saturday evening. Organizations and individuals gathered to support the annual benefit dinner with Community Care of Northeast Indiana.
 Above right is Jodi Holloway (left) who was up to the task as the live auction earned laughs — and over \$16,000. Council member Chandler Gerber (right) also assisted.
 Bottom right, Christine Walker, executive director of Community Care of Northeast Indiana, detailed a long list of critical resources the organization has provided to the community throughout the last year. Walker also announced a new campaign to raise \$175,000 for the purchase of Hannah's House.
 Below, residents and staff at Hannah's House also attended the event. A video testimony played for attendees as several women detailed their experiences with addiction and recovery. (Photos by Sydney Kent)



Board of Works approves bids for sidewalk, curb improvements

By JONATHAN SNYDER
 KBL Transport will be supplying Bluffton with concrete for sidewalk and curb improvements, the Board of Public Works and Safety announced Tuesday.
 On March 12, the Board of Works opened bids from KBL and JL Wilson Construction for concrete. KBL had the low bid, with ADA ramps valued at \$2,350 each, \$65 per linear foot for both standing and roll curbs, \$18 per square foot for sidewalk concrete and \$20 for concrete drives and approaches six inches deep.
 "They (KBL) were uniquely well underneath (JL

Wilson) on each and every line item," said Street Commissioner Tim Simpson.
 Utility Director Jon Oman stated that Inliner Solutions is almost ready to perform spot fixes for sewer pipes, and they will pull out of town until the spring. Materials for street lights on River Road have also been purchased and will be installed from the Rotary Park Pavilion to Red Bridge once a survey is completed.
 The road closure of Main Street last Thursday also brought up a discussion about another bridge going
 (Continued on Page 2)

Two local groups receive funds for addiction recovery

By JONATHAN SNYDER
 Two organizations helping people with addiction received opioid settlement funding from Bluffton's Common Council on Tuesday.
 Tri-Recovery, an organization that focuses on the biological side of addiction recovery, received \$4,000 and Renovate Counseling Services received \$5,000.
 Tri-Recovery founder Andy Yergler, along with Craig Mickey and Doug Johnson, started the organization as a way to encourage others to adopt a healthier lifestyle in order to aid in their recovery. Tri-Recovery meets every Sunday

at the pavilion by Hardee's and the group holds many different events for all skill levels for endurance sports.
 Yergler sees the money being used for a voucher system, where dedication to getting better can lead to a free pair of running shoes. Tri-Recovery also will use the money to help kids of parents who are struggling with addiction by paying for football cleats or tennis rackets to keep them engaged in a healthy lifestyle.
 Renovate is looking to start a weekly class and group meeting for
 (Continued on Page 2)

Southern Wells discusses upcoming projects, construction

By HOLLY GASKILL
 Southern Wells schools learned about a number of facility renovations and repairs for the upcoming months during its board meeting on Tuesday.
 The largest items include parking lot and ag building repairs, resurfacing of the track, construction of a softball pressbox and replacement of flooring in the elementary school cafeteria. The total projected cost is approximately \$285,000.
 Maintenance Director Ryan King stressed that many of these items were well below their origi-

nal projections. Some items have already been approved by the board, and others will be considered in the future.
 Also during the meeting, Superintendent Trent Lehman presented a revised version of the Southern Wells policy manual. The changes presented appeared to be largely for clarity or brevity, and the board agreed to approve them in a first and second reading.
 However, board member Todd Fiechter asked Lehman to investigate precedent regarding extra-
 (Continued on Page 2)

Woman receives bond reduction after OWI

By SYDNEY KENT
 A bond reduction was approved Monday for a mother that was allegedly driving drunk with her two young children on Friday.
 Ashley Nicole Brock, 31, Ossian, was charged with operating a vehicle while intoxicated with a passenger less than 18 years of age a Level 6 felony, and three counts of operating while intoxicated endangerment, a Class A misdemeanor. During her initial hearing in the Wells Superior Court Monday, Brock's bond was reduced from \$8,500 to \$1,500.
 According to a police report from the Wells County Sheriff's Department, units were dispatched to the area of County Road 100 West and State Road 116 in Markle around 7:41 p.m. The caller claimed they saw a woman slumped over the wheel who had briefly raised her head as they passed.
 When the first officer located the vehicle, Brock was in the driver seat and appeared to be asleep. She also reportedly had a strong odor of alcohol, watery eyes, and slow and slurred speech.
 The report stated that officers attempted to place Brock in hand-
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Ashley Nicole Brock

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Outside

Sunny but cold today with wind gusts

Today	Thursday	Friday
High 41	High 40	High 50
Low 21	Low 28	Low 31

More Weather on Page 2

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Kline resigns

(Continued from Page 1)
several elected officials also discussed the separation of Economic Development from the Chamber and adding a solely government-contracted economic development consultant.

The parties ultimately compromised that the Chamber would be paid through June while negotiations continued. Bluffton Common Council member Scott Mentzer was appointed to handle negotiations with the board, specifically related to key performance indicators, over the next several weeks.

Following the commissioner meeting Monday, Commissioner President Jeff Stringer stated these conversations were ongoing.

During the meeting, the commissioners unanimously approved a contract with Cheryl Morphew of Johnson County for economic development consulting. The Common Council approved the same agreement on March 5; both entities will pay for 10 hours monthly at \$150 per hour.

Kline had also been present at Monday's meeting with a proposal to contract a consulting firm, The Veridus Group of Indianapolis, to perform an economic development study and develop a master plan for economic development for Wells County. The study will cost \$87,000, \$50,000 of which will be covered by a grant through the Wells County Foundation.

The commissioners unanimously agreed to pay \$18,000 of the remaining portion. The city of Bluffton and the towns of Ossian and Uniondale have also financially committed.

According to the release, Kline has assisted in drawing over \$400 million in investment to Wells County and over 1,100 new jobs. He also helped secure funding for many other projects, including the Parlor City Plaza and Archbold Wilson Amphitheater in Ossian.

"The accomplishments Chad has completed over the last several years is much appreciated!" said Patty Randall, president the Chamber board.

"These achievements

have assisted in making our community the great place it is. While we are sad to see him leave our organization, we wish him nothing but the best in his future venture."

Kline plans to remain in the community and continue his role on the board for Norwell Community Schools.

The board further advised that the transition would not hinder their service to Chamber members. They wrote, "We remain dedicated to our core mission of being a visionary organization that inspires and impacts engagement, collaboration, and connection among our members for positive community growth," they wrote.

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Groups receive funds

(Continued from Page 1)
individuals in various recovery stages. The class would be led by one or two therapists with significant experience and is designed to be completed in 12-16 weeks. Lane Sanders clarified that people can join the program at any time.

"People in recovery try to commit as much as they can," Sanders said. "If they are finding meetings on a daily basis they perform better."

The Common Council also approved nine CF1 forms from Star Engineering for different machines involved in its tax abatement. These forms include various equipment items such as vertical and horizontal milling centers, while noting the increased

number of jobs the new machines will provide. Elwell described the forms as the DNA profile and the official accounting of the tax abatement.

Star's tax abatement will be spread over four years, with the first three at a 100% abatement, and the final year at 85%.

The Bluffton Redevelopment Commission also had business during the allotted time for the council. The Redevelopment Commission passed a resolution allowing them to enter negotiations for purchasing a 69.995-acre parcel near the intersection of Lancaster and Adams Street, according to Council member Josh Hunt. City Attorney Tony Crowell also stated that the own-

ers are willing to sell and go down this route with the redevelopment commission, which has more flexibility in negotiations than what the city would have.

"We want to take more direct steps to protect the financial interests of constituents," council member Chandler Gerber said. "We (the council) is working to protect economic activity here."

In addition to the resolution, the Redevelopment Commission also looked at a report from Baker Tilly that listed all of the businesses in the tax increment finance district. The report looked at debts and revenues that are involved with those businesses.

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Southern Wells projects

(Continued from Page 1)
curricular participation for students enrolled in a private institution within the district. The policy draft states these students need only enroll in one class, however, Fiechter questioned if the school was fairly reimbursed for that credit hour. He proposed adding a contingency for a cost per credit hour for this special circumstance.

Lehman stated he would look into the matter before the board's next meeting, 5:30 p.m. April 16. The draft is available on BoardDocs.

Other updates were:
• The board approved 2-1 a stipend agreement for extra athletic director responsibilities performed last fall by Principal Kim Conner and teacher Joel

Roush during the full-time position's vacancy. Fiechter, who voted against the agreement, said other positions within the district were also likely deserving of a stipend and thought it appeared they were "picking and choosing" who would receive them. Board members Andrew Pursifull and Delora Schneider voted in favor, and Chad Roush was absent.

• Fiechter later also recommended the board amend its policy requiring approval for all conference requests. The administration will now follow a similar protocol as field trips, presenting requests for out-of-state trips and/or costly trips.

• The board recognized the resignation of art teacher Josh Heim and instructional

assistant Alyssa Toland.

• The following coaching recommendations were approved: Bret Vickery as baseball assistant coach, Lucas Miller as the junior varsity baseball coach, Geoffrey Horner as junior high golf coach, Jacob Duncan as junior high wrestling coach, and Karadyn Riley and Tony Reeves to split the junior varsity softball coach position in place of Amanda Murray, who resigned from the position. The board also approved a superintendent contract for 2024-26.

• Approved a series of surplus and no-value items from the industrial technology classroom.

• Donations were accepted from Country Cabinets, National Oil

and Gas, PRO Mechanical Industrial Contractors, First Bank of Berne and Family Ford for the Business Professionals of America. Anonymous donations were also accepted for the Southern Wells Steve Wagner Scholarship and to cover the transportation costs of a fan bus for girls' basketball sectional games at Northfield.

• The board approved the following fundraisers: the In Harmony Choir to sell chocolate April 8-19, PIE family dodgeball night April 2, volleyball to hold a youth camp April 15-18, athletic boosters to sell Texas Tenderloins and golf to sell hats beginning in March.

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Sidewalk, curb improvements

(Continued from Page 1)
across the Wabash River to help with traffic flow. Oman noted that any bridge would take a partnership between Bluffton and Wells County. Mayor John Whicker also stated that a partnership would be worth looking into.

The board also approved the Parks Department's new hirings for the summer — 16 concession workers, 17 lifeguards, two pool managers, a concessions manager, six maintenance staff members and a staff member for the tennis courts were hired. All of

the positions pay above \$9 an hour, with some members getting additional money if they fill in as managers. Additionally, the board also approved a contract for Kathy Gehrett's services in arts, crafts and drawing classes.

Another new hire and a raise were also approved on Tuesday.

The board approved Jayme Miller's hire as a 911 dispatcher. She has two years of experience in the public safety field as a confinement officer with the Adams County Jail and is going for her master's in criminology. This puts the

department at 11 dispatchers.

The board also gave a raise to Building Department Assistant Karen Nash, who goes to her maximum allocated salary. She has worked in the department for two years, but a misread salary ordinance saw her pay at the 2023 salary ordinance maximum, not the 2024 ordinance.

The Local Road and Street Department also transferred \$55,000 from the office supplies line item to the maintenance and repair line item.

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Zoning board approves three variances

By JONATHAN SNYDER
Two setback variances were given "do pass" recommendations by the Wells County Board of Zoning Appeals on Tuesday.

AMZ Rentals LLC requested that their rear yard setback be reduced from 5 ft. to 4 ft. to accommodate a cold storage addition on the back side of Dunwiddie Heating and Air Conditioning. Owner of Dunwiddie Ben Osborn stated that the addition will be 28 ft. by 16 ft. on the south side of the property, next to an alley coming off of Jersey Street.

Area Plan Commission Executive Director Mike Lautzenheiser stated that the addition is being built in the best possible location, given the small lot size.

Additionally, the BZA gave a "do pass" recommendation for a variance to increase the size allowance of a residential accessory structure. Dayle and Scott Mentzer asked for the variance so they could build a

new storage garage. Dayle Mentzer also stated that she contacted all their neighbors, who have written letters stating they are not objecting to the addition.

The board recommended the variance, with the condition that they leave as much of the natural buffer around the property as possible. Mentzer stated they would only cut down one tree and leave the fence rows between them and their neighbors alone.

Furthermore, the board also approved a front yard setback variance from 60 to 44 ft. for New-Hope Dairy Inc. Manager Alex Neuen-schwander stated their feed center is getting a bit small, so they are adding onto that area with a 16-foot barn. Lautzenheiser stated that another structure near the area is at a similar distance and that the roadway does not see much traffic. He also noted that the addition will not impede a driveway.

The board reached out

to the Wells County Highway Department for questions and comments about the appeal, but since they

did not hear back the board gave a "do pass" recommendation for the project.

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Weather

Wednesday, March 20, 2024
(24-hour observations at 8:45 p.m. Tuesday at Fort Wayne International Airport)
High: 53; **Low:** 44; **Precipitation:** None
Wabash River Level (at the Main Street bridge): 2.35 feet at 6:45 p.m. Tuesday

Wells County forecast

Today: Sunny, with a high near 41. Northwest wind 15 to 20 mph, with gusts as high as 30 mph.

Tonight: Mostly clear, with a low around 21. North wind 10 to 15 mph decreasing to 5 to 10 mph after midnight.

Thursday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 40. East wind around 5 mph becoming north in the afternoon.

Thursday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 28. East wind 5 to 10 mph.

Friday: A 40% chance of showers, mainly after 2 p.m. Partly sunny, with a high near 50.

Friday Night: A 40% chance of showers before 2 a.m. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 31.

Saturday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 44.

Saturday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 25.

Sunday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 49.

Sunday Night: A chance of rain and snow showers. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 36. Chance of precipitation is 30%.

Monday: A 40% chance of showers. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 59. Breezy.

Monday Night: Showers likely. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 46.

Bond reduction

(Continued from Page 1)
cuffs where her children would not see, however, she refused to cooperate. Upon arrival at the hospital for a blood draw, Brock also refused chemical testing. A search warrant was obtained.

A family member report-

edly picked up Brock's children and vehicle from the scene. The Department of Child Services was also contacted.

A status conference is scheduled for 1 p.m., March 27 in the Wells Superior Court.

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OBITUARIES

Lillyian Ellenberger, 19

Lillyian Danielle (Smith) Ellenberger, 19, of Uniondale, passed away on Sunday evening, March 17, 2024.



Lilly was born on July 5, 2004, in Bluffton and attended Norwell High School. From the time she took her first steps, Lilly had a great love for horses, and was most comfortable riding her entire life. She enjoyed riding dirt bikes and spending time with her family and friends. She was currently working at 20/20 Custom Molded Plastics in Bluffton.

On July 3, 2023, Lilly and Corbin G. Ellenberger were married in Bluffton.

Survivors include her husband, Corbin of Uniondale, and her son who she loved so much, Dakota W. Ellenberger of Uniondale. She is also survived by her grandpa, Bill Smith of Uniondale, a sister, a brother, and many cousins and friends.

She is preceded in death by her grandmother, Sharon R. Smith in 2023.

Visitation will be held from 2-8 p.m. on Friday, March 22, 2024, at the Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home in Bluffton.

Funeral services will take place at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, March 23, 2024, at the funeral home with calling for one hour to the service. Pastor Dan Eckelbarger will officiate.

Memorials may be made to help her son, Dakota, and checks can be made payable to Corbin Ellenberger and sent to the funeral home.

Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to the care of the Lemler family of Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home in Bluffton. Friends can share online condolences with the family at www.thomarich.com.

Darrell L. Jones, 80

Darrell L. Jones, 80, passed away Saturday afternoon, March 16, 2024, at Christian Care Retirement Community following an extended illness.



Darrell was born Dec. 15, 1943, in Bedford, Ky., to William T. and Opal (Dice) Jones. His parents preceded him in death. He married Janet R. (Deppel) in North Vernon, Ind., on July 26, 1968. His wife resides in Bluffton.

Darrell graduated from Aurora High School and attended God's Bible College in Cincinnati, Ohio. He served as a minister for several area Wesleyan churches. He worked for Crown Unlimited for 15 years and Bi-County Services for 13 years before retiring. Darrell was a member of Grace Fellowship Church in Decatur and was very active in missions work alongside his wife. Darrell and Janet were foster parents to more than 40 children in their home.

He is survived by his wife of 55 years and their four children, Rene (Lonnie) Biberstein of Bluffton, Lana (Chris) Summers of Bluffton, Troy Jones of Portland, Ore., and Todd (Crystal) Jones of Ossian. He is also survived by five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren; two brothers, Bill (Nancy) Jones and Frank Jones; and a sister, Stella Dice.

Darrell was preceded in death by his parents; a twin sister, Helen Grigsby; a sister, Velma Jones; and a brother, Wayne Jones.

Visitation will be from 4 to 7 p.m. Wednesday, March 20, at the Goodwin - Cale & Harnish Memorial Chapel in Bluffton. Services will be held at 10:30 a.m. Thursday, March 21, at the funeral home, with one hour of visitation prior to the service. Pastor Dan Eckelbarger will officiate. Burial will follow at Six Mile Cemetery in Bluffton.

Memorials can be made in Darrell's memory to Christian Care Retirement Community.

Online condolences: www.goodwincaleharnish.com

Keaton Osmun, 17

Keaton William Osmun, 17, of Ossian, passed away on Sunday evening, March 17, 2024.



Keaton was born on Nov. 14, 2006, in Bluffton to Brandy (Smith) Carr and Bradley Cottier. He was known to be "all boy." Keaton played basketball and football and loved anything with a motor. He was happiest riding his dirt bike and ATVs and doing burnouts. He was a sophomore at Norwell.

Survivors include his mother, Brandy, of Ossian; his father, Bradley; his brother, Cody Osmun of Bluffton; his twin brother, Coleson Osmun and his sister, Kalyssa Carr, both at home; along with his grandparents, Bill Smith of Uniondale and Barry and Cheryl Blain, and many aunts, uncles, cousins and friends.

Visitation will be held from 2-8 p.m. on Friday, March 22, 2024, at the Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home in Bluffton.

Funeral services will take place at 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, March 23, 2024, at the funeral home with calling for one hour to the service, with John Reinhard officiating.

Burial will follow at the Garden of Chimes in Elm Grove Cemetery in Bluffton.

Memorial may be made to help the family at this difficult time.

Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to the care of the Lemler family of Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home in Bluffton. Friends can share online condolences with the family at www.thomarich.com.

Carl R. Stephan, 88

Carl R. Stephan, 88, of Bluffton died Tuesday evening, March 19, 2024, at The Heritage of Huntington.

Funeral arrangements are pending at this time with the Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home in Bluffton.

Obituary Policy

The News-Banner and Ossian Journal publishes "basic" obituaries free of charge for "local" deaths. "Basic" obituaries will include the deceased's name, age, community of record, date and place of death, basic genealogical information, the date, time and location of calling hours and services and the name of the funeral home handling arrangements.

If additional information and/or a photo is desired to be included, or if the deceased does not meet the definitions of a "local" person, there is a charge.

Area funeral homes will provide details on the policy and will coordinate obituary publication.

Corrections and clarifications

Initial reports from the Wells County Sheriff's Department referred to one of the victims of a fatal accident on County Road 100 West in Uniondale by a former name. The WCSD has clarified that the individual used the name Lillyian Ellenberger.



A winning season

Norwell's show choirs Knight Moves and Knight Stars finished their seasons this past weekend at the Marysville Showcase in Marysville, Ohio. Knight Moves placed 4th in its division with senior Eli Ingle being named the group's Outstanding Performer. Knight Stars also received 4th in the Non-Mixed Division with senior V. Riley named outstanding performer.

Also in the Non-Mixed Division, Knight Stars was awarded a Judge's Caption for Best Acapella Moment and Senior Emily Edmiston was named Outstanding Soloist in a show. Edmiston also earned 2nd runner up in the separate solo competition.

All the Norwell Show Choirs will perform their competition shows one last time at the annual Reflections concert May 10 in the Norwell Auditorium. The performance will start at 7:30 p.m. with doors opening at 7:00. Tickets are \$10 and will be sold at the door.

Pictured from left to right are seniors Edmiston, Ingle and Riley. (Photo provided)

Police Notebook

INCIDENTS

City:
Saturday, 12:48 p.m., 300 block of White Bridge Court. Report of fighting.

Saturday, 3:11 p.m., 1100 block of West Washington Street. Report of custody issue.

Saturday, 5:42 p.m., Roush Park. Caller reported son was unable to get bike from park due to juveniles throwing rocks and being rude.

Saturday, 9:13 p.m., Advanced Auto Parts. Man recently released from jail trying to hitch hike to Fort Wayne.

Sunday, 7:02 a.m., South Main and East Townley streets. Driver cited for speeding 51 in a 30 mph zone.

Sunday, 12:22 p.m., 400 block of South Baldwin Street. Caller reported children's father picked up children from church and was refusing to return them.

Monday, 7:09 a.m., Walmart. Report of parking issue with semi.

Monday, 3:56 p.m., McDonalds. Report of cardboard box in lane.

Monday, 4:54 p.m., 1100 block of West South Street. Douglas Whitacre arrested on active arrest warrant for child sexual abuse.

Monday, 5:47 p.m., Coco China Buffet. Report of woman passed out, possible drugs involved. Welfare check requested.

Monday, 6:18 p.m., Walgreens. One woman from previous welfare check in custody for possession of syringe and paraphernalia.

Monday, 11:10 p.m., Peyton's Northern. Report of hit and skip in parking lot. Video footage being reviewed.

Monday, 11:19 p.m., North Bond and West Market streets, Bluffton. Report of semi trying to turn around and getting lost. Officer assisted with redirection.

Tuesday, 1:14 a.m., South Oak and West Silver streets. Report of subject with laser light.

Tuesday, 12:12 p.m., Budget Inn. Report of juvenile who kicked her mother during tantrum. No weapons except the child's attitude, which can seem lethal.

County:
Monday, 12:44 p.m., Pemberton's Garage. Subject requested to remove personal items from vehicle involved in personal injury accident.

Monday, 1:24 p.m., Wells County Jail. Warrant served to Brian M. Knopp.

Monday, 7:19 p.m., Wells County Jail. Warrant served to Hudsyn Michael Kaehr.

Monday, 7:20 p.m., Wells County Jail. Warrant served to Trey Bodenheimer.

Monday, 8:46 p.m., Wells County Jail. Warrant served to Markus Oliver.

Tuesday, 5:48 a.m., S.R. 124 and North 200 West, Bluffton. Driver was cited for speeding 73 in a 55 mph zone after passing a fully marked Sheriff K9 SUV traveling the same direction.

Tuesday, 8:20 a.m., 20/20 Custom Molded Plastics. Warrant issued for Shane Fletcher's arrest after he failed to update his termination to sex offender registry.

Ossian:
Monday, 9:43 p.m., 3700 East 1200 North, Ossian. Caller requested officers respond to domestic disturbance.

ARRESTS

Douglas Whitacre, 63, Bluffton; child molesting, a Level 4 felony. Bond set at \$10,000.

Vincente Tinoco Barrera, 57, Indianapolis; operating without ever being licensed, a Class C misdemeanor. Bond at \$500.

Milot Larose, 29, Bluffton; operating while intoxicated and operating while intoxicated — endangerment, both Class A misdemeanors. No bond set.

Kenneth Edward Boyer, 42, Bluffton; confinement, a Level 5 felony, possession of methamphetamine and domestic battery, both Level 6 felonies, and possession of paraphernalia, a Class C misdemeanor. No bond set.

Brian Monro Knopp, 53, Alexandria; theft, a Level 6 felony. Bond set at \$5,000.

Hudsyn Michael Kaehr, 18, Markle; minor consumption of alcoholic beverage, a Class C misdemeanor. Bond set at \$500.

Trey Matthew Bodenheimer, 18, Warren; leaving the scene of an accident, a Level 6 felony, reckless driving, operat-

ing while intoxicated — endangerment, and minor possession of an alcoholic beverage, all Class A misdemeanors. Bond set at \$7,000.

Tatiana Janae Royal, 29, Bluffton; possession of a hypodermic syringe, a Level 6 felony, and possession of paraphernalia, a Class C misdemeanor. Bond set at \$5,500.

Markus Lynnell Oliver,

42, Bluffton; possession of marijuana and public intoxication, both Class B misdemeanors. Bond set at \$2,000.

Markus Lynnell Oliver, 42, Bluffton; operating a vehicle while intoxicated — endangerment, a Class A misdemeanor, and operating a vehicle with an ACE of .15 or more, a Class C misdemeanor. Bond set at \$1,500.

Darrell L. Jones
Calling: 4-7 p.m.
Wednesday, March 20.
Funeral: 10:30 a.m.
Thursday, March 21 at the funeral home.
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VISITATION & SERVICES
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Celebration of Life:
1 p.m. Thursday, March 21 at the funeral home.
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Bluffton cancels Boil Water Advisory

After two days of bacterial testing, the Bluffton Water Department has issued a cancellation of its boil water notice for the 1200 and 1300 block of Stogdill Road and Honeysuckle and Hollyhock lanes.

The notice was given after a water main break on Sunday evening. The break has since been repaired.

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Deep ideological chasm behind SB202 will remain

The debate over ideological diversity on campus won't end with Senate Bill 202. Also, the heart of the issue isn't what most people think. It doesn't fit easily into ideological labels of conservative or liberal, and it isn't about political party. The issue is not about gender, race or ethnicity, or the mix of ideas discussed on campus. It isn't about acknowledging lingering discrimination, recognizing the ugly parts of American history, or even choosing the right tactics to promote equality.



Michael Hicks

Hoosier Opinions

Many folks would like to make these claims, but the issues are far more fundamental, and far different, than we've seen in any American institution for a very long time. The central fight over ideological bias on campus involves two competing visions of the world. One view reflects the founding principles of the Constitution; the second is wholly different and incompatible with the Constitution.

In the first view, the individual is at the center of morality and law. In this view, we are each unique beings, created equal and responsible for our individual actions. That still-radical idea came to us from the Enlightenment, though some of us find it in our faith tradition. It took political form in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the bodies of laws that built upon them.

In the second view, classes of people, not the individual, are at the center of morality and law. In this view, individuals are irrelevant unless they are mobilized by class interests in a struggle for political and economic power. The goal of that struggle is to dismantle the structures of oppression, colonization and exclusion. This view comes to us through an early 20th century branch of German Marxism, and has today become known as Critical Theory.

Many readers will have heard of Critical Race Theory or CRT as part of the culture wars. Critical Theory is a much broader ideology. Marxism focused on economic classes such as the proletariat and bourgeoisie. Critical theory adds to them intersections of race, ethnicity, and an expanding list to include queerness, body weight, trauma experience and the like. Critical Theory claims that the more a class is oppressed, the more merit it must possess and the greater its moral vision. As individuals, we are irrelevant and disposable. Only our intersectional class matters.

The debates on campus speech and ideology are really a struggle between these two wholly incompatible worldviews. Conflict is not only certain, but necessary.

Speech rules on public university campuses are derived from the first view, because the Constitution offers no alternative. In contrast, admissions, hiring, promotion and tenure are heavily controlled by the use of Critical Theory. In many campuses you cannot be admitted, hired, tenured or promoted without pledging commitment to Critical Theory.

To be clear, I'm not talking about classroom teaching. The same freedom of expression required by our Constitution permits professors to teach Marxist and Critical Theory in classrooms. That is where ideas are challenged and succeed or fail on their merits. In contrast, Critical Theory explicitly views freedom of speech as a tool of the oppressors. As intended, this closes debate on campus.

Our culture wars are the direct result of this longstanding divide on campus. I also think much of the current political chasms stem from the use of Critical Theory as campus policy on admissions, hiring, funding, programming, tenure and promotion. Let me provide a concrete example.

In the late 1970s, as I grew into adulthood, women faced considerable discrimination. In higher education, to their credit, universities not only preached equality, but also practiced it. By the time I entered college in 1980, America's colleges were evenly split by gender. Occupations once closed to women began to open, first begrudgingly, then quickly. Facts and experience changed minds. It was a huge national achievement.

Today's college students inhabit a wholly different world. At Ball State, two out of every three students are women, and women earn almost seven out of 10 degrees. This is roughly the national average.

As institutions, universities rarely preach equality. Worse still, they don't even attempt to practice equality. For example, men don't just attend to Ball State at lower rates, they are also accepted by the university at much lower rates.

Yes, it is likely that young men applying to Ball State are less qualified. After all, the use of Critical Theory in K-12 schools is downstream from the colleges that train teachers. But, men are now under-represented minorities, much in the way women were in the 1950s. Any discussion of this is off limits. One consequence is that Ball State, like other Hoosier schools, discriminates against men.

There are many small examples, or "microaggressions," in the language of Critical Theory. One obvious example are several scholarships available only to women in that bastion of male supremacy—nursing. This continues because campus diversity efforts aren't aimed at diversity. They exist to indoctrinate Critical Theory. Young men are the wrong class of students.

The campus message young men receive today is drastically different from the message of equality I received 40 years ago. Many find themselves being told that to be part of a campus community, they must reject outdated visions of masculinity. They are told that an objection to this is simply nostalgia for a time when their class had power. These bizarre examples are drawn directly from training offered to young men at my campus.

I write this firmly believing Ball State is better than most schools on these issues, but that is far from sufficient.

After my last column on SB 202, one young man offered me this eloquent view of graduate school in Indiana: "... it was an incredibly stifling environment for anyone exploring alternative viewpoints, or even just expressing honestly held beliefs that didn't quite vibe with the consensus. At the time, as a privileged White man, I felt this was justified b/c quite frankly, didn't we deserve to be humbled into adherence? But in retrospect, NO, that's absolutely not okay, nor conducive to the mission of higher education, and although I believe the program truly opened my eyes to other viewpoints, I also believe that my own creative pursuits suffered as a result of the stifling environment."

This testimony should embarrass and humble every faculty member in the state.

The reluctance of universities and faculty to even admit a problem is why we see the legislatures addressing these issues in Indiana and nationwide. While many faculty members fear these laws as an attack by conservative legislators, they are mistaken.

The actual challenge to the use of Critical Theory as a guide to university admissions, hiring, promotions and tenure doesn't come from some right-wing conspiracy. It comes from the timeless words of Thomas Jefferson, and the Constitution.

Michael Hicks is the George and Frances Ball Distinguished Professor of Economics and the director of the Center for Business and Economic Research at Ball State University.



Government has no business bullying social media platforms on speech

Legal briefs are usually dry as dust, so delighted laughter is an unusual response to reading one. You can, however, bet dollars to doughnuts that the Supreme Court justices allowed themselves judicious private chuckles when they read one particular amicus (friend of the court) brief in the case concerning for which they heard oral arguments Monday.

At issue is government behavior that is no laughing matter: secret pressure to suppress speech by, and deny access to speech by, Americans, thereby violating the First Amendment. The brief is from the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE), which devotes much time to reminding academics of the First Amendment's existence. FIRE notes that some people supporting FIRE's side of the argument are "oblivious to the irony" of their doing so: Their "head-spinning inconsistencies" involve favoring state governments' behavior that is similar to the federal government's behavior that they are deploring.

The fundamental facts in this case are not in dispute. The high-stakes argument concerns the legal significance of how those facts are characterized.

Biden administration officials from the White House, FBI, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other federal entities persistently contacted social media platforms in attempts to influence the platforms' dissemination of various posts expressing views the government disliked or that it mincingly deemed "problematic." Many concerned the pandemic and involved supposed "disinformation" (about lockdowns, masks, vaccines, etc.) that turned out to be not merely debatable but true.

In 2023, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit upheld a district court's injunction against certain federal officials coercing, or too powerfully importuning, social media platforms to delete or otherwise disfavor certain constitutionally protected speech. The Biden administration asked the Supreme Court to disallow these "unprecedented limits on the ability of the President's closest aides to use the bully pulpit to address matters of public concern" and on the FBI's and CDC's abilities to perform their missions.

Something certainly is unprecedented. Government attempts to shape the discourse on social media platforms are as new as the platforms. But government attempts to enlarge its reach are as old as government.

Clarity is elusive concerning when attempts at "persuasion" become "coercive." And when "jawboning" or "cajoling" become impermissible pressure on the platforms. The common problem is government pressure to make the platforms' "content moderation" policies — deciding what and who they will delete or downgrade — reflect government's preferences.

Social media platforms are private entities that

express, through those policies, their editorial preferences. When government interferes with these, the platforms suffer a First Amendment injury.

Government has a need and duty to speak. The presidency is, as a notably talkative occupant (Theodore Roosevelt) said, a "bully pulpit." Other agencies, too, must address the public about their objectives and methods.

President Biden, with his characteristic blunderbuss rhetoric, accused social media companies of "killing people" by not censoring pandemic-related posts he disliked. He has a (frequently exercised) right to speak public foolishness. Government speech should not, however, be secret for the purpose of concealing stealthy attempts to control others' speech.

When the government's secretive speaking to platforms serves its agenda of shaping discourse on those platforms, the government is not speaking to the public to which it is accountable. Rather, it is attempting to unaccountably regulate individuals' speech. This is an attempt (as another amicus brief says) "to launder constitutional violations through private entities."

The Biden administration has behaved badly, but the urge to break private entities to the saddle of government is bipartisan. FIRE's brief notes acerbically that some states' attorneys general who are challenging the federal government's pressure on social media platforms did, themselves, pressure Target Corp. by intimating, preposterously, that the sale of LGBTQ-themed merchandise might violate some states' obscenity laws. And they suggested, ominously, that Target's "directors and officers may be negligent," and therefore liable, because they authorized merchandising that "negatively affected" the company's stock price.

Concerning this case, the Biden administration says its dealings with the platforms have been constitutionally insignificant because the process was "collaborative." This is supposed to be reassuring?

Pending judicially clarified rules, this rule might suffice: Government should confine itself to publicly explaining and justifying its behavior, avoiding private speech with the platforms that is secretive and conveys even a tincture of pressure. So, you states that want to compel — for the protection of disfavored conservatives — the platforms to adopt more lenient content moderation policies: You should understand that this is incompatible with the Constitution, and (hence) with conservatism, properly understood.

georgewill@washpost.com



George Will

What's with all the big stuff?

After years of trying to prevent what he called a "premium" hamburger, McDonald's CFO Ian Borden surprised no one the other day by announcing that the company's new focus is not making burgers better, just a lot bigger.

The move won't please nutritionists, but it fits perfectly with a growing desire among Americans for super-sized stuff.

Consider ads for the 2024 Chevrolet Suburban boasting that, at 18 feet in length, the vehicle is "impossible to ignore." Chevy refers to its massive SUV as "a room with a view."

And what about the 100-year-old Stanley company that found new life when its giant drinking cups became a sensation. Now Stanley is selling a humongous 96-ounce version for \$90, "thoughtfully designed to be your personal hydration companion." When this big baby is filled with water it weighs 8.8 pounds.

In the world of fashion — or at least fashion fads — a recent head-



Peter Funt

line in the New York Times noted "Fashion's Big Idea: Oversize Everything." Seems skinny jeans are out and clown pants are in. This month Julianne Hough wore what might have been the biggest pants in Oscar history when she hosted ABC's red carpet show. "Hough wore a white Alexandre Vauthier couture jumpsuit with a gold and silver metallic bodice," People Magazine dutifully reported. "The pants were so voluminous, though, that they acted as an optical illusion, making her jumpsuit look like a gown."

The fascination with over-sized items comes at a time when many folks are troubled by a shift toward deceptively smaller products in categories such as snack foods, the result of what's known as shrinkflation. "Some companies are trying to pull a fast one by shrinking the products little by little and hoping you won't notice," said President Biden last month.

But there's no such problem when it comes to, say, TV screens. They've

grown steadily in recent years — from roughly 55 inches, measured diagonally, to 98 inches. Samsung offers a version it calls The Wall, which measures 292 inches, making it the largest TV on the retail market.

Being a golfer I was intrigued by a club I saw on Amazon named the Soolong, with the "biggest, baddest driver head on the planet." It's listed at 750cc's, which, for the record, is about 60% larger than USGA rules permit.

The rest of the world has long scoffed at the way we Americans favor bigness — from our 10-gallon hats to our Big Gulp sodas.

That brings us back to McDonald's which recently offered a Double Big Mac sandwich, consisting of one-and-a-half buns surrounding four beef patties. "The opportunity is significant" said Mr. Borden, for a "large, more satiating type burger."

Satiating is an interesting choice of words to describe the trend. The dictionary defines it as "gorge, overfeed, sicken and nauseate," which are really big matters, to say the least.

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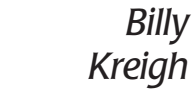
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When life spirals into disagreeable terrain, just breathe

Spring has sprung; daylight arrives earlier and earlier and hangs around later and later; temps are on the rise; the robins are fat and sassy; and here I am testy and truculent. Well, I did not intend to be this way at the moment. Who am I kidding... it's exactly what I intend to be. This has, without question,



Billy Kreigh

been one of the most disagreeable beginnings to a year that I have experienced in my recent memory.

In the last 10 weeks I have had two deplorably unpleasant bouts with the flu, I tested positive for COVID for 13 straight days, and then there was a 2 day hospital stay where I discovered that my heart was stopping for brief periods of time and I had pneumonia, neither of which sounded like "good things" to me. I know, my life is indeed charmed.

Ok, I will not pretend or imply that my "ailment encounters" qualify as a "big dang deal" when compared to what so many others are dealing with in their lives, but let me be clear, when I am in the beginning, middle, or end of hugging the porcelain throne, I am most assuredly somewhat less delightful than my standard cheerful, exuberant, kind self. Save

your snark here; I distinctly recall one time when I was cheerful, bordering on exuberant, so cut me some slack.

The COVID thing was accompanied by a constant temperature between 101-103 which was just enough to make me ache and feel like 100% top grade crud. I had a headache that raged, I could not breathe, my body ached like I had gotten into a scrap with the "Hell's Cherubs" and lost. FYI, "Hell's Cherubs" are the diminutive version of Hell's Angels, not quite as fierce as the "real thing" but still more than capable of royally kicking my backside.

While I am speaking so candidly of getting my butt kicked by microscopic entities, let me share a brief synopsis of the 2nd flu experience which followed approximately 7 days after the COVID. I was in Kroger. So far so good. In fact I was feeling quite competent and stable. Then I rounded the corner and put my hand on the 2% milk case handle. About 1/2 of a nano-second later, I knew that I was going to be sick. Cold sweats, shaky all over, glazed eyes, and that horrible yet unmistakable feeling that I needed to get out of the store, pronto.

With a cart full of groceries, I charged full speed ahead to the self check out place, aggressively rolled my cart toward that



Keep my groceries, thank you!" With that, I ran out to the parking lot in the general direction of where I hoped my car was parked. Well, I made it to my car, or one that resembled it, held on to the door and the inevitable happened. It was not pretty.

The poor guy in the truck next to me, exited his vehicle, could not ignore me, turned an array of 25 rather distinctive and impressive colors of green and power walked 75 feet around my car. I mumbled, "I'm sorry," but I do not think he cared at that moment. Anyway, it came to my mind that although I did not know the guy, I did conclude that he did not work in a profession where barfing was a common occurrence. Probably traumatized him for at least 2 years; he is probably in counseling even as I write this. Mea culpa.

So, I know you are just dying for me to continue, and not one to disappoint, I will. I managed to topple into my car, drive home - luckily I live right down the road - and crawled out of my car, made it to my kitchen floor and thought maybe I might expire right there. I wondered how long it might take

for someone to find my wretched body tucked tightly into a rigid fetal position under my kitchen table. But, not to worry, I called my very very good friend and incoherently muttered, "I need you." Within 3 minutes, there she was! She went to Kroger, got my groceries, brought them back and even put them away. My daughters were called; one came within an hour and stayed with me through the night to make sure I didn't croak alone, I guess.

Family and friends are critical in times of illness, that's for sure. Well, I did survive, obviously because here I am, but the memories continue to haunt me in the night. Now the upside of being sick for a lengthy time, confined pretty much to the bathroom floor, is I had lots of opportunities to think and ponder the world situation. Want to know what one considers in the throes of a fever-ridden, -covid-pneumonia-heart stopping-barf-fest? I will assume you answered in the positive, so here are some of the questionably profound thoughts of a delirious Kreigh.

* If one must deal with yuckiness, sunshine helps.

* Hypothetically, if students do something wrong, even against the law, and they get caught but the people in charge do nothing, what is the larger lesson, do you suppose, those kids learned from the experience? Talk is cheap. What we adults do carries much more weight with children than what we say.

* If Katie Britt was a greeter at Walmart, I would be compelled to shop at Target.

* As you read this, my 2 daughters, my grandson and I will be on an 11-day whirlwind college visit road trip. Starting at Vanderbilt, going to Wharton School of Business, University of Pennsylvania, continuing on to Boston and 4 more institutions of higher learning, then flying back to Indy. It will be great fun because I will be in the company of the 3 most important people in my life. That said, I hope I can keep up!

* Sometimes, on occasion, I think I may be bat guano crazy.

Here's the thing: No matter what, life does go on. I cannot control much about anything except perhaps my actions, reactions, interactions, and non-actions. Babe Ruth said that it's hard to beat a person who never gives up. That's the goal then, not to give up, but to get up. I am determined to get the heck up, breathe, and get on with it. Here's to the remaining 9 months of 2024, may they be smashingly safe and healthy, for all of us.

bkreigh@adamswells.com

Editor's Note: This is one of a series of articles written by a group of retired and current teachers - LaNae Abnet, Ken Ballinger, Billy Kreigh, Kathy Schwartz, Anna Spalding. Their intent is to spur discussions at the dinner table and elsewhere. You may also voice your thoughts and reactions via The News-Banner's letters to editor.

Upcoming Events

Twin Bridge Conservation Club fundraiser supper

The Twin Bridge Conservation Club at Mt. Zion will host a fish, chicken and tenderloin supper from 4:30 to 7 p.m. on Saturday, March 23.

Cost for the meal will be \$14 for adults and \$7 for children.

Poe Fire Dept. Pancake and Sausage brunch

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

Swiss Stitchers to meet Monday at Berne Fire Station

The Swiss Stitchers Quilt Guild meeting will be Monday, March 25th in the Berne Fire Station at 7 p.m.

There will be a short business meeting with Show and Tell to follow.

Guests are welcome. If you have questions please call Vivian at 260-692-6227.

Events at Historic Fort Wayne

Old Fort Wayne is located at 1201 Spy Run Ave., with parking available across from the fort.

Among the special events scheduled to be held there over the next few months are the following:

Civil War Garrison: Saturday, March 23, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. At the fort it is March of 1864 and the men of the 9th Indiana Volunteer Infantry are on garrison duty. Weather permitting there will be a morning parade, drills and guard mount. Learn about the soldiers

daily lives.

Muster on the St. Mary's: Saturday, May 11, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday, May 12, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Learn all about the forts built in Fort Wayne including the first, which was French. Learn first hand about life at the fort.

More information at the fort's website which is www.oldfortwayne.org or on Facebook.com/Historic-Fort Wayne. Updates also available at 260-437-2836.

'Pooh' production by 'All For One'

"Winnie the Pooh: a Dream of Honey" will be the next presentation by All for One Productions of Fort Wayne from April 19-28.

Curtain times are 7:30 p.m. on Friday and Saturdays and 3:30 p.m. on Sundays. A sensory-friendly matinee will be held at 2:30 p.m. on April 27th.

This play is suitable for all ages with tickets available by calling 260-422-4225. More information at allforonewf.org.

Civic Theatre offers 'Six Degrees of Separation'

Fort Wayne Civic Theatre will be presenting "Six Degrees of Separation" through March 24.

There will be 7:30 p.m. performances on Friday, March 22 and Saturday, March 23. There will be a final 2 p.m. performance on Sunday, March 24.

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

A440 Strings at First Presbyterian

The A440 Strings, members of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic, will be playing at

the Maundy Thursday evening worship service at the First Presbyterian Church at 7 p.m. on March 28.

They will be performing excerpts from George Frederick Handel's "The Messiah" in addition to seasonal music for the prelude, postlude and hymns. The musicians include: violinists Kristin Westover and Pablo Vasquez and cellist Brian Klickman.

Pastors from the First United Methodist and Calvary Lutheran Churches will be assisting with the worship service and Holy Communion will be observed. The public is invited to attend.

Creative Arts Spring Showcase

A Spring Showcase will be presented by the Creative Arts Council on April 26-27 at the Auditorium at 428 S. Oak St. in Bluffton.

The Dance Academy students of ballet, modern and tap will be on stage. The ballet students will be presenting excerpts from "Sleeping Beauty." The beginning, intermediate and advanced modern dance students will be taking a trip into ancient Egypt while the tap dancers will be performing rhythm and Broadway tap styles.

The Friday performance will begin at 7 p.m. and on Saturday at 3 p.m. Admission is \$5 at the door.

Coffee concerts at Crescendo

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

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



Eclipse shirts

"Total Eclipse" tee shirts are now being offered for sale at Ouabache State Park's office for \$24.95. They are available with a black or navy blue background and feature a list of all of Indiana's DNR properties that will be in the line of the total eclipse on the back. The park office also has the special "eclipse" glasses for sale at \$3 a pair or 4 pairs for \$10. (Photo by Barbara Barbieri)

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Friday, March 22nd 6:20pm & 8:45pm
Saturday, March 23rd
3:20pm, 5:45pm & 8:15pm
Sunday, March 24th 2:20pm & 4:45pm

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Norwell rebuilds roster under new coach Bonata in 2024 baseball season

By RYAN WALKER

Norwell's baseball team lived up to the program's standards last year, piling up a 23-8 record and finishing second in the Northeast 8 Conference at 6-1 behind Huntington North.

The Knights caught fire at the right time, riding a three-game winning streak into the postseason and made it seven in a row to claim the sectional and regional championships. The magic did come to an end at the hands of Andean in the semi-state semifinal, who went on to lose in the state championship game.

The senior-heavy group went out with a bang, but now several changes will need to be made in the aftermath, including the head coach.

Heading into this season, Norwell is faced with replacing six starters and eight players of significant impact from a year ago. And the man to do it will be new head coach Christian Bonata, who is replacing Dave Goodmiller after five seasons with the Knights.

Bonata will be coaching his alma mater after graduating from there six years ago. He played under coach Andy McClain.

He recently took over the reins of the junior varsity team after he served two years as an assistant.

"I am stoked to take over such a historic program," Bonata said. "Coach Goodmiller was a tremendous coach and took this program to new heights. I am excited to continue that on. I know I have big shoes to fill and high expectations. This support the community shows our program is unmatched."

Bonata understands there will be growing pains with a young, inexperienced roster, but expects his team to grow throughout the 28-game schedule, one that features Homestead, Guerin Catho-

lic (twice), Crawfordsville, Carroll, Huntington North and Heritage.

The motto he and the team have been using in the offseason compete, especially with the level of competition while rebuilding.

"I wholeheartedly believe in this group we have this year," Bonata said. "The guys are working hard, coachable, and have a lot of talent. We may get punched in the mouth once or twice, especially because we play a tough schedule. But that will only strengthen us and give us an advantage come the end of May when we begin to make our run to Victory Field."

Luckily, Norwell will have talent coming back to the team as its core pieces. Plus, the junior varsity team had a great season last year under Bonata, who knows the junior varsity guys already and can plug them in where he thinks they will fit.

Of the returning starters, the Knights will be in good hands.

Taylor University signee Lane Lewis solidified himself as an ace throughout the end of the season, posting a 3.17 ERA. Four of his final five starts of the season included six innings or more, striking out 28 hitters against Andean, Huntington North, Bluffton and Peru — all teams with winning records.

Huntington University signee Cade Shelton hit .296 and 12 RBI, while missing 10 games due to an injury. He will help the outfield and bring leadership with some pop in his bat. Bonata also says he will be placed back into the pitching rotation pending other injuries.

Finally, the final pillar is centerfielder Drew Graft, who has had quite a two-year career so far on varsity. The five-tool athlete nearly hit .400 (.394) with nine extra-base hits last season,

stole a team-high 20 bases and had only one error as the quarterback of the outfield.

Last year, Graft was listed on Prep Baseball Report's top-10 outfielders in the state of Indiana that does not have a college home yet. The junior still has plenty of time to tour schools as he enters year three with the big club as the leadoff man.

With Lewis and Shelton filling out the first two spots in the rotation, Bonata projects sophomores Noah Shamerloh and Cayden Cassel with junior Noah Turk will eat up innings as starters or out of the bullpen. All had solid numbers on the junior varsity team, waiting for the likes of Lleyton Bailey, Curtis Ellis and Brody Bolyn to graduate for a spot on the bump.

On the field is where the lineup card will be tricky. Bonata listed Colin Burns, Garry Riley, Logan Cotton, Korben Neuenschwander, Max Babcock and Cassel to have a chance to crack the everyday lineup. All have not had consistent varsity playing time yet.

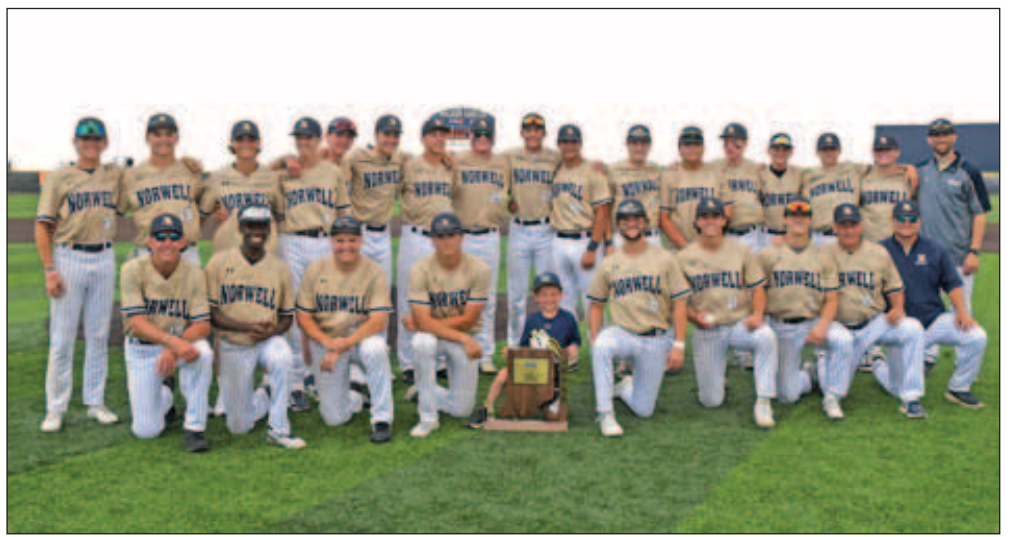
"The obvious weakness will be the inexperience," Bonata said.

Only time will tell to see how the starting nine will field out, and luckily for the Knights, they'll play around 12 games before hosting Leo to begin conference play.

The NE8 can be grueling with Huntington North at the top, and a mixture of six of the eight teams finishing with a winning record in 2023.

Bellmont, who met Norwell in the sectional championship last year, tied with DeKalb for fourth place last year, while Leo (3-4) Columbia City (3-4), East Noble (1-6) and New Haven (0-1) rounded out the field.

ryan@news-banner.com



Norwell's baseball team poses together after winning the regional championship over New Castle last year at Oak Hill High School. The Knights will be losing several key members from this team to this year, including the retirement of head coach Dave Goodmiller. (News-Banner file photos)



Knights' pitcher Lane Lewis fires a pitch during a game in 2023. The senior and Taylor University signee will lead a rebuilt pitching staff in 2024 and a small list of starters from a season ago.

High School Calendar

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20
No events scheduled.
THURSDAY, MARCH 21
No events scheduled.
FRIDAY, MARCH 22
No events scheduled.
SATURDAY, MARCH 23
No events scheduled.
MONDAY, MARCH 25

No events scheduled.
TUESDAY, MARCH 26
No events scheduled.
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27
No events scheduled.
THURSDAY, MARCH 28
No events scheduled.
FRIDAY, MARCH 29
BASEBALL: Norwell vs.

Evansville Central at Edgewood High School, 7:30 p.m.
SATURDAY, MARCH 30
BASEBALL: Norwell vs. Edgewood, 10 a.m.; Norwell vs. Brownstown Central at Edgewood high School, 5:30 p.m.

Baird to lead more experienced Knights in his second season

By RYAN WALKER

Norwell strung together a positive softball season in 2023 despite having lost multiple key graduates and switching up leadership.

The Knights had a mostly underclassman-led group and a first-year head coach that netted two more wins than the previous season for a 15-11 record. They even made a good run in the sectional tournament, defeating Oak Hill 6-4 in extra innings and Maconaquah 11-1 before falling in the championship to Peru 12-4.

Baird was a travel softball coach before taking the head varsity gig at Norwell, which had surprising adjustments to be made in year one. He, along with several other underclassmen playing varsity for the first time, are even more prepared this time around.

"I strive to continue to learn and evolve as a coach," Baird said. "There are definitely differences between high school ball and travel ball. This year, we have been more focused on more of the situational things that happen during high school games and what we can do to be better prepared this year. Hopefully, that will show this season."

Now, Baird's second season will have a familiar feel, returning players six of the nine starters, including recent college signees Jordan Markley (Bethel University) and Sami Lemler (Grace College).

There is no question that the pitching is the team's strength, and the numbers prove that.

Lemler and sophomore Kayla Watkins saw most of the time on the pitcher's circle last year. The two combined for 105 innings (Lemler threw 53, Watkins 52). In that workload, Lemler and Watkins served up a 2.40 ERA.

The only piece Norwell lost was Madyson Sonnigsen, who threw 40 innings for the Knights but followed her father, Tyler Sonnigsen, to Bluffton, where he is the new head coach.

To add to those two, Kara Brown shined on junior varsity as a freshman waiting behind three solid starting pitchers at the varsity level. She still managed to throw 17 innings for the varsity squad, blowing away the competition with a 0.81 ERA.

"All three of these girls can start and take us deep into games this year, so we should have fresh arms come playoff time," Baird said.

Norwell should be able to pack a punch at the plate, too.

Of the returning starters, three stick out as the core hitters of the team and should expect them to do the most damage.

Markley will command the outfield with her speed and pop with the bat. As a junior last year, she had a .478 batting average, three home runs and 20 stolen bases — all are the team's

best out of all returning players.

The other two, junior Kaydance Clark and Reese Frauhiger, will sit in the middle of the lineup to drive in some runs.

Clark, who will catch and play third base, led the team with 33 RBI, hit .303 and had eight extra-base hits. Frauhiger, an outfield/utility player, came onto the scene as a first-time varsity starter as a freshman and could be poised to have a breakout campaign. She hit .266 and drove in 17 runs as a middle-of-the-order hitter.

Other contributions will come from Lemler, a .239 hitter who drove in 13 runs, and sophomore Leah Werling, who hit .312 with 10 RBI.

"I believe we have a talented group of hitters," Baird said. "We've been working hard on our approach at the plate as a team and I think it will show when we start playing."

The Northeast 8 Conference was a war last year that had Huntington North come out on top in a 7-0 season of perfection. Leo was second at 6-1 in the NE8, which then dropped off to Columbia City and Bellmont at 4-3. Norwell sat alone at No. 5 with a 3-4 conference record.

With the returning talent, it will be interesting to see how it plays out in the NE8 and the Knights seeking to move up a few spots in the standings.

ryan@news-banner.com



Norwell's Jordan Markley takes a cut during the Wells County rivalry battle against Bluffton last year. The now senior and Bethel University signee will lead the Knights with her speed and bat, a team that is poised for big things in year two under head coach Kevin Baird (News-Banner file photos)



Norwell infielder Leah Werling (left) tags out an Oak Hill baserunner last year during the opening round of the sectional playoffs. The Knights went on to advance to the sectional final, but fell to Peru.

News-Banner Scoreboard

BASKETBALL

High School

Boys' Basketball State Final

1A

Bethesa Christian (23-7) vs. Fort Wayne Canterbury (18-9), 10:30 a.m.

2A

Brownstown Central (27-4) vs. Wapahani (26-2)

3A

Scottsburg (24-5) vs. South Bend St. Joseph (20-9), 6 p.m.

4A

Ben Davis (23-5) vs. Fishers (28-1), 8:15 p.m.

College

Men's Basketball Schedule

First Four

Wagner 71, Howard 68

Colorado St. 67, Virginia 42

NIT

Ohio State 88, Cornell 83

Georgia 78, Xavier 76

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A note to caregivers

Dear Readers: A recent column about the caregiver who felt worn out prompted a deluge of letters, mostly from others who are, or have been, caregivers themselves.

Dear Annie: Please add to the caregiver ("Not Good Enough") that human beings have a finite mental capacity for each day.

Caregiver is mentally exhausted due to the load he or she is carrying and needs to find ways to lessen that burden.

Caregiver should decide what tasks are most important for them, get help with things that are needed but that others could do, and focus on the tasks that would make them feel happy and productive.

Dear Annie: First, let me start by saying that reading your column is the marriage to my morning cup of coffee. I have never responded or written to you, but I just read about the caregiver who is taking care of their partner and is overtaken by exhaustion.

Dear Annie: Depression is a common occurrence in caregivers. There are support groups online for caregivers of dementia, Alzheimer's and other conditions.

through almost the same thing you are. You already reached out, writing to Annie — that's an incredible first step, and if you do a quick Google search on caregiver support groups, many resources can pop up.

I'm the sole caregiver of my husband with severe combat-related PTSD; he is in his early 30s. The online support I found is amazing, because the people I know in person do not have real life experience with the everyday struggles that we have.

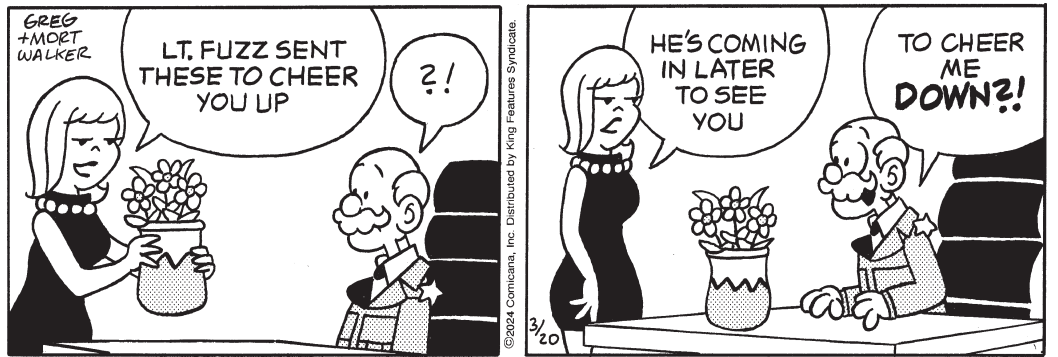
Dear Annie: Having been a caregiver, I know firsthand how this lady feels. When you are taking care of everything, you are forgetting about your needs, and one of the most important is your own health.

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

Dear Annie by Annie Lane



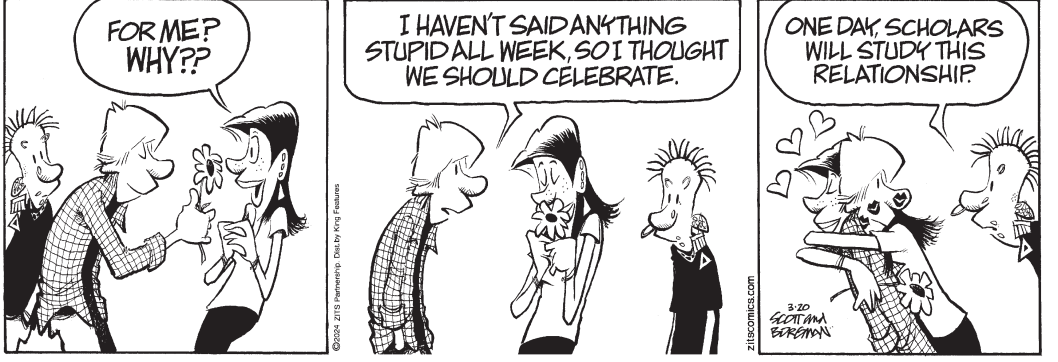
BEETLE BAILEY



BLONDIE



ZITS



CRANKSHAFT



My Answer

By Dr. Billy Graham



God stands ready and able to show His boundless mercy

Question: I am a social worker and also engage in humanitarian work. I see some terrible situations: famine, disease, violence in homes, and people who have lost their jobs and have nowhere to turn.

Answer: When Scripture uses the word "poor" it does not always mean financially poor. No one is more pathetic than the person who is in great need and is not aware of it!

on God. Perhaps inserting the word "humble" in place of the word "poor" will give clarity of mind.

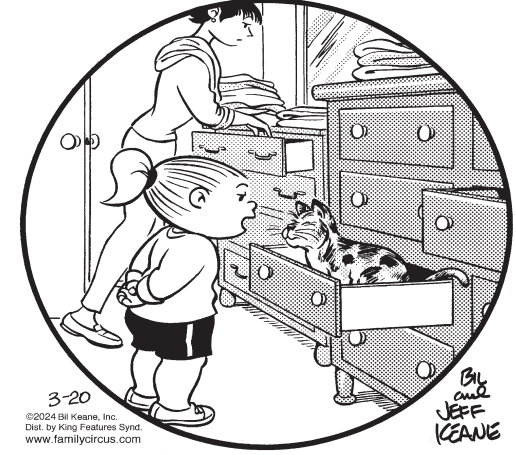
Wise, then, is the person who openly confesses their lack of spiritual wealth and in humility cries out, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!"

by the sinner who cried out for mercy. In God's economy, spiritual emptiness comes before filling, and spiritual poverty before riches.

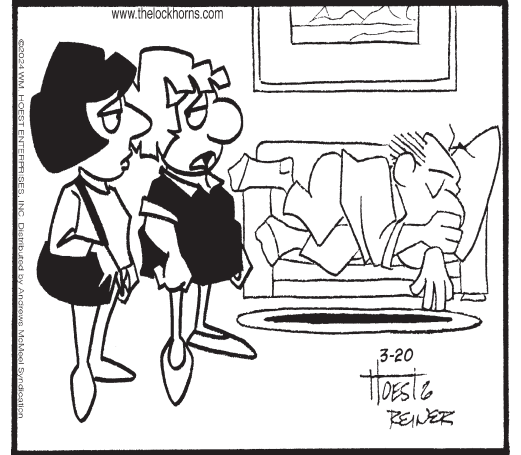
(This column is based on the words and writings of the late Rev. Billy Graham.) ©2024 Billy Graham Literary Trust.

THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane



The LOCKHORNS



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CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues: ACROSS 1 Docs' peaks and org., 4 Prof's valley, 7 Utah city, 8 Pub orders, 10 Bee-thoven's "Für —", 11 Reach, 13 2002, 16 Bond film, 17 NBC weekend show, 18 Equal moisture (Pref.), 19 Move, in Realtor lingo, 20 — incline (tilted), 21 Halloween bagful, 23 Katherine of "27 Dresses", 25 Swiss grass, 26 Secluded valley, 27 Pirate's chart, 28 Bitter, 30 Freudian topic, 33 007, 36 Rum cocktail, 37 Hunk of cheese, 38 Perch, 39 Cupid's alias, 40 Three, in Rome, 41 Drops on grass, 42 Sheeran and Harris, 43 Twangy Paris airport, 44 Thither, 45 ICU workers, 46 Black gold, 47 Allege, 48 Rating, 49 German mister, 50 Nudged, in a way, 51 Pump up the volume, 52 Ledger entry, 53 Thes-pian, 54 Stop, 55 Fund, 56 Jokes, 57 Low digit, 58 Mob scene, 59 Withered

TV schedule table with columns for time slots (5 PM to 12:30 AM) and rows for various channels (WIMN, CBS, Antenna, ABC, NBC, MNT, CW, PBS, FOX, etc.) listing programs like News, The Tonight Show, and various reality shows.

Grid for yesterday's crossword puzzle answer, 3-20, with numbers 1-32 indicating starting positions for clues.

The Classifieds

SUDOKU

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

King Classic Sudoku

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

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Difficulty: ★★★

3/20

EMPLOYMENT

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.

Help Wanted



HOLLEY SALES, INC. is looking for an experienced medium duty / heavy duty truck mechanic. Full-time. Starting pay is \$25.00 per hour. 40-45 hours per week. Some Saturday mornings required. Paid uniforms. Vacation & holiday pay. Please apply in person at 12005 Indianapolis Rd. Yoder, IN 46798 or send your resume to dirk@holleytruckparts.com. For more information, call 260-478-7411.

This Week's Garage Sales



MARCH 21, 22, 23, 8 a.m.-6 p.m., 2570 W. 100 S., Monroe. Lots of new Easter items, noodles and jam, furniture, tools, excellent clothing, toys, everything imaginable.

CRAFT/GARAGE SALE AT Country Road Primitives, 2446 E 350 N, Bluffton, Friday & Saturday, March 22 & 23, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Check out all the pictures on Country Road Primitives Bluffton, IN Facebook page.

HELOISE HINT: Displaying sales items on tables at your garage sale? Put the bigger items underneath and the smaller objects on top so that it's easier for them to be seen. Write to HELOISE@Heloise.com.

FOR SALE

Miscellaneous

EVEREST VX3 ICE & WATER VENDING MACHINE This Everest VX3 water/ice vending machine is the perfect addition to any business looking to boost their profits. With the ability to dispense both water and ice, this unit is sure to be a hit with customers. The machine is in great working condition and has been slightly used, making it a cost-effective option for those looking to invest in a vending machine. This unit is made in the United States and comes with a unit quantity of 1. Included is an all season insulation package, ice shield ozone disinfection, and cold fusion energy recovery. It is perfect for placement in other beverage and snack vending locations, as well as in restaurant and food service settings. Don't miss out on the opportunity to make extra money with this Everest VX3 vending machine. \$45,000.00 260-273-7020 glacierpure@outlook.com

Pets

HELOISE HINT: When you have an older dog. It might be a good idea to have pet insurance to cover potential illnesses. Vet care can be expensive. Email HELOISE@Heloise.com.

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NOTICE

Notices

HAVING AN UPCOMING event? A 20 word, line classified ad for six days is only \$24.50. Add a border for an additional \$1 or a graphic for an additional \$5. Contact the Bluffton News-Banner office at 260-824-0224 or 125 N. Johnson St., Bluffton, IN, or online at news-banner.com and click on classifieds.

Lottery Numbers

Tuesday's Drawings HOOSIER LOTTERY

Cash 5 — 02-09-13-14-16
Cash4Life — 07-10-29-41-51, Cash Ball: 04
Quick Draw Midday — 2-4-15-18-22-24-29-35-38-39-49-50-52-53-55-56-60-64-66-79, BE: 18
Daily Three-Midday — 5-6-1, SB: 3
Daily Three-Evening — 8-1-6, SB: 1
Daily Four-Midday — 5-6-9-3, SB: 3
Daily Four-Evening — 0-4-2-7, SB: 1
Quick Draw Evening — 5-11-26-27-29-30-37-39-42-44-53-61-66-69-73-74-75-77-79-80, BE: 73
Hoosier Lotto — Estimated jackpot (for Wednesday): \$7.1 million

MEGA MILLIONS

24-46-49-62-66; Mega Ball: 07; Megaplier: 2X.

POWERBALL

Estimated jackpot (for Wednesday): \$687 million

March

GOODS & SERVICES DIRECTORY



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Public Sale Calendar

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.**, 260-824-3006, www.steffengrp.com.
BIDDING ENDS MARCH 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 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.
BIDDING STARTS CLOSING APRIL 4 STARTING AT 6 p.m. EST - Joann Groves, Anita Miller & Veda Ewart POA, owner. 6 p.m.: 2,132 sf, 4 bedroom, 1 bath, partial basement, 2-car attached garage, sitting on .4 acre city lot, South Adams Community School, Wabash Township, Adams County. 6:30 p.m.: Furniture, household items, cast iron pans, lots of collectibles, dishes, Zippo lighters & more! Preview March 25, 5-6 p.m., 230 High Street, Geneva. Pick

up April 5, 1-5 p.m. **Krueckeberg Auction & Realty LLC**, 260-724-7402, kjauction.com.
APRIL 7-14 - (Online Only Auction) - Unique Blue Bar and Grill (Formerly Stag Bar), seller. Ongoing needs. Outstanding collection of beer signs, neon signs, beer taps, collectibles, tools, much more. Preview: April 4 and April 11 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., 205 W. Market St., Bluffton, IN. **The Steffen Group Inc.**, <http://www.steffengrp.com>, 260-824-3006.
APRIL 8-APRIL 15 - (Online Only Auction) - Fort Wayne Community Schools, seller. Excess needs of FWCS Transportation Department. Mechanic and shop equipment, shelving, computer monitors and electronics, office furniture, parts washer, air compressor, much more. Preview: April 10 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., 6006 Ardmore Ave., Fort Wayne, IN. **The Steffen Group Inc.**, 260-824-3006, www.steffengrp.com.
APRIL 9 - 6 p.m. - Michael & Shelley Mossburg, owners. Wells County Chamber of Commerce, 211 Water Street, Bluffton. Commercial real estate & land auction. Seven tracts to be sold in individual tracts or any combinations. Open house March 26, 5-6 p.m. or by appointment, 1600 W. Washington St., Bluffton. **Krueckeberg Auction & Realty LLC**, 260-724-7402, kjauction.com.
APRIL 12-APRIL 19 - (Online Only Auction) - The Estate of Dr. Hugh and Rhea Glidewell, seller. Huge jewelry and coin auction. Seven Rolex watches, fine diamond rings, necklaces, earrings, 14ct, 18ct and 22ct gold jewelry, sterling silver jewelry, 350+ Invicta luxury watches, coin collection. Auction preview: April 14 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., 2926 Smith Rd., Fort Wayne, IN. **The Steffen Group Inc.**, www.steffengrp.com, 260-824-3006.
APRIL 13-APRIL 20 - (Online Only Auction) - The Estate of Dr. Hugh and Rhea Glidewell, seller. Major personal property auction. 2008 Mercedes sedan, large quantity of

high-end camera equipment, professional telescope, new high end his and her golf clubs and accessories, huge qty. of power and hand tools, modern furniture, sterling silver flatware set, Smith and Wesson revolver, jewelers safes, much more. Auction preview: April 14 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., 2926 Smith Rd., Fort Wayne, IN. **The Steffen Group Inc.**, 260-824-3006, www.steffengrp.com.
APRIL 20 - 10 a.m. - (Live Auction) - Marc and Valerie Hamman, seller. 6530 S. 300 E., Hamilton, IN. Three lots adjacent to Hamilton Lake with 2 car 26'x28' garage. This is the perfect property to build a new home, extra storage and parking. **The Steffen Group Inc.**, www.steffengrp.com, 260-824-3006.

Public Notices

NOTICE OF UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION
 IN THE WELLS CIRCUIT COURT OF WELLS COUNTY, INDIANA
 DOCKET NO. 90C01-2402-EU-000009
 Notice is hereby given that DUANE E. HEYNE was on the 4th day of March, 2024, appointed personal representative of the estate of OSCAR L. HEYNE, deceased, who died on the 24th day of December, 2023, and was authorized to administer his estate without Court supervision.
 All persons who have claims against this estate, whether or not now due, must file those claims in the office of the Clerk of the Wells Circuit Court within three (3) months after the date of the first publication of this notice, or within nine (9) months after the decedent's death, whichever is earlier, or those claims will be forever barred.
 Dated at Bluffton, Indiana, this 4th day of March, 2024.
 Beth Davis
 Clerk, Wells Circuit Court
 Matthew P. Hayes
 Attorney for Personal Representative
 Attorney No. 32002-02
 GORDON & ASSOCIATES
 PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION
 119 East Oak Forest Drive
 Bluffton, IN 46714
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SUDOKU ANSWER

02/E								
1	2	7	1	6	9	8	9	8
9	8	8	2	7	6	9	1	8
9	6	1	8	8	9	2	7	2
1	9	8	8	7	2	9	2	6
8	7	9	6	8	2	7	1	9
6	2	7	9	9	1	7	8	8
8	9	6	7	9	8	1	2	2
7	1	9	2	2	8	8	6	9
2	8	7	9	1	6	9	8	7

Lancaster Township, Wells County Indiana
 The Lancaster Township Board will be having a meeting on Monday, March 25, 2024 at 6:00 PM at the Lancaster Township Office located at 915 N Main Street, Bluffton Indiana.
 Agenda: Approval of Minutes
 Update On Fire Territory
 Township Investments
 Laptop Computer
 Accounting software
 Other business related to Lancaster Township
 David Rigney
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