

The News - Banner

www.News-Banner.com

MONDAY, MARCH 25, 2024

BLUFFTON, INDIANA • Wells County's Hometown Connection

\$1.00



Trivia at the brewery

Chamber Bucks were awarded to the trivia team of Les Quizerables (above), as they were declared the winners at Trivia Night at the Parlor City Brewing Company Sunday evening.

The event is jointly sponsored once a month by the Wells County Public Library and the brewery. Library staff members Lisa Powell-Sabinski (left) and Jason Habegger (middle) were the "quizzers" for the this month's event. (Photos by Barbara Barbieri)



Wells County public information officer details first year

By HOLLY GASKILL

Wells County hired its first-ever public information officer in 2023, and one year later, LeAnne Wyss shared how the job's responsibilities have adapted and developed.

Wyss, formerly Gibbs, began in the position in February 2023. At the time, the position was loosely defined as one interceding in the county's communication with the public, particularly through the county's website and social media presence. Commissioner Mike Vanover had championed the position, which was approved by the County Council in 2022, and renewed in 2023.

As she began the position in 2023, Wyss explained that a large portion of taking the position off the ground would be observing the communication and using creativity to develop an appropriate system to address these needs. One year later, she referred to this process as a "trial and error." There are changing seasonal needs within the county government, many of which she encountered on the fly in her first year.

"I think I'm still kind of in that learning and adapting, and some of that is, we try something and evaluate, and go back to the drawing board of somethings," Wyss

explained. "It's a lot of experimenting with whatever that 'secret sauce' is."

For example, Wyss said Wells County Commissioners had been asked to explain their decision not to join Health First Indiana. She then worked with the commissioners to create a press release with their combined and individual statements on the matter.

Not only did Wyss find this important to understanding the large decision, but it also gave a quick introduction to coordinating between commissioners, who are limited in their communication due to the Open Door Law. The release ultimately included individual statements from each of the commissioners, as well as combined statements about HFI.

"It was a more lengthy process because we knew we wanted to get it right the first time and

(Continued on Page 2)



LeAnne Wyss

Michigan woman sentenced on child solicitation charge

By SYDNEY KENT

The first woman caught in a string of online predator stings last year was sentenced in the Wells Circuit Court last week.



Jill Sweeney

Jill Sweeney, 46, from Elise, Michigan, was sentenced to six years in prison with three years of that time suspended. Sweeney also received 193 days of jail credit for the time she spent incarcerated while waiting for disposition in the case.

Sweeney was convicted of one count of child solicitation, a Level 4 felony, and is now required to

register as a sex offender.

According to a probable cause affidavit, Sweeney drove the nearly three-hour trip from Michigan to meet with a child she met through the social media app TikTok. The child claimed to be 13 years old. Repeated sexual advances from Sweeney were identified in the messages.

When Sweeney arrived at the Bluffton Walmart last September, she was met by a decoy from the nonprofit group Predator Catchers Indianapolis. Sweeney is one of nine arrests the group has facilitated in the county in recent years.

The sentence imposed for Sweeney is similar to that of fellow offenders.

Unlike fellow offenders, Sweeney was offered the opportunity for a shorter sentence upon com-

(Continued on Page 2)



Hippity hoppity Easter's on its way

The Easter bunny was happily hopping through Walmart over the weekend to give shoppers a smile. Bryce Kilander (center) and Megan Kilander (right) added to the festivities with a set of bunnies people were welcome to pet. (Photo by Sydney Kent)

Palestinians describe bodies in Israel's raid at Gaza's main hospital

By WAFAA SHURAF and SAMY MAGDY
Associated Press

RAFAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Palestinians who fled an ongoing Israeli raid of Gaza's main hospital described mass arrests and forced marches past bodies in interviews on Sunday, while the United Nations said Israel is now blocking its main agency helping Palestinians from sending food aid to the enclave's devastated north.

Israel's military says it has killed more than 170 militants and detained about 480 suspects in the raid on Shifa Hospital that began Monday, calling it a blow to Hamas and other armed groups it says had regrouped there as the war nears the six-month mark.

The fighting highlights the resilience of Palestinian armed groups in a heavily destroyed part of Gaza where Israeli troops have been forced to return after a simi-

lar raid in the war's earliest weeks.

Kareem Ayman Hathat, who lived in a five-story building about 100 meters from the hospital, said he huddled in the kitchen for days while explosions sometimes caused the building to shake.

Early Saturday, Israeli troops stormed the building and forced dozens of residents to leave. He said men were forced to strip to their underwear and four were detained. The rest were blindfold-

ed and ordered to follow a tank south as blasts thundered around them.

"From time to time, the tank would fire a shell," he told The Associated Press. "It was to terrorize us."

Israeli jets on Sunday launched several strikes near Shifa Hospital, which largely stopped functioning following the November raid. After claiming that Hamas maintained an elaborate command cen-

ter there, Israeli forces months ago exposed a single tunnel leading to a few underground rooms.

Hardly any aid has been delivered in recent weeks to northern Gaza and Gaza City, where Shifa is located. The isolated area suffered widespread devastation in the early days of Israel's offensive launched after the Oct. 7 Hamas attack that triggered the war.

As of Sunday, Israel has told

(Continued on Page 2)

Inside

Local/Area

- Obituaries 3
- Court Docket 3

Opinion

- Niki Kelly 4

Also...

- Sports 2a
- Classifieds 4a
- Diversions 3a

Outside

Plan to run against the wind today

Today	Tuesday	Wed.
High 64	High 63	High 46
Low 46	Low 37	Low 29

More Weather on Page 2

Online

Follow us on Facebook!
Go to www.facebook.com/newsbanner

Place Your Classified Ads 24/7

Vol. 95 No. 122

MONDAY
March 25, 2024

close to home; far from ordinary

Ossian Assisted Living

215 DAVIS ROAD
OSSIAN, IN
PH: 260-622-7821

www.ossianhealthandrehab.com

How to contact us:

Call us: 824-0224
or 1-800-579-7476
email@news-banner.com

On the Web:
www.news-banner.com

Follow us at:
twitter.com/newsbanner

OBITUARIES

Duane M. Sprunger, 74

Duane M. Sprunger, 74, of Berne, was welcomed into his eternal home by his Lord and Savior on Friday, March 22, 2024, surrounded by his loving family. Duane was born April 1, 1949, to Marvin and Margaret "Pill" (Parr) Sprunger. Duane grew up in and around the Berne area and was a part of the inaugural class of South Adams High School in 1967. Duane was blessed with a golden tenor voice and pursued his love of music and ministry at the Grand Rapids School of the Bible and Music, now Cornerstone University, in Grand Rapids, Mich. During his time there, Duane toured with the music group the Choralaires and made many life-long friends and had many wonderful memories and stories to share of his time at GRBM. He married the love of his life, June M. (Sprunger) Sprunger on June 14, 1968. Together they served as leaders of the youth group at Grace Bible Church, where they have been faithful members. He continued to use his talents to serve Grace Bible as a deacon, Sunday School teacher, Sunday School Superintendent, music leader, and soloist. Duane was most passionate that people know the love of Christ and accept Him as a personal Savior. Duane loved driving truck. He was a faithful employee for Teeple Truck Lines for many years. In his 74 years on this earth, Duane was always social, eager to make a friend with a ready smile, a twinkle in his blue eyes, and a teasing comment that let you know that he cared. He was an avid University of Michigan fan. He will be remembered as a loving husband and an affectionate and doting father and grandfather. His warm hugs and funny little sayings will be dearly missed. Duane is survived by his devoted wife of 55 years, June Sprunger of Berne; his loving daughters, Shannon (James) Gause and Rochelle (Eric) Criss both of Warsaw; five grandchildren, Graham Criss, Sydney Gause, Travis Gause, Grant Criss and Ainsley Criss all of Warsaw; one sister, Nancy (Stan) Van Emon of Berne; brother, Randy (Vicki) Sprunger of Berne; and many loving brothers and sisters-in-law, nieces, and nephews. Duane was preceded in death by his eldest daughter, Jodi Sprunger; his parents Marvin L. Sprunger and Margaret "Pill" Sprunger; a nephew, Jeffrey Sprunger; and brother-in-law, J. Steven Sprunger. A funeral service will be held at 10:30 a.m. Thursday, March 28, 2024, at Grace Bible Church in Berne with Pastor Jeff Gaskill officiating. Burial will follow at M.R.E. Cemetery in Berne. Friends and family will be received from 3-5 p.m. and 6-8 p.m. Wednesday, March 27, 2024, at Zwick & Jahn Funeral Home, Yager-Kirchhofer Chapel in Berne and one hour prior to the service at the church on Thursday. Arrangements are by Zwick & Jahn Funeral Home, Yager-Kirchhofer Chapel in Berne, Indiana. For complete obituary information and to sign the on-line guestbook, visit www.zwickjahn.com.

Carol Jane Dailey, 86

Carol Jane Dailey, 86, died Saturday, March 23, 2024, at Ossian Health and Rehabilitation. She was born March 10, 1938, in Geneva. Her survivors include a daughter-in-law, Susan Dailey; son, Don (Carol) Dailey; eight grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren; and 9 great-great-grandchildren. In addition to her husband, Donald E. Dailey and parents, Carol was preceded in death by a son, Douglas L. Dailey; two sisters; and brother, Robert Everhart. A funeral service will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, March 27, 2024, at Zwick & Jahn Funeral Home, Yager-Kirchhofer Chapel in Berne. Burial will follow at Apostolic Christian Cemetery in Bluffton, Indiana. Friends and family will be received from 5-8 p.m. Tuesday, March 26, 2024, at Zwick & Jahn Funeral Home, Yager-Kirchhofer Chapel in Berne, Indiana and one hour prior to the service on Wednesday at the funeral home.

1 killed, 5 wounded in Indy shooting

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — One person was killed and five others including a police officer were wounded during an early morning shooting Sunday in Indianapolis, police said. Two Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department officers in full uniform were working in off-duty employment at a bar in the 9400 block on East Washington Street when a disturbance erupted in the parking lot around 1:30 a.m., Chief Christopher Bailey said during a news conference. Both officers exchanged gunfire with at least one suspect and one officer was shot in the upper thigh and sustained an additional shoulder injury that may have occurred when he fell after being shot, according to Bailey, who said the officer was in stable condition and expected to be released from a hospital on Sunday. Additional officers responded and found four other people in the parking lot who had been shot. All were transported to nearby hospitals with non-life-threatening injuries. The victims included two 45-year-old men, a 42-year-old man and a 33-year-old woman, Bailey said.

Wells Court Docket

Wells Superior Court Criminal Cases

Preston Jonathan Thomas Hopkins, 26, Poneto; Sentenced to 547 days in prison with all but 429 suspended. He received 118 days of jail credit and was also ordered to complete one year of probation. The sentence was issued after Hopkins pled guilty to one count of residential entry, a Level 6 felony. One count of resisting law enforcement, a Class A misdemeanor, was dismissed pursuant to the plea agreement. Hopkins is also required to pay court costs and filing fees in the amount of \$869. Arturo Jesus Ortiz Ramirez, 30,

Fort Wayne; Sentenced to 545 days in prison with 485 days suspended for one count of possession of cocaine, a Level 6 felony. Ramirez was sentenced to 60 days in the Wells County Jail, concurrent to count one, for one count of operating a vehicle with an ACE of .08 or more, a Class C misdemeanor. Ramirez is required to complete one year of probation and pay court costs and filing fees in the amount of \$639.50. Dillon Jackson, 27, Liberty Center; Sentenced to 547 days in prison with 545 days suspended for one count of possession of marijuana where the defendant has a prior drug offense conviction, a Level 6 felony. One count of

operating a vehicle while intoxicated and one count of operating a vehicle with a controlled substance were dismissed pursuant to the plea agreement. Jackson is also required to pay court costs and filing fees in the amount of \$439. Wells Circuit Court Criminal Cases Marvin Wayne Arnold, 43, Fort Wayne; Sentenced to 730 days in prison with 550 days suspended for one count of failure to register as a sexual offender — prior conviction, a Level 5 felony. Arnold received 96 days of jail credit towards his sentence and is ordered to pay court costs and filing fees in the amount of \$439.

DNR considers deer hunting reform

By WHITNEY DOWNARD Indiana Capital Chronicle

A hybrid public hearing on reforming the state's deer hunting programs managed by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources got little feedback Wednesday, but roughly 90 Hoosiers submitted comments online beforehand. Of the public comments reviewed by the Indiana Capital Chronicle, a few of the proposed changes were clear standouts, especially crossbow licensing and the elimination of a special season for antlerless deer, or does, at the end of the year. The Indiana Natural Resources Commission meeting, scheduled at the Garrison at Fort Harrison State Park in Indianapolis, appeared to have no members of the public in attendance and less than a dozen who tuned in online. In a lengthy outline on the DNR website, the agency detailed the 17 proposed changes and said it would simplify the process for hunters and reduce confusion. "The DNR recognizes the desire of hunters to keep seasons specific to a type of equipment and to place certain limitations on others who hunt that season. However, the deer program aims to simplify the rules that govern deer hunting so that hunters desiring to enter the sport are less confused by the regulations," said DNR on its website. "Much staff time and resources are taken up trying to explain the requirements of a license to an individual, and correcting an accidental mistake made when checking in a deer," the agency continued. Several of the changes appeared to be responses to legislation passed in 2023 curbing the power of agencies to enact emergency rules. Previous limitations on youth hunters and the establishment of deer reduction zones were done through such administrative rulemaking. The deadline to submit public comment was March 20. The commission still has to approve the rules at an upcoming meeting.

Feedback from public comments Currently, the state offers a standalone crossbow license in addition to the archery license — both of which run from Oct. 1 to Jan. 5 — the change would combine both into one license. DNR notes on

its site that the use of crossbows to hunt was legalized in 2012 but less than 1% of hunters purchase both licenses. A 2022 Deer Management Survey of over 16,000 found that nearly three-quarters, or 73%, supported the rule change while 19% were opposed. Several people wrote that crossbows were far more powerful than their counterparts and should instead be included in the firearms or muzzle loaders seasons, rather than archery. Many said exceptions should only be made for those with physical or mental impairments. "While I agree that this reduces confusion since crossbows are allowed during archery, I do not agree with the principle overall. Crossbows should not be allowed during archery seasons with the exception of those with special permits," said Nathan Flook, of Tippecanoe County. "Crossbows do not belong in the archery category. The only similarity they have with a traditional vertical bow is the presence of cam and strings." But the change regarding crossbows didn't get nearly the same attention as the special antlerless firearms season from Dec. 26 to the first Sunday in the following January. A DNR 2021 survey found that 38% of hunters used that season in the last five years, dropping to 24% in the last year. Citing the low usage and "ineffectiveness" in harvesting deer, DNR proposed striking the season. But many hunters spoke out, saying it was one of the few times of year when children were out of school and adults had time off work. "This is an opportunity for adult hunters to take youth into the field. It doesn't really matter if significant numbers of deer are harvested during this season. The purpose is to give potential new hunters an opportunity in the field with someone they can learn from," said Mike Foster, of Johnson County. "I think removing this season is short-sighted if one considers the shrinking number of hunters taking to the field as each year passes." Previously, the agency had an emergency rule prohibiting hunting antlerless deer with a firearm on certain Fish & Wildlife properties. Due to 2023 legislation, DNR needs to codify it. The most complicated process, previously decid-

ed via rule-making, is the establishment of deer reduction zones. Such zones are created in areas where excess deer conflict with humans, such as car accidents and deer damage. **Managing the deer population** Other proposals included changes to muzzleloader licenses and a statewide bag limit of six antlerless deer, similar to the current state limit on antlered deer. "This change is being proposed because the current county bonus antlerless quota (CBAQ) system allows individuals to shoot perceived excessive numbers of antlerless deer across multiple counties, if individuals in each county were to take the maximum number of bonus antlerless deer available in each county," DNR said on its website. "The proposed changes to the rules governing deer hunting will allow an individual to still take no more than one antlered deer during the regular deer seasons combined, as is allowed now, but it will also allow them to purchase up to six additional multiple season antlerless deer licenses to take antlerless deer in any of the regular deer seasons (e.g., archery, firearms and muzzleloader)," the agency continued. DNR noted that fewer than 70 hunters took more than seven deer during a regular deer season and that nearly three-quarters of those surveyed in 2022, or 74%, supported the change while just 14% opposed. Hunters weighing in appeared conflicted, with some reporting thinning

herds in their counties and others concerned about deer damage to their properties. "The number of antlerless deer is staggering on my farm. I sustain over \$5,000 worth of deer damage every year on my 1,700-acre farm. It is hard enough to make a living growing corn and soybeans. I do not like feeding deer!" Dennis Simpson, of Gibson County, said. But Marion County's Allen Glover, who said he'd hunted for decades, reported the opposite experience. "The low number of deer that I have seen in recent years have been very young and only two or three of them in the entire season. The Franklin County (herd), if you can call it that, has been decimated by over hunting antlerless deer or by (Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease)," Glover wrote in. "With the disease continuing to decimate the (herd), I hope that they would continue to limit the doe harvest for the next 5 years. Hopefully this would increase the number of deer available to be harvested." The sometimes fatal EHD virus kills deer in Indiana, and in other parts of the country, annually and peaks in late summer to early fall. According to DNR, 67 deer were reported to have EHD last year, though the agency only tested 7 and confirmed one case. But the department does allow hunters who kill such a diseased deer to not let it count against their limit, with reservations. Such a decision is made by evaluating the conditions of the deer meat and observations by biologists or conservation officers.

Still Waters
FAMILY DENTISTRY

**YOUR SMILE.
OUR PASSION.
EVERY TIME.**

Accepting many new insurance plans including Humana and United Healthcare. Always accepting new patients. Please call today to schedule an appointment.

10045 North State Road 1 Ossian, IN 46777
(260)-622-4138
www.stillwatersfamilydentistry.com

FRESH • VARIETY • LOCAL • QUALITY
3095 VAN HORN ST., ZANESVILLE
LOCALLY SUPPLIED • LOCALLY OWNED

Lengerich
MEATS • SPECIALS

Ham Loaf Mixture	\$4.49/lb.
Beef Rump Roast	\$7.69/lb.
Cheese Summer Sausage	\$6.89/lb.
Mac & Cheese Salad	\$2.69/lb.

Sides of Beef Available at Market Prices
Whole or Half Hog *dressed weight* \$2.99/lb.

www.lengerichmeats.com **PRICES GOOD Mar. 25 – Mar. 30, 2024**

GET YOUR EASTER HAM

Pulled Pork with or without BBQ sauce • Sloppy Joe • Smoked Pork Chops
Meat & Cheese Trays • Roasting Hogs • Homemade Chicken and Ham Salad
CALL IN ADVANCE FOR ALL SPECIAL ORDERS

WE HELP YOU GET SOCIAL SECURITY, MEDICARE AND MEDICAID READY!

Jerry Flack & Associates
WE REPRESENT MANY - MANY - MANY INSURANCE COMPANIES
WE HAVE ALL THE MEDICARE AND MEDICAID OPTIONS AVAILABLE

The Price Tag is the Same Everywhere Consider Local for Better Service

WE HAVE THE MARKETPLACE UNDER 65 PRODUCTS.
WHEN YOU HAVE PROBLEMS AND YOU WILL HAVE PROBLEMS YOU WILL HAVE US TO COUNT ON
MEDICARE SUPPLEMENTS - MEDICARE ADVANTAGE PLANS - PRESCRIPTION DRUG PLANS
Life Insurance - Long Term Care Insurance - Investments - Individual and Small Group Health - Dental - Vision - Hearing - Cancer Insurance

Folks on Medicare A and B and Diabetic can get **FREE** Nice Looking Diabetic Shoes Every Year from Us | We Do **FREE** Information/ Education Seminars In Your Business (Again Former Teachers)

WE CAN MEET: IN OUR OFFICE - IN YOUR HOME - IN A FAVORED LOCATION
In the 1882 Building at Main & Market with the mural on the outside wall • **260-824-1618**

What’s happening at the Wells County Public Library

The Wells County Public Library takes its mission to “provide the community with access, knowledge and growth” very seriously and offers a variety of events each week for kids, teens, and adults. Registration is preferred at most events. To signup, go to www.wellscollibrary.org, click on the Library Event Calendar, navigate to the date of the event, and view more to get to the registration screen. Alternatively, call 260-824-1612 (Bluffton) or 260-622-4691 (Ossian) to register.

Block Days

At the Main Library (Bluffton): Tuesday, March 26 and Thursday, March 28 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

All ages of kids. Enjoy building with various types of blocks throughout the Children’s Room at the library. No need to register for these events; show up and have fun!

LEGO Drop-in At Ossian

At the Ossian Branch Library: Tuesday, March 26 from 4 to 7 p.m.

Grades K-6. Create LEGO masterpieces using the library’s blocks during this drop-in event. No registration needed.

Teen Advisory Board

At the Main Library (Bluffton): Wednesday, March 27 from 6:00 to 6:45 p.m.

Grades 6-12. Do you wish you had a say in Teen Programming at the Library? Do you need volunteer credit? Join the Teen Advisory Board! You don’t need to sign up—just show up for the TAB meetings on the last

Wednesday of each month.

Library Closed: March 29-30

At the Main Library and the Ossian Branch.

The library will be closed on Friday, March 29 and Saturday, March 30 for Good Friday and Easter.

Bingo with Jason

At the Main Library (Bluffton): Monday, April 1 from 6 to 7 p.m.

Adults. Enjoy a lively game of Bingo for a chance to win a candy bar with everyone’s favorite librarian named Jason! Registration required.

Teen Gaming Club

At the Main Library (Bluffton): Monday, April 1 from 6 to 7 p.m.

Grades 6-12. Enjoy a variety of different games each month, including video games, trading card games, and board games. No registration needed.

Cooking Basics by the Book At Ossian

At the Ossian Branch Library: Tuesday, April 2 from 6 to 7 p.m.

Adults. Join us as we focus on a different cookbook each month and make an easy recipe to taste. This month will be oven less breads. Registration required.

Children’s Book Clubs

At the Main Library (Bluffton) Grade 1-2 Book Club: Tuesday, April 2 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Grades 3-4 Book Club: Tuesday, April 9

from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Grades 5-6 Book Club: Thursday, April 11 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Teen Book Club: Thursday, April 11 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Pick up a copy of the book-of-the-month when you sign up at the library. Talk about the book and enjoy an activity or craft based on the book.

Genealogy/Local History Club

At the Main Library (Bluffton): Thursday, April 4 from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m.

Ages 12+. Members help each other learn new things and obtain a greater appreciation for local history and genealogy research. Bring your own laptop or share one of ours. Registration appreciated.

Solar Eclipse Viewing

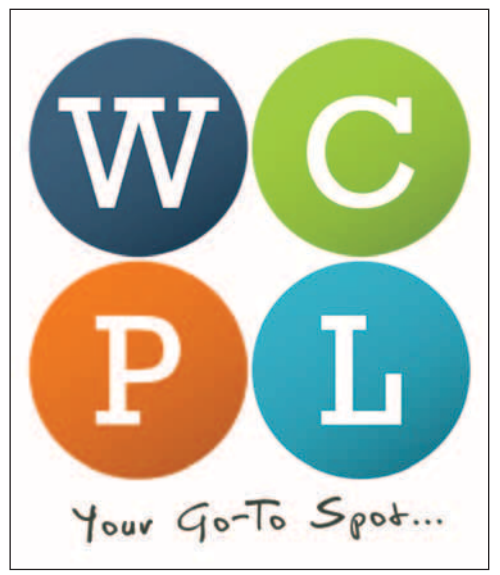
At the Main Library (Bluffton): Monday, April 8 from 2 to 4 p.m.

All ages. Participants of this program will get a safety briefing and can enjoy some solar-themed refreshments before we all go outside to view the eclipse. Each participant who registers will receive a pair of glasses to view the eclipse safely. There will also be a few different types of telescopes to get a different view of the eclipse. Glasses will only be distributed at the event and space is limited. Must be registered to attend.

Solar Eclipse Viewing At Ossian

At the Ossian Branch Library: Monday, April 8 from 2 to 4 p.m.

All ages. Participants of this program



will get a safety briefing before we all go outside to view the eclipse. Each participant who registers will receive a pair of glasses to view the eclipse safely. Glasses will only be distributed at the event and space is limited. Must be registered to attend.

Library Hours

At the main library in Bluffton — Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

At the Ossian branch library — Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Saturday, 9 a.m. to noon.

Access the library online at www.wellscollibrary.org for digital books, magazines, online databases, event info, and more.

Zanesville News

by Melba Edwards

The Zanesville Community Church of God is having a Maundy Thursday Service on March 28 at 7 p.m. They are also having an 8:30 a.m. Sunrise Service on Easter Sunday followed by a breakfast at 9 a.m. before their 10 a.m. service.

All our area churches join in with an annual Good Friday Service that will be held March 29 at the Nine United Methodist Church that is located just a few miles north on Indianapolis Road.

The Coffee Cafe at

the Zanesville Community Church of God is open every weekday from 7:30 to 10 a.m. and all are welcome to attend.

Ellen Decker is getting ready for the Let’s Read It Program that is held at the Zanesville Church of God. This will be held on six Tuesdays from 1 to 3 p.m. starting June 4 through July 9. Ellen was asking for reading partners and she may still need some. Please call the church if you would like to volunteer.

The new restaurant downtown is now open.

It is called Sis & Bub’s Kitchen and is located at 3010 Scott Street near the 4-way stop. The food is very good.

The County Line Pizza & Pub is another great place to eat. If you want to pick up the Zanesville Lions apple dumplings you can get them there or by calling me at 638-4327.

You can also find all the deli food you want at Lengerichs Meats. They are well known everywhere for all their products. They are located right behind the Zanesville Lions Ballpark.

Weekday walking program at the City Gym

The Bluffton Parks Department is promoting a free weekday walking program. The City Gym will be open Monday through Friday from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. through the end of March.

Walking has many health benefits but can be difficult during the colder months.

Participants can enter through the glass door on the West side of the building at 128 E Market St. Sign in on the wooden door each day. If you are the last to leave the gym, turn off the light in the southwest corner of the gym. 1 mile is equal to 20 laps.



Maundy Thursday music by A440 Strings

On Maundy Thursday (March 28) at 7 p.m. the A440 Strings, all musicians with the Fort Wayne Philharmonic, will be performing excerpts from George Frederic Handel’s The Messiah at the First Presbyterian Church in Bluffton. The public is invited to the program being jointly sponsored by the First United Methodist Church, Calvary Lutheran Church and the Presbyterian Church. (Photo provided)

Special Feature *Your MONEY \$ Your TAXES*

How to find a tax prep pro

The deadline to file 2023 tax returns is Monday, April 15, 2024. Tax returns can be complicated, particularly for adults who own their homes and have dependents. Though it’s not impossible for individuals to fill out and file their own returns, the complexity of the process and the stakes involved underscore how beneficial it can be to work with a tax accountant.

Advertisements promoting the services of tax preparation professionals are hard to miss between January and April. Though it’s great to have options, it can be hard for taxpayers to find the right tax pro for them. The following tips can make that process a little easier.

- Ask around. Neighbors, family and friends can be a great resource when looking for a tax preparation service. Ask people you trust who does their taxes and inquire about fees and additional services if they recom-

mend a certain individual or firm.

- Look local. Tax laws differ from state to state, and taxpayers typically must file both state and federal returns. While an out-of-state tax preparation professional may be qualified to work on your return, it might be easier to pick a local tax pro.

- Ask for a preparer tax identification number. The Internal Revenue Service notes that all tax return preparers who are compensated for preparing, or assisting in the preparation of, all or substantially all of any United States federal tax return, claim for refund, or other tax form submitted to the IRS are required to obtain a Preparer Tax Identification Number (PTIN). Though there are exceptions to that rule, taxpayers should recognize that anyone they pay to prepare their return must have a PTIN. Ask for this and ensure the PTIN is listed on your return.

- Check a tax preparer’s credentials. The IRS maintains a Directory of Federal Tax Return Preparers with Credentials and Select Qualifications (<https://irs.treasury.gov/rpo/rpo.jsf>) to help taxpayers find preparers in their area whose credentials are recognized by the IRS or who hold an Annual Filing Season Program Record of Completion. Taxpayers can utilize that directory to find pro-

professionals, and such an approach can ease some of the concerns they may have about working with someone new.

- Compare fees. When shopping around for a tax preparation professional, ask each about their fees. A 2023 survey from Drake Software found that tax preparers expected to charge between \$250 and \$300 per return. Taxpayers can compare fees and then choose a tax preparer



who fits into their budget. These are just a handful of strategies taxpayers can employ to find a tax prep pro. More information about filing tax returns is available at irs.gov.

TOPP CPA FIRM PC
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT

Top notch tax service

Dean (Chip) Topp, CPA
chip@toppcpa.com

Mon-Friday 8-5; Sat 8-12
Call for evening appointments
159 N. Jefferson St., Berne, IN 46711
260-589-8778

- Individual Taxes
- Corporation Taxes
- Partnership Taxes
- Bookkeeping & Payroll
- Property Taxes
- Quickbook ProAdvisor

Edward Jones®

> edwardjones.com Member SIPC

Make your financial future a priority.

BLUFFTON
DOUG FEAR, AAMS®
Financial Advisor
2035 Commerce Dr., Suite 209
260-565-4134

JEREMY TODD, AAMS®/CFP®
Financial Advisor
1169 N. Main St. Suite 2
260-824-0686

JEREMY PENROD, AAMS®/CFP®
Financial Advisor
201 E. Market St., Suite 1
260-824-2354

OSSIAN
LARRY A. SMITH, AAMS®
Financial Advisor
102 S. Jefferson
260-622-7952

MKT-58940-A AECSPAD

Your Local Tax Specialists

E&E EMSHWILLER & EMSHWILLER

BUSINESS CONSULTING • TAX PREPARATION
BOOKKEEPING • PAYROLL • QB CONSULTS
IRS REPRESENTATION

JOHN EMSHWILLER, EA
NICK SCHEER, EA
CORY RECKARD, CPA
COLIN PENROD, EA

207 N. Johnson Street, Bluffton, IN 7230 Engle Road, Fort Wayne, IN

www.emshwiller.net • 260.824.1826

Memorial marks anniversary of battle between Native Americans and U.S.

By **KIM CHANDLER**
Associated Press

ALEXANDER CITY, Ala. (AP) — Prayers and songs of remembrance carried across the grassy field where more than 800 Muscogee warriors, women and children perished in 1814 while defending their homeland from United States forces.

Members of the Muscogee Creek Nation returned to Alabama this weekend for a memorial service on the 210th anniversary of Horseshoe Bend. The battle was the single bloodiest day of conflict for Native Americans with U.S. troops and paved the way for white settler expansion in the Southeast and the tribe's eventual forced removal from the

region. "We don't come here to celebrate. We come here to commemorate, to remember the lives and stories of those who fought and honor their sacrifice," David Hill, principal chief of the Muscogee Creek Nation, said at the Saturday ceremony.

One thousand warriors, along with women and children from six tribal towns, had taken refuge on the site, named for the sharp bend of the Tallapoosa River. They were attacked on March 27, 1814, by a force of 3,000 led by future U.S. President Andrew Jackson.

"They were going to fight to the end. The warriors were going to do what they could do to protect the

women and children, protect themselves, protect our freedom, what we had here," Hill said.

Leaders of the Muscogee Nation on Saturday placed a wreath on the battle site. The wreath was made of red flowers, in honor of the warriors who were known as Red Sticks. It was decorated with six eagle feathers in recognition of the six tribal towns that had taken refuge there.

Despite signing a treaty with the U.S., the Muscogee were eventually forcibly removed from the Southeast to Oklahoma on the Trail of Tears. Some of their descendants made the journey back to the land their ancestors called home to attend the remembrance

ceremony. "Hearing the wind and the trees and imagining those that came before us, they heard those same things. It wakes something up in your DNA," said Dode Barnett, a member of the Muscogee Nation Tribal Council.

RaeLynn Butler, the Muscogee Nation's secretary of culture and humanities, has visited the site multiple times but said it is emotional each time.

"When you hear the language and you hear the songs, it's a feeling that is just overwhelming. Painful. Even though it's hard to be here, it's important that we share this history," Butler said.

The Muscogee Nation

has announced plans to try to place a permanent memorial at the site.

At sunset, luminaries were placed on the field to remember the Muscogee people who lost their lives there. A song was sung in the Mvskoke language. The names of the tribal towns were read out over the site along with shouts of "Mvto," meaning thank you.

Hill became emotional watching his young grandson frolic and play in the nearby woods. He could envision the children doing the same 210 years ago and then the fighting that followed as the warriors made their final stand, he said.

But Hill and others said

the story is ultimately one of strength and survival.

"Our tribal towns remain. Our culture remains. Our people remain. Our blood remains. And our ideas remain," Jonodev Chaudhuri, the Muscogee Nation ambassador to the United States, said.

The "sacrifices and the loss of life of those 857 have provided light and life for us," Chaudhuri said.

"The battles we fight today, to protect our culture, and protect our way of life, protect our sovereignty is a direct through line to the lessons that were given to us by these brave, brave folks who lost their lives here protecting what is most dear to us," Chaudhuri said.

Pope Francis skips Palm Sunday homily at start of Holy Week

By **NICOLE WINFIELD**
Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Pope Francis decided at the last minute to skip his homily during Palm Sunday Mass in St. Peter's Square, avoiding a strenuous speech at the start of a busy Holy Week that will test his increasingly frail health.

Hobbled by bad knees and persistent respiratory problems, Francis also didn't participate in the procession of cardinals around the obelisk in the piazza at the start of the Mass. Instead, the 87-year-old pontiff blessed the palm fronds and olive branches carried by the faithful from the altar.

Francis had been expected to deliver a homily halfway through the service and a prepared text had been

distributed to journalists. But when an aide presented Francis with his glasses to begin reading, the pope made clear he wouldn't deliver the remarks, leaving the crowd waiting in silence.

Vatican officials didn't immediately explain why. The Vatican press office later said the homily was replaced by "a moment of silence and prayer."

Francis though did pronounce prayers throughout the service and offered a long appeal for peace at the end of the Mass. He said he was praying for the families of those killed in what he called an "inhuman" attack at a suburban Moscow concert hall and also asked for prayers for "the martyred Ukraine" and people of Gaza.

Vatican officials esti-

mated some 60,000 people attended the Mass, held under a sunny, breezy spring sky. Francis spent several minutes greeting them from the popemobile, making several loops around the piazza at the end of the service.

Palm Sunday kicks off a busy week for Francis leading up to Easter Sunday when the faithful commemorate the resurrection of Christ. On Thursday, Francis is due to travel to a Rome women's prison for the traditional washing of the feet ritual. On Friday he is scheduled to preside over the torchlit Way of the Cross procession at Rome's Colosseum re-enacting Christ's crucifixion.

The following day marks the Easter Vigil, during which Francis presides over

a solemn nighttime service in the basilica, followed by Easter Sunday Mass in St. Peter's Square and his noon-time blessing from the loggia above.

The Holy Week schedule is challenging for popes even under the best of circumstances. But that is especially true this year for Francis, who has been battling on and off all winter what he and the Vatican have described as a case of the flu, bronchitis or a cold. For the last several weeks he has occasionally asked an aide to read aloud his speeches and catechism lessons to spare him the effort.

On Sunday, there was no substitute called in, and the homily was skipped. Vatican officials said the prepared text was to be considered as never having existed. Usual-

ly, the pope doesn't deliver a homily at Easter, but he traditionally offers reflections on Palm Sunday.

Even when he isn't sick, Francis often speaks in a whisper and seems to run out of breath easily. He had part of one lung removed when he was a young man because of a respiratory infection.

At this time last year, he was hospitalized for three days with an acute case of bronchitis, but then rallied to get through Holy Week. He has been hospitalized two other times during his pontificate for abdominal surgery, including one 10-day stay in 2021 to remove a part of his large intestine.

Over 130 abducted schoolchildren in Nigeria's northwest are rescued after weeks in captivity

By **CHINEDU ASADU**
Associated Press

KADUNA, Nigeria (AP) — More than 130 children abducted more than two weeks ago from their school in Nigeria's northwestern state of Kaduna were rescued Sunday and are getting psychological support before being returned to their families, the West African nation's military and government officials said.

School authorities had told the state government that a total of 287 students were kidnapped when motorcycle-riding gunmen invaded the remote Kuriga school March 7. However, Kaduna Gov. Uba Sani told local media late Sunday that only 137 young people had been abducted during the attack.

"All of them have come back home safely," the governor said in a broadcast by the Lagos-based Channels Television. The Associated Press could not reach villagers or school authorities in Kuriga town, which does not have cellphone service.

Such varying reports are common in Nigeria's kidnapping crisis, sometimes because of inadequate recordkeeping or because some hostages escape moments after their abduction.

"As the leader, I shouldn't bother myself about figures. What is more important is the return of the children," the governor said.

At least 1,400 students have been kidnapped from Nigerian schools since 2014, when Boko Haram militants seized hundreds of schoolgirls from Borno state's Chibok village. In recent years, abductions have been concentrated in the country's northwestern and central regions, where dozens of armed groups often target villagers and travelers for ransom.

The 137 children were rescued in Zamfara state, an enclave notorious for kidnappings more than 124 miles away from their school, Nigerian military spokesman Maj. Gen. Edward Buba said in a statement.

Pictures released by the Nigerian military showed the children looking worn out as they were covered in dust, still wearing their blue-white-and-brown uniforms while being transported following their release. Kuriga town leaders joined other government officials in waiting for their arrival at the Kaduna State Government House, which officials postponed until Monday.

The children were in

"high spirits" and were receiving psychological support and medical attention, the governor said.

At least 17 other schoolchildren in northern Sokoto state were also rescued two weeks after they were taken hostage, according to a statement issued Saturday by the Sokoto state government.

Under growing pressure to end the mass kidnappings in northern Nigeria, President Bola Tinubu promised his administration is "deploying detailed strategies to ensure that our schools remain safe sanctuaries of learning, not lairs for wanton abductions."

Tinubu had vowed to rescue the children "without paying a dime" as ransom. But ransoms are commonly paid for kidnappings, often arranged by families, and it is rare for officials in Nigeria to admit to the payments.

No group has claimed responsibility for the Kaduna kidnapping, which locals have blamed on bandit groups known for mass killings and kidnappings for ransom in the conflict-battered northern region, most of them former herders in conflict with settled communities.

At least two people with

extensive knowledge of the security crisis in Nigeria's northwest told AP that the identity of the abductors is known.

UNIQUE BLUE
BAR & GRILL

SPECIALS

Sunrise Burger
Tues., Mar. 26 - Wed., Mar. 27

Steak Tips
Fri., Mar. 29 & Sat., Mar. 30

205 W. Market St.
Bluffton, IN
Mon-Sat 10am - 3am • Closed Sunday

Wells
Jay
Allen
Grant
Adams
Blackford
Huntington

FISHER'S
GARAGE DOORS, LLC
SALES & SERVICE

RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL

- Replace Broken Springs & Cables on All Makes
- Replace or Repair Doors & Openers on All Makes

"Large Enough to Serve, Small Enough to Care"

260-849-0206 • www.fishersgaragedoors.com

FAST, RELIABLE FIBER INTERNET

SOLUTIONS FOR HOME AND BUSINESS
UNLIMITED DATA | UPTO 1* GBPS | 24/7 SUPPORT

SERVICE NOW AVAILABLE IN MANY AREAS.
Sign up today or get fiber-ready by signing the underground agreement.
Call for more details!
833.727.5563
twncomm.com/heartland

TWN Communications **HEARTLAND REMC**

*Services provided by TWN Communications. Not available in all areas. Restrictions, terms and conditions apply. Taxes, regulatory, surcharges and other charges are applicable. A line connection fee may be applicable. Call for details or visit twncomm.com/terms-conditions for additional information and terms and conditions of services. Residential customers on qualifying internet plans will receive download/upload speeds of 25.0 Mbps to 1.0 Gbps, per respective plan. A 30-day notice is required to cancel service.

ALL SERVICES ARE FREE

HEALTH SCREENINGS, COMMUNITY RESOURCES, VACCINES, GIVEAWAYS AND MORE!

First 50 people will receive a free hygiene kit (min value \$25), a pack of diapers, and a \$10 gas card

Wells County Community HEALTH FAIR

Wednesday, April 3 2 - 5 pm

Wells County Fairgrounds Expo Hall in Community Center
1240 4-H Park Road
Bluffton, IN 46714

Scan for more information and to register

INDIANA IMMUNIZATION COALITION
#VACCINATEINDIANA

SPRING HOME & GARDEN DIRECTORY

FIND WHAT YOU NEED for all of your Spring Home Improvement and Lawn & Garden projects at these local businesses.



PLUMBING

Summer "HOT" Kooldown with Us!

MR. KOOL
Plumbing, Heating and Cooling

Call and Schedule a Check Up Today!

260 824-1126 • mkoolbluffton@gmail.com • 610 N. Main St. Bluffton, IN
COS2100004

CARPET CLEANING

STANLEY STEEMER
Carpet, Vinyl, Upholstery & Tile

\$99 ASK ABOUT OUR SPECIAL

CERTIFIED asthma & allergy friendly

www.stanleysteemer.com • 1-800-STEEMER • 260-724-7377

HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING

Serving Bluffton Since 1933
4th Generation Experience

Get Ready for Hot Weather with a **SPRING CHECKUP!**

Check Out Our Air Conditioning or Furnace Units

American Standard
HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING

MOSER & SON
Heating & Air Conditioning
824-0228
219 E. Perry St. Bluffton

SOLAR ENERGY

PADDLEFISH
solar project

Susan Poper - Local Representative
201 E. Market St., Suite 3
Bluffton, IN 46714
Office Hours: By appointment only

info@paddlefishsolar.com
edf-re.com/project/paddlefish-solar-project/
(260) 355-5951
facebook.com/PaddlefishSolar

FURNITURE

MF

915 N. Main St., Ste. D Bluffton, IN 46714
260.353.1099
www.themandfstore.com

THE MATTRESS + FURNITURE STORE

FROM NOW UNTIL **MARCH 31ST**
Select Items **10% to 30% OFF**

LIFT CHAIRS & RECLINERS
catnapper HomeStretch

THERAPEDIC Adjustable Beds! & More!!!

M-F: 10-6 • SAT: 10-3 • SUN: CLOSED

LAWN & GARDEN

POTTER'S
LAWN SERVICE

Insured Owner & Operator

LAWN SPRAYING & FERTILIZATION

KIRK POTTER
260-820-0437

STEPS

SIMON'S
MANUFACTURING

Make Your Yard & Patio More Attractive

Steps and Rails Manufactured in Berne, IN

- Steps
- 100's of Yard Ornaments
- Patio Blocks & Edging
- Concrete Benches
- Bird Baths
- Fountains & Statuary
- Strawberry Jars
- Splash Blocks
- Mail Box Posts
- Planters

U.S. 27 South, Berne, IN • 260-589-3223
HOURS: 9 A.M.-5 P.M.

GARAGE DOORS

JC'S GARAGE DOOR
SALES & SERVICE

All makes & models • broken springs & cables
Owner: James Fisher • Sales: Carl Fisher
"50 Years of Combined Experience"
Call us at **824-3262**

HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING

Collier's
COMFORT SERVICES INC.
260-622-6622
ColliersComfort.com

LENNOX

TAX SALE

Don't waste your tax dollars—the furnace isn't free. At Collier's you get honest, upfront pricing.

Lennox 14 SEER A/C & 96% EFF. Furnace Starting at **\$9199** (INSTALLED)

RECEIVE A FREE MERV 11 AIR FILTER & CABINET, AND IWAVE AIR PURIFIER WITH A 10-YEAR WARRANTY ON FURNACE AND A/C REPLACEMENT

ColliersComfort.com | 260-622-6622

Not valid with any other offer or combined with other sales or promotions. Offer valid through 4/15/2024.

LUMBER

Arnold Lumber Co.
Decatur, Indiana

FABRAL
METAL WALL AND ROOF SYSTEMS

- Full Service Lumberyard
- Kitchens, New Homes and Remodels
- Garages and Complete Pole Barn Packages - Erected or Materials Only
- Doors, Windows and decks - Repair or Replacement
- Free Roof Top Delivery with Shingle Purchase

1-800-903-4206 | Check Us Out on Facebook

Hours: Mon-Thur 7AM-5PM • Fri 7AM-4:30PM • Sat 7AM-11:30PM
425 S. Winchester St. • 260-724-3108 • Fax 260-724-4505

TIRES

WE HAVE THE TIRES FOR ALL YOUR SPRING ACTIVITIES

If It's Got a Tire! We Can Replace It!

- Lawn Mowers
- Yard Carts
- Cars
- Trucks
- Utility Vehicles
- Boat Trailers
- Wheel Barrows

COMPLETE AUTO SERVICE

BLUFFTON TIRE INC.
1308 S. MAIN ST., BLUFFTON • 824-0418
Hours: Mon.-Fri. 7:30-5:00 • WWW.BLUFFTONTIRE.COM

Regret and renewal

Dear Annie: I could have written the letter from "Regretful," who was sad that she and her husband had left the city and moved into a rural area where she is missing out on so much that had made her life fun. For me, it's been 12 years of misery. I used to see my daughters and grand-kid almost every day, and now I'm lucky if it's once a year.

My physical and mental health have deteriorated to the point where, at times, I no longer have any motivation to live.

My husband knows how I feel but chooses to ignore me; he's happy here in the Northwoods where he can hunt and ride around on his four-wheeler. I'm 80 years old, and I feel like it's over for me, but I don't want my life to end in misery. What can I do? — Also Regretful

Dear Also Regretful: First off, I'm sorry that you are feeling so alone and isolated. Please reach out for help. You are not alone. If you are feeling like you do not want to live, visit the website https://988lifeline.org, which is a great resource.

Please tell your husband and your children how you are feeling. There is no reason that you should be feeling this alone and isolated. There are people who love you. Please reach out. There is help. Seek the help of a professional therapist to work through these feelings, if you can. Call your doctor and book a check-up, and see if there are exercises that you can do to boost your physical and mental health.

Dear Annie: Keep up your good advice. When I was a young mother at

home all day with two babies while my husband was at work, I was very unhappy. I thought of leaving my husband. But one day, when I was reading the newspaper, I came across a letter describing my same situation. The advice was, "Finish your education, then decide what to do."

I got a teaching degree and worked for 30 years, loving my profession.

My first husband and I agreed to divorce after 20 years. My second husband and I were married for 30 years until he passed away. My third husband — we're both 87 — and I have been married for four years. We are so much in love. — Kept Growing

Dear Growing: Thank you for your letter. It highlights that you are never too old to find love and or start a new career.

"How Can I Forgive My Cheating Partner?" is out now! Annie Lane's second anthology — featuring favorite columns on marriage, infidelity, communication and reconciliation — 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.

© 2024 CREATORS.COM

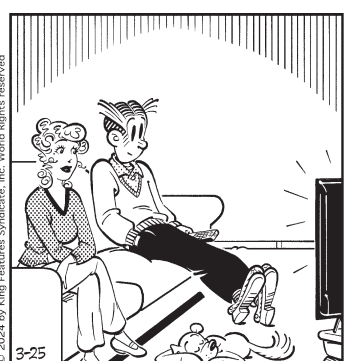
Dear Annie by Annie Lane



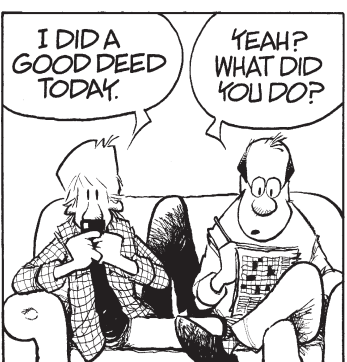
BEETLE BAILEY



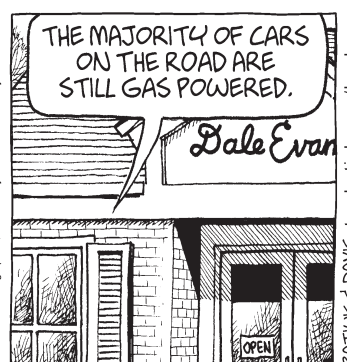
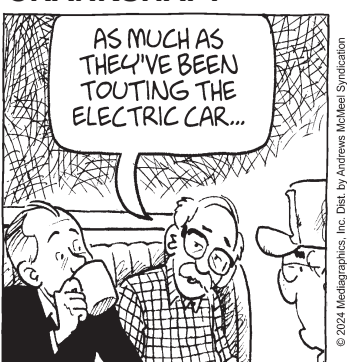
BLONDIE



ZITS

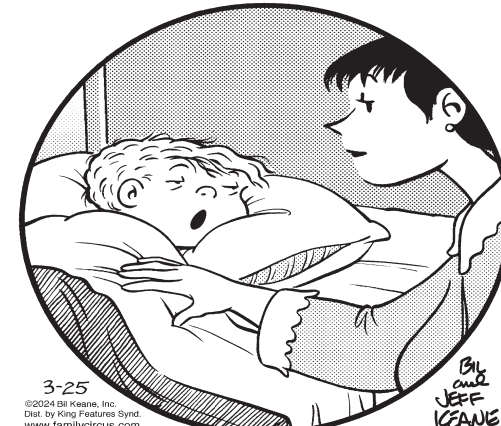


CRANKSHAFT



THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane



"I can't wake up yet. I hafta finish my dream."

The LOCKHORNS



"WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU CLEANED OUT YOUR CLOSET?"

My Answer

By Dr. Billy Graham



We must open our hearts to Christ

Question: Working in the field of computer science has been fascinating—and sometimes scary, considering what goes into programming. My boss often compares computer software to the human brain. While I disagree with him, the brain is complex and as many say, "What goes into our brain eventually comes out in our thoughts, words, and actions." Are we programmed at birth? — C.P.

Answer: In a sense, we do get programmed by families, culture, education, and entertainment. Our minds are constantly taking

in information and images that impact how we think, what we say, and what we do. While God does not program us in the same way as a set of instructions or as a robot, the Bible does tell us that God has "set eternity" in our hearts but no one knows the work God does from beginning to end (see Ecclesiastes 3:11).

We are responsible for what we allow into our minds. We need to program our minds and our hearts that when bad things permeate our thinking and take root, we are to seek the mind of Christ and replace bad with good from God's Word.

When we open our hearts to Christ and

ask Him to help us see the way He sees us we should depend on Him to reveal what needs to be cleaned up, and then drink in the pure water of His wisdom. He will faithfully guide us; that is His desire. "Set up signposts, make landmarks; set your heart toward the highway" (Jeremiah 31:21, NKJV). The Bible is our road map for living a life that brings glory and honor to His Name, and we do well to follow the admonition of Scripture: "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things" (Colossians 3:2, NIV).

©2024 Billy Graham Literary Trust. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

BUY IT SELL IT RENT IT FIND IT FILL IT GET IT DO IT IN THE CLASSIFIEDS! Place Your Ad 24/7/365! www.news-banner.com

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues and solution time: 21 mins. Saturday's answer 3-25

TV schedule table with columns for date, time, and program names.

Crossword puzzle grid with numbers and letters.

