

# The News - Banner

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BLUFFTON, INDIANA • Wells County's Hometown Connection

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## Man convicted of intimidation, other charges dropped

By SYDNEY KENT

Felony charges for domestic battery were dismissed for a Markle man after his wife reported she lied to police.

Johnny Saffore, 38, was convicted of one count of intimidation, a Level 6 felony, after he admitted to threatening to pour bleach on his pregnant wife. He was sentenced to 390 days in jail with 195 days of jail credit. With the credit, his sentence was effectively served.

Multiple counts of domestic battery with injury to a pregnant woman, all Level 5 felonies, and interference with the reporting of a crime, a Class A misdemeanor, were dismissed months into the case.

According to a probable cause affidavit, police were called to the Saffore residence in mid-August for a report of a domestic disturbance. The caller hung up and was unreachable. When police arrived, they located Saffore's wife inside of her vehicle with her two children.

She reported that she and Saffore argued about animal waste on the ground. When she threatened to get rid of the animals, Saffore threatened to pour bleach on her. She said Saffore then allegedly slapped her across the face when she tried to pick up her child. A child in the vehicle reportedly stated that he heard the altercation but did not witness anything. The woman was pregnant at the time.

Saffore told police that his wife slapped herself and threatened to take his baby before she pushed him into the closet. He admitted to taking her cell phone during the 911 call and later retrieved it from a high space in the closet.

Prosecutor Colin Andrews told the court that after multiple meetings, it was clear the couple intended to get back together. During a previous hearing in the case, Saffore met his newborn baby in passing as he sat before the judge.

"I am concerned for the couple, and that these things happen more often than we know," Andrews said. "Mr. Saffore has a history of violence. I think a period of probation is appropriate to keep eyes and ears on them."

Saffore was convicted of domestic violence against his

(Continued on Page 2)

## Biden OKs \$60M in aid after Baltimore bridge collapse

By LEA SKENE and BRIAN WITTE, Associated Press

BALTIMORE (AP) — Maryland Gov. Wes Moore warned Thursday of a "very long road ahead" to recover from the loss of Baltimore's Francis Scott Key Bridge as the Biden administration approved \$60 million in immediate federal aid after the deadly collapse.

Meanwhile the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was moving the largest crane on the Eastern Seaboard to help remove the wreckage of the bridge, Moore said, so work to clear the channel and reopen the key shipping route can begin. The machine, which can lift up to 1,000 tons, was expected to arrive Thursday evening, and U.S. Sen. Chris Van Hollen said a second crane with a 400-ton capacity could arrive Saturday.

The state is "deeply grateful" for the federal funds and support, Moore said at an evening news conference.

Moore promised Thursday that "the best minds in the world" were working on plans to clear the debris, move the cargo ship that rammed into the bridge from the channel, recover the bodies of the four remaining workers presumed dead and investigate what went wrong.

"Government is working hand in hand with industry to investigate the area, including the wreck, and remove the ship," said Moore, a Democrat, who said the quick aid is needed to "lay the foundation for a rapid recovery." President Joe Biden has pledged the federal government would pay the full cost of rebuilding the bridge.

"This work is not going to take hours. This work is not going to take days. This work is not going to take weeks," Moore said. "We have a very long road ahead of us."

Van Hollen said 32 members of the Army Corps of Engineers are surveying the scene of the collapse and 38 Navy contractors are working on the salvage operation.

The devastation left behind after the powerless cargo ship struck a support pillar early Tuesday is extensive. Divers recovered the bodies of two men from a pickup truck in the Patapsco River near the bridge's middle span Wednesday, but officials said they have to start clearing the wreckage before anyone could reach the bodies of four other missing workers.

State police have said that based on sonar scans, the vehicles appear to be encased in a "superstructure" of concrete and other debris.

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Curb work continues on to Wiley Street

Work continues to fix sidewalks and curbs throughout Bluffton. E&B Paving employees Bryan Savage (right), and Buster Douglass demo concrete near South Johnson Street. (Photo by Jonathan Snyder)

## Fort Wayne Mayor Tom Henry dies following late-stage cancer diagnosis

By HOLLY GASKILL

Fort Wayne Mayor Tom Henry died Thursday after a medical emergency related to his cancer diagnosis.

Henry, 72, announced in February that he was battling late-stage stomach cancer. On Wednesday, Henry was placed in hospice care following a medical emergency.

In a statement Thursday evening, the family said, "In the early morning hours of Wednesday, March 27, Mayor Henry was privately transported to a local hospital at which time he and his family consulted at length

with medical professionals including his oncologist. After careful consideration of the risks associated with surgical intervention, Mayor Henry opted for comfort measures. He died peacefully surrounded by his loving family."

Henry, a Democrat, was first sworn into office in 2008 as the 35th mayor of the city. He began his fifth term this year.

Henry was preceded by his wife, Cindy Henry, who died of pancreatic cancer in January.

The statement concluded, "We, his

family, mourn the loss of Tom with the rest of our community, but we also take great comfort in knowing that he is once again with his beautiful Cindy who passed away from cancer just two months ago."



Tom Henry

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## Bittersweet Easter for chocolate lovers, African farmers, but brands see profits

By FRANCIS KOKUTSE and JESSICA DONATI  
Associated Press

ACCRA, Ghana (AP) — Shoppers may get a bitter surprise in their Easter baskets this year. Chocolate eggs and bunnies are more expensive than ever as changing climate patterns eat into global cocoa supplies and the earnings of farmers in West Africa.

About three-quarters of the world's cocoa — the main ingredient in chocolate — are produced on cacao trees in Ghana, Ivory Coast, Nigeria and Cameroon. But dusty seasonal winds from the Sahara were severe in recent months, blocking out the sunlight needed for bean pods to grow. The season prior, heavy rainfall spread a rotting disease.

With exports from the Ivory Coast, the world's top producer, down by a third in recent months, the global price of cocoa has risen sharply. Cocoa futures have already doubled this year, trading at a record high of more than \$10,000 per metric ton in New York on Tuesday after rising more than 60% the previous year. Farmers who harvest cacao beans say the increases aren't enough to cover their lower yields and higher production costs.

Yet the high Easter demand for chocolate carries a potential treat for

big confectionery companies. Major global makers in Europe and the United States have more than passed on the rise in cocoa prices to consumers. Net profit margins at The Hershey Company increased to 16.7% in 2023 from 15.8% in 2022. Mondelez International, which owns the Toblerone and Cadbury brands, reported a jump to 13.8% in 2023 from 8.6% the year before.

"It is likely consumers will see a price spike on chocolate candy this Easter," Wells Fargo said in a report this month.

Mondelez said it raised chocolate prices up to 15% last year and would consider additional price hikes to help meet 2024 revenue growth forecasts. "Pricing is clearly a key component of this plan," Chief Financial Officer Luca Zaramella said in January. "Its contribution will be a little bit less than we have seen in 2023, but it is higher than an average year."

Hershey's also raised prices on its products last year and has not ruled out making further increases. "Given where cocoa prices are, we will be using every tool in our toolbox, including pricing, as a way to manage the business," Hershey Chairman, President and CEO Michele Buck said during a conference call with investors last month.

Consumer groups are keeping track. In the United Kingdom, British consumer research and services company Which? found that chocolate Easter eggs and bunnies from popular brands like Lindt and Toblerone cost about 50% more this year. It said some candy eggs were smaller, too.

Cocoa is traded on a regulated, global market. Farmers sell to local dealers or processing plants, who then sell cocoa products to global chocolate companies. Prices are set up to a year in advance. Many farmers blame climate change for their poor crops. Cacao trees only grow close to the equator and are especially sensitive to changes in weather.

"The harmattan was severe at the time the pods were supposed to develop," Fiifi Bofo, a spokesperson at the Ghana Cocoa Board, said, referring to the cool trade winds that carry enough dust to block out the sunlight needed for the trees to flower and produce beans.

Months of rain also are being blamed for black pod disease, a fungal infection that thrives in cooler, wet and cloudy weather, and causes pods to rot and harden.

"While we have a good price today, that's not it. The cacao hasn't even pro-

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**Outside**

Mostly sunny and cool, showers tonight

Today	Saturday	Sunday
High 61	High 65	High 56
Low 48	Low 40	Low 46

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## Domestic battery charges

(Continued from Page 1)

wife in July 2020. According to a probable cause affidavit, the two argued over Saffore using his wife's phone to watch pornography and a physical altercation ensued.

Saffore's wife later requested to retract her statement that he threw an ashtray at her and pushed her into a chair. However, there was enough evidence to press charges in the case.

"This appears to be a toxic relationship between him and his wife," said Judge Kenton Kiracofe. "The parties are free to engage in whatever, if they're content with the fighting then that's up to them. Clearly, these two want to be in a relationship with each other, no matter how difficult. Just today, I watched the wife try to talk

to Mr. Saffore while he was in court. There are a number of violations that have been dismissed. They're going to do what they want to do."

Saffore has repeatedly violated his no-contact order with his wife via video calls and during hearings since he was arrested in the case.

"She said she was not actually injured by him, she would admit that she was lying," Andrews said. "She would say that she does not believe he is a threat to her or her children. I understand the court's position is maybe she takes (domestic violence) classes, however, that being said — he will potentially be in DOC."

Kiracofe stated he didn't know if there was a point in utilizing the resources under the circumstances.

Saffore is facing a probation revocation in a case in Allen County. In October 2022, Saffore was convicted of unlawful possession of a firearm, a Level 4 felony. Two years of a three-year sentence were suspended. Because of the conviction for intimidation, Saffore could go back to prison.

"I do appreciate the resolution that has come," Saffore said during the hearing. "I have intentions to put forth effort to rectify what has happened between me and my wife in this matter."

Saffore is scheduled for a probation revocation hearing at 9:30 a.m. on April 11 in the Allen County Superior Court.

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## Biden OKs \$60M in aid

(Continued from Page 1)

National Transportation Safety Board officials boarded the ship, the Dali, to recover information from its electronics and paperwork and to interview the captain and crew members. Investigators shared a preliminary timeline of events before the crash, which federal and state officials have said appeared to be an accident.

"The best minds in the world are coming together to collect the information that we need to move forward with speed and safety in our response to this collapse," Moore said Thursday.

Of the 21 crew members on the ship, 20 are from India, Randhir Jaiswal, the nation's foreign ministry spokesperson, told reporters. One was slightly injured and needed stitches, but "all are in good shape and good health," Jaiswal said.

The victims, who were part of a construction crew fixing potholes on the bridge, were from Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, Butler said. At least eight people initially went into the water when the ship struck the bridge column, and two of them were rescued Tuesday, officials said.

The crash caused the bridge to break and fall into the water within seconds. Authorities had just enough time to stop vehicle traffic, but didn't get a chance to alert the construction crew.

During the Baltimore Orioles' opening day game Thursday, Sgt. Paul Pastorek, Cpl. Jeremy Herbert and Officer Garry Kirts of the Maryland Transportation Authority were honored for their actions in halting bridge traffic and preventing further loss of life.

The three said in a statement that

they were "proud to carry out our duties as officers of this state to save the lives that we could."

The Dali, which is managed by Synergy Marine Group, was headed from Baltimore to Sri Lanka. It is owned by Grace Ocean Private Ltd. and was chartered by Danish shipping giant Maersk.

Synergy extended sympathies to the victims' families in a statement early Thursday.

"We deeply regret this incident and the problems it has caused for the people of Baltimore and the region's economy that relies on this vitally important port," Synergy said, noting that it would continue to cooperate with investigators.

Scott Cowan, president of the International Longshoremen's Association Local 333, said the union is scrambling to help its roughly 2,400 members whose jobs are at risk of drying up until shipping can resume in the Port of Baltimore.

"If there's no ships, there's no work," he said. "We're doing everything we can."

The huge vessel, nearly as long as the Eiffel Tower is tall, was carrying nearly 4,700 shipping containers, 56 of them with hazardous materials inside. Thirteen of those were destroyed, officials said. However, industrial hygienists who evaluated the contents identified them as perfumes and soaps, according to the Key Bridge Joint Information Center.

"There was no immediate threat to the environment," the center said. About 21 gallons of oil from a bow thruster on the ship is believed to have caused a sheen in the waterway, Coast

Guard Rear Adm. Shannon Gilreath said Thursday.

Booms were placed to prevent any spreading, and state environmental officials were sampling the water.

At the moment there are also cargo containers hanging dangerously off the side of the ship, Gilreath said, adding, "We're trying to keep our first responders ... as safe as possible."

Divers sent to work beneath the bridge debris and container ship will encounter challenging conditions, including limited visibility and moving currents, according to officials and expert observers.

"Debris can be dangerous, especially when you can't see what's right in front of you," said Donald Gibbons, an instructor with the Eastern Atlantic States Carpenters Technical Centers.

The sudden loss of a highway that carries 30,000 vehicles a day and the port disruption will affect not only thousands of dockworkers and commuters but also U.S. consumers, who are likely to feel the impact of shipping delays.

The governors of New Jersey and New Jersey offered to take on cargo shipments that have been disrupted, to try to minimize supply chain problems.

Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, who met Thursday with supply chain officials, has said the Biden administration was focused on reopening the port and rebuilding the bridge, but he did not put a timeline on those efforts.

From 1960 to 2015, there were 35 major bridge collapses worldwide due to ship or barge collisions, according to the World Association for Waterborne Transport Infrastructure.

## Bittersweet Easter

(Continued from Page 1)

duced any (fruit)," Eloi Gnakomene, a cacao farmer in Ivory Coast, said last month. "People say that we've had a bit, but those living over that way, they've had nothing."

Opanin Kofi Tutu, a cacao farmer in the eastern Ghana town of Suhum, said the shortfall in production coupled with higher fertilizer costs are making it difficult to survive. "The exchange rate to the dollar is killing us," he said.

Chocolate isn't even one of the traditions Tutu associates with Easter. "I am looking forward to my wife's kotomir and plantain, not chocolates," he said, referring to a local sauce prepared with cocoyam leaves.

To help increase production, authorities are promoting education on farming

methods that might mitigate the effects of climate change, such as the use of irrigation systems. The president of Ghana also has promised to step in to help farmers get a better deal.

"With the current trend of the world cocoa price, cocoa farmers can be sure that I will do right by them in the next cocoa season," President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo said last month.

The National Retail Federation, an American trade association, expects spending this Easter to remain high by historical standards despite rising candy prices. Its latest survey showed that consumers were expected to spend \$3.1 billion on chocolate eggs and bunnies and other sweets this Easter, down from \$3.3 billion a

year ago.

In Switzerland, home to the world's biggest consumers of chocolate per capita, domestic consumption melted slightly last year, falling by 1% to 10.9kg per person, according to industry association Chocosuisse. It linked the dip to the rise in retail chocolate prices.

The nation's signature chocolate maker, Lindt & Sprüngli, reported increased profitability, with margins rising to 15.6% from 15% a year earlier.

"Lindt & Sprüngli Group's business model once again proved to be very successful in the financial year 2023," it said in a statement this month, noting that prices increases accounted for most of the growth.

Yet some smaller businesses that sell chocolate are

finding it hard to keep up with the spike in cocoa prices while their sales decline.

Sandrine Chocolates, a shop in London that sells handmade Belgian chocolates, is struggling to survive after decades in business. The owner, Niaz Mardan, said the U.K.'s cost-of-living crisis and weak economy leave people worrying more about food than luxury chocolate, especially when cheaper alternatives were available at big grocery stores.

She has let go of her two employees and relies on sales at Easter and Christmas to stay afloat. "Many, many times, I thought to close the shop, but because I love the shop, I don't want to close it," Mardan, 57, said. "But there is no profit at all."

## Weather

Friday, March 29, 2024

(24-hour observations at 10:17 p.m. Thursday)  
**High:** 53; **Low:** 27; **Precipitation:** Trace of rain  
**Wabash River Level** (at the Main Street bridge): 1.67 feet at 8:45 p.m. Thursday

## Wells County forecast

**Today:** Mostly sunny, with a high near 61. Light and variable wind becoming west 5 to 10 mph in the afternoon.

**Tonight:** A chance of showers, then showers and possibly a thunderstorm after 2 a.m. Low around 48. Northeast wind 5 to 10 mph becoming southeast after midnight. Chance of precipitation is 80%. New rainfall amounts between a quarter and half of an inch possible.

**Saturday:** Showers and thunderstorms before 11 a.m., then a chance of showers. High near 65. Southwest wind 15 to 20 mph, with gusts as high as 30 mph. Chance of precipitation is 80%. New precipitation amounts between a tenth and quarter of an inch, except higher amounts possible in thunderstorms.

**Saturday Night:** A 30% chance of showers, mainly after 2 a.m. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 40. Northwest wind around 10 mph.

**Sunday:** A chance of showers, with thunderstorms also possible after 5 p.m. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 56. Chance of precipitation is 50%.

**Sunday Night:** A chance of showers and thunderstorms, then showers and possibly a thunderstorm after 8 p.m. Low around 46. Chance of precipitation is 90%.

**Monday:** Showers and possibly a thunderstorm. High near 59. Chance of precipitation is 90%.

**Monday Night:** Showers and possibly a thunderstorm. Low around 46. Chance of precipitation is 80%.

**Tuesday:** Showers likely and possibly a thunderstorm before 8 a.m., then a chance of showers and thunderstorms after 8 a.m. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 59. Chance of precipitation is 60%.

**Tuesday Night:** A 30% chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 34.

**Wednesday:** A 30% chance of showers. Partly sunny, with a high near 45. Breezy.

## Biden administration restores threatened species protections

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — The Biden administration on Thursday restored rules to protect imperiled species and shield their habitat from destruction after the measures were rolled back under former President Donald Trump.

Among the changes, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will reinstate a decades-old regulation that mandates blanket protections for animals and plants newly classified as threatened. That means officials won't have to craft specific plans to shield each individual species while protections are pending, as has been done recently with North American wolverines in the Rocky Mountains, alligator snapping turtles in the Southeast and spotted owls in California.

The restoration of more protective regulations rankled Republicans who said the Endangered Species Act was being wielded too broadly and to the detriment of economic growth. Meanwhile, wildlife advocates were only partially satisfied, saying some potentially harmful changes under Trump were untouched.

The blanket protections rule had been dropped in 2019 as part of a suite of changes to the application of the species law under Trump that were encouraged by industry. Those changes came as extinctions accelerate globally due to habitat loss and other pressures.

Another rule issued Thursday clarifies that officials must decide if species merit threatened or endangered designations regardless of the potential economic costs of bestowing protections. That's already government practice, but the 2019 Trump rules caused confusion because they removed an explicit directive to ignore economic impacts, said Fish and Wildlife Service Deputy Assistant Director Gina Shultz.

The rules from the wildlife service and National Marine Fisheries Service also make it easier to designate areas as critical for a species' survival, even if it is no longer found in those locations.

That could benefit imperiled fish and freshwater mussels in the Southeast, where the aquatic animals in many cases are absent from portions of their historical range, officials have said.

Fish and Wildlife Service Director Martha Williams said in a statement that the rule changes underscored the agency's commitment to using the best available science to halt population declines as "climate change, degraded and fragmented habitat, invasive species, and wildlife disease" threaten many species.

## Statehouse repairs include cleaning the dome

By NIKI KELLY, Indiana Capital Chronicle

Workers this week assembled a massive crane outside the Statehouse for a \$12.5 million project that includes cleaning the copper dome.

When laying flat, the crane was 400 feet long and will help erect scaffolding on the mammoth building.

The crane will be lifting scaffolding components that will be built around the dome and all the way up to the lantern/cupola. The crane will be removed once all scaffolding has been installed. It is anticipated that the scaffolding will be in place for at least a year, the Department of Administration said.

According to a State Budget Committee agenda, the project is the fourth phase of work on the Statehouse exterior. The first three phases addressed the four sides of building, including removing all deteriorated sections of the façade and stairways, rebuilding all damaged stairways, rehabbing the doors and entryways, cleaning and repairing the limestone façade, replacing joint seals, and installing water infiltration barriers under the staircases on each side. The collective cost of those phases was \$10.8 million.

The last phase will focus on the roofline and will include gutter repair, chimney masonry work, rotunda masonry work and cleaning, window replacement/repair, limited patching and repair of the roof where needed and, finally, cleaning of the copper dome.

According to a 1964 Indianapolis Star article, the two-tiered dome stretches 243 feet above the ground. The smaller one, 15 feet in diameter, sits on top of the large copper dome that is 73 feet in diameter.

At one point, the state applied gold leaf to the dome. "An increase in the cost of gold leaf eventually forced officials to settle for a copper dome but the memory of a gold leaf lingered on," the article said. "Governors and citizens who demanded a cleaner and more attractive Statehouse continually talked about gilding the dome to add color to the soiled stone building."

That's because pigeons loved the building. At one point efforts to kill the pigeons left the dome punctured with buckshot. "Unightly" tar patches covered the holes.

State officials in 1964 decided to sandblast the dome and try again with the gold but the leafing was too expensive, at \$17,000. And it would last only five years, the Indianapolis Star reported. Instead, officials used gold enamel paint costing \$25 per gallon, and 20 gallons of it covered both tiers of the dome and the flagpole.

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OBITUARIES

Wanda Mae Steffen, 96

Wanda Mae (Kiefer) Steffen of Bluffton, passed away on Wednesday morning, March 27, 2024. A long-time resident of Christian Care Retirement Community, she died peacefully at age of 96.



The youngest daughter of Artie and Faye (Faus) Kiefer, Wanda lived most of her life in Bluffton. She married George Roy Steffen of Bluffton, on June 1, 1946; he owned and operated Bluffton Heating and Plumbing for many years with his brothers. For 20 years, Wanda worked as bookkeeper and office manager for "the Shop" until her retirement in 1990. Wanda's beloved husband, George, to whom she was married for 65 years, died in 2011.

As a member of Epworth United Methodist Church, Wanda served as Sunday School teacher, Vacation Bible School director, choir member, youth counselor and an officer of United Methodist Women. As a long-time volunteer, Wanda worked at Caylor-Nickel Clinic, Wells County Food Bank and the Bluffton Harrison Elementary Buddy Programs.

Wanda is survived by her two sons, Richard (Marla) of Redlands, California, and Tom (Julie) of Sequim, Washington; her two grandchildren, Aaron (Maritess) Steffen of Seattle, and Anna (Bryan) Tapia of Redlands; and her four great-grandchildren; Noah and Jonah Steffen of Seattle, and Noelle and Nora Tapia of Redlands.

Funeral Services will be held at 2 p.m. on Monday, April 1, 2024 at the Thoma/Rich Funeral Home in Bluffton. Wanda's sons, Richard and Tom will officiate. Visitation will take place from 1 p.m. until the time of service.

Burial will follow at Elm Grove Cemetery in Bluffton. In lieu of flowers, the family prefers that you consider memorial donations to Christian Care Retirement Community.

Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to the care of the Lemler family of Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home in Bluffton. Friends can send online condolences to the Steffen family at [www.thomarich.com](http://www.thomarich.com).

James A. Myers, 71

James A. Myers, 71, of Monroe, passed away Thursday morning, March 28, 2024, at Lutheran Hospital in Fort Wayne.

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

Holcomb signs eclipse emergency response order

By LESLIE BONILLA MUÑIZ  
Indiana Capital Chronicle

Gov. Eric Holcomb on Wednesday signed a disaster order letting Indiana call on a nationwide aid compact should the upcoming eclipse stress the state's emergency response systems.

Indiana expects hundreds of thousands of visitors for the April 8 event, plus plenty of in-state travel.

Officials anticipate "widespread and significant impact" on Indiana's "critical infrastructure systems," including for communication, emergency response and transportation, according to the order.

Holcomb said that could cause a "technological or other emergency." His disaster emergency order lets the Indiana Department of Homeland Security "enlist the support" of members of the nationwide Emergency Management Assistance Compact to "ensure statewide preparedness."

The EMAC, dubbed the "nation's all-hazards mutual aid system," has been ratified by all 50 states, the District of Columbia and a variety of American territories, according to its website.

The order also authorizes DHS' leader to coordinate any needed assistance with other local, state and federal agencies.

The order is immediately effective and ends April 9.

Holcomb and state lawmakers have previously clashed over such orders. He repeatedly renewed a statewide disaster declaration during the pandemic with little pushback from lawmakers, who convened multiple times during the statewide emergency. But they've held a grudge, approving new restrictions four years after the fact this session.

A total solar eclipse occurs when the moon passes between the sun and Earth, and completely blocks the face of the much larger sun. Hoosiers won't be in another total solar eclipse's path of totality until 2099.

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.

Police Notebook

INCIDENTS

**City:**  
Wednesday, 2:49 p.m., Walmart. Driver hit a pole. Vehicle towed.

Wednesday, 3 p.m., Main and Ohio streets. Citation issued for expired plates.

Thursday, 9:41 p.m., Main and Market streets. Citation issued for driving with a suspended license.

Thursday, 10:44 p.m., Walmart. Report of juvenile following another around the store.

Wednesday, 8:04 a.m., Airplane Express. Citation issued for 58 in a 40 mph zone.

Wednesday, 11:46 p.m., 2000 block of North Main Street, Bluffton. Welfare check request on caller's mother when the phone line went dead in the middle of a call. Woman found fine, her phone had died and she didn't have a charger.

Wednesday, 12:54 p.m., 1300 block of West South Street. Report of an aggressive black dog.

Thursday, 1:15 a.m., 700 block of West Horton Street, Bluffton. Caller reported a suspicious individual in their backyard. Bluffton police

stopped a vehicle leaving the area and the driver appeared to be under the influence of alcohol. Deputy loaned Standardized Field Sobriety Test cards and deployed K9 for a free air sniff. No alerts.

**County:**  
Wednesday, 1:50 p.m., 500 block of Beth Avenue, Bluffton. Warrant service on Brandy Singleton.

Wednesday, 9:54 p.m., 1463 W 1100 N, Markle. Personal injury accident.

Wednesday, 11:35 p.m., 500 block of Countryside Drive, Bluffton. Warrant service on Jordan Mangas.

Thursday, 5:55 a.m., S.R. 1 and County Road 1200 South, Montpelier. Warrant service.

Thursday, 6:26 a.m., Wells County Jail. A Li turned himself in on warrant.

Thursday, 7:11 a.m., 5133N 300 W, Uniondale. Vehicle rollover. All vehicles outside of the vehicle and uninjured.

Thursday, 10:32 a.m., 10415 N 300 W, Markle. Report of injured deer. Requested tag.

**Ossian:**  
Thursday, 9:29 a.m., S.R. 1, Ossian. Report of four

loose pigs on the west side of the road. Owner contacted, and said she would corral the insu-boardinate animals.

**ACCIDENTS**  
**County:**  
Wednesday, 9:55 p.m., 1463 W 1100N, rural Markle. From vehicle tracks, it appeared Gary T. Tidwell, 58, Ossian, was driving a 2005 Saturn SUV west-bound on County Road 1100 North in rural Markle and left the roadway on the southside, straddling the shoulder until striking the concrete barrier head of the bridge. The vehicle was destroyed and Tidwell was partially pinned inside. He was found incapacitated and with multiple injuries, and was transported by EMS from the scene. Damages did not exceed \$10,000.

**FIRES**  
**City:**  
Wednesday, 1:45 a.m., 215 E Horton St., Bluffton. Structure fire. Liberty Township, Ossian and Bluffton fire departments responded. Incident terminated at 2:52 a.m.

**Ossian:**  
Wednesday, 12:48 p.m., Norwell High School. Fire

alarm.

**ARRESTS**  
Elvis Aaron Larkey, 43, Ossian; public administration — escape, a Level 6 felony. Bond set at \$5,000.

Jordan Olin Charles Mangas, 20, Markle; minor in possession of an alcoholic beverage, a Class C misdemeanor. Bond set at \$500.

Artemio R. Gomez, 30, Bluffton; operating a vehicle while intoxicated and operating a vehicle while intoxicated — endangerment, both Class A misdemeanors, and operating a vehicle without ever receiving a license, a Class C misdemeanor. Bond set at \$2,000.

A Li, 47, Fort Wayne; two counts of operating a vehicle while intoxicated, both Class C misdemeanors. Bond set at \$500.

Hali Noel Heath, 31, Ossian; possession of a legend drug or precursor, a Level 5 felony, possession of a controlled substance, a Class A misdemeanor, possession of a marijuana, a Class B misdemeanor, and possession of controlled substance paraphernalia, a Class C misdemeanor. Bond set at \$13,000.

Indiana National Guard to depart for border

By LESLIE BONILLA MUÑIZ  
Indiana Capital Chronicle

Green-garbed Indiana National Guard soldiers milled around a big beige room Thursday morning, chatting among themselves, speaking with spouses and parents, and pushing their children in strollers. They gathered on a hulking set of blue bleachers in five neat rows of 10 each, then snapped to attention for the national anthem.

The 50 men and women selected from more than 300 volunteers depart Indiana for the Texas border town of El Paso in early April. The company is set for a 10-month deployment meant to reinforce Texas Gov. Greg Abbott's efforts to close off his state's share of the U.S.-Mexico border.

Abbott and a growing number of Republican governors say President Joe Biden's administration isn't doing enough to stem the flow of unauthorized migrants. Holcomb announced the deployment in February, after visiting the border and following a "direct request" from Abbott.

"Hoosiers are proving once again: if the federal government at large can't get their act together on the border, we will," Holcomb said at a Thursday departure ceremony at Indiana's Camp Atterbury.

Adj. Gen. Dale Lyles, who leads the Hoosier Guard, told soldiers they'd soon "embark upon a great crusade toward the cause of liberty."

"The current security environment threatens America's ideals now, more than (at) perhaps any other time in history," Lyles said. "Your mission goes well beyond standing watch along our border and our southern flank. You are deploying for the cause of protecting our freedom and our liberty. Never forget that."

The Hoosier company's mission to "observe and report" was "an agreement between Indiana and Texas," according to Master Sgt. Jeff Lowry, the guard's spokesman.

Holcomb and guard members alike cited illicit drugs entering Indiana as a primary motivator.

"So many people in (each) of our 92 counties are working hard day in and day out, to try to address addiction ... and we continue to see record amounts of illegal killer drugs flowing into our state and 49 others," Holcomb told reporters.

Indiana State Police seized 92 pounds of meth, 8 pounds of cocaine,



Gov. Eric Holcomb speaks at a departure ceremony on Thursday, March 28, 2024 for Indiana National Guard members on their way to Texas. (Photo by Leslie Bonilla Muñiz)

a pound of fentanyl and a half-pound of heroin in a single arrest Tuesday in Indianapolis, Holcomb announced. But it's not yet clear if the drugs entered the country through El Paso because the arrest was so recent, he said.

Most fentanyl is smuggled through legal points of entry, U.S. Customs and Border Protection Acting Commissioner Troy Miller told NPR last year. But most people convicted of bringing the drug across the border are U.S. citizens, according to the conservative-leaning Cato Institute.

Sgt. Daniel Cook, one of the 50 soldiers heading to El Paso, said the mission is to rein in unauthorized entry and to "curb the fentanyl epidemic."

"I was one of the first people to put my name on the list," the 24-year-old Cook told reporters. "... I see the problems that (fentanyl) can cause, the families that it's affected. And I just want to help allow Hoosiers to live long, peaceful, meaningful lives."

Soldiers also cited other reasons for volunteering. Christopher Estrada, a 26-year-old studying flight at Utah Valley University, said the state had offered "very good benefits." He hoped to pay off debt.

Estrada said he typically doesn't net money off his service — the monthly flights from Utah to Indiana for drills eat up his pay — but he thought the mission to Texas would be "good for the family in the long run." He leaves a wife and daughter at home.

Soldiers are being called up under State Active Duty, meaning the state of Indiana pays their salaries.

The deployment is expected to

cost the state of Indiana about \$7 million, including pay and allowances, hotel accommodations, transportation, supplies and maintenance. An earlier statement from the guard said it had sufficient funds to cover the costs.

Deployment details

Holcomb has previously deployed a collective 300 soldiers to Texas for a variety of federal missions, according to a February news release.

Indiana's soldiers have been mobilizing since then. They completed two weeks of training at Camp Atterbury on the "operations of the mission," Lowry said Thursday. That included courses on the Spanish language and more.

Soldiers won't have arrest powers.

"Our role is to assist, not to arrest or apprehend," Holcomb said. "We are there as a complement — reporting, watching — to our Texan counterparts."

"We will fall in on what's already established and we will assist the Texas military department with observing and controlling things that may come across the border," Lyles added. "We'll report them and then they will take appropriate action for apprehension. Non-standard missions are a part of what we do. We're well-trained, well-resourced, and we're ready to execute the mission."

Soldiers have internal Hoosier leadership but will "take direction" from the Texas National Guard and Texas Department of Public Safety, according to Lowry.

They're expected to return before Christmas, he said.

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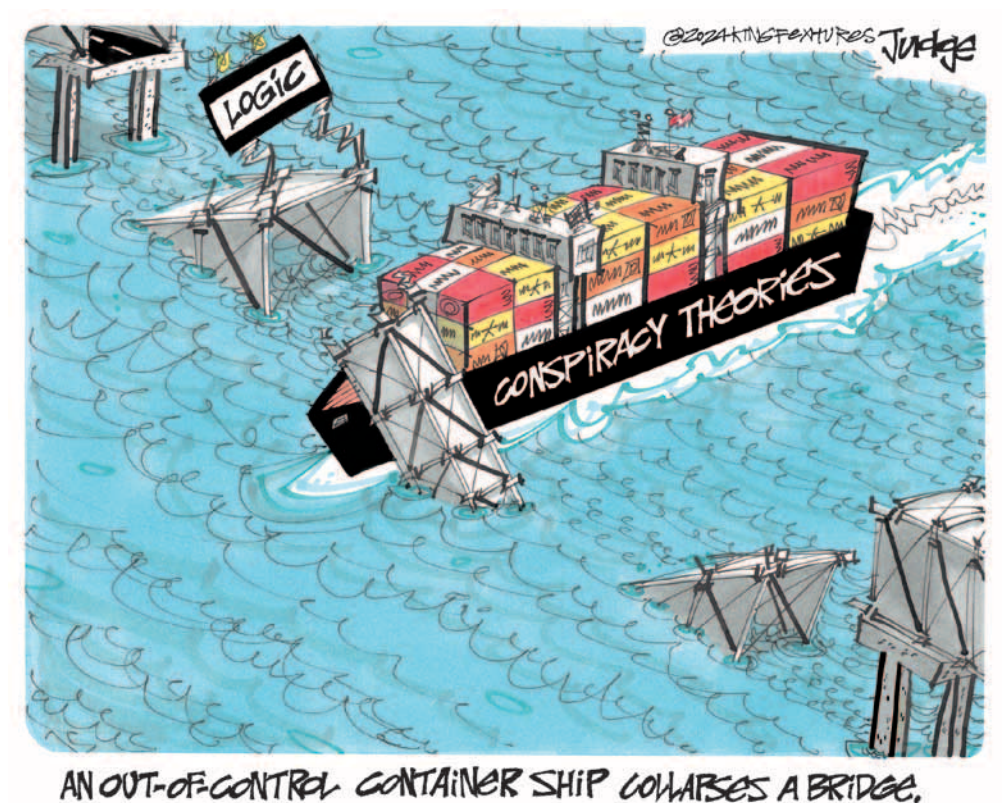
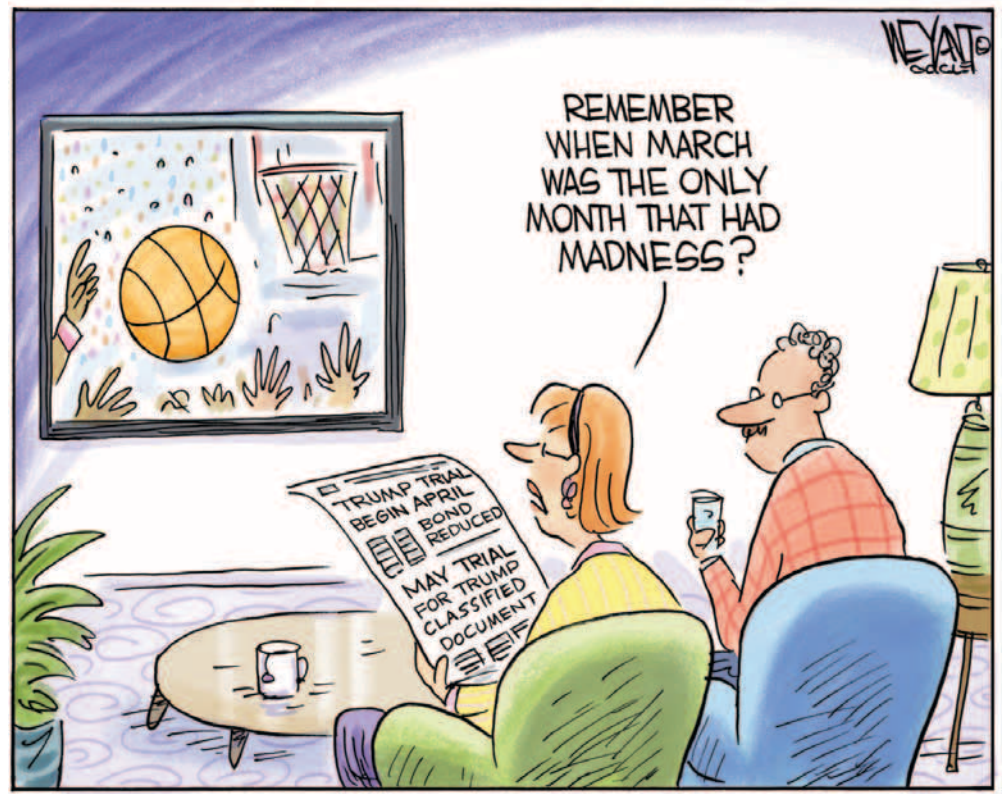
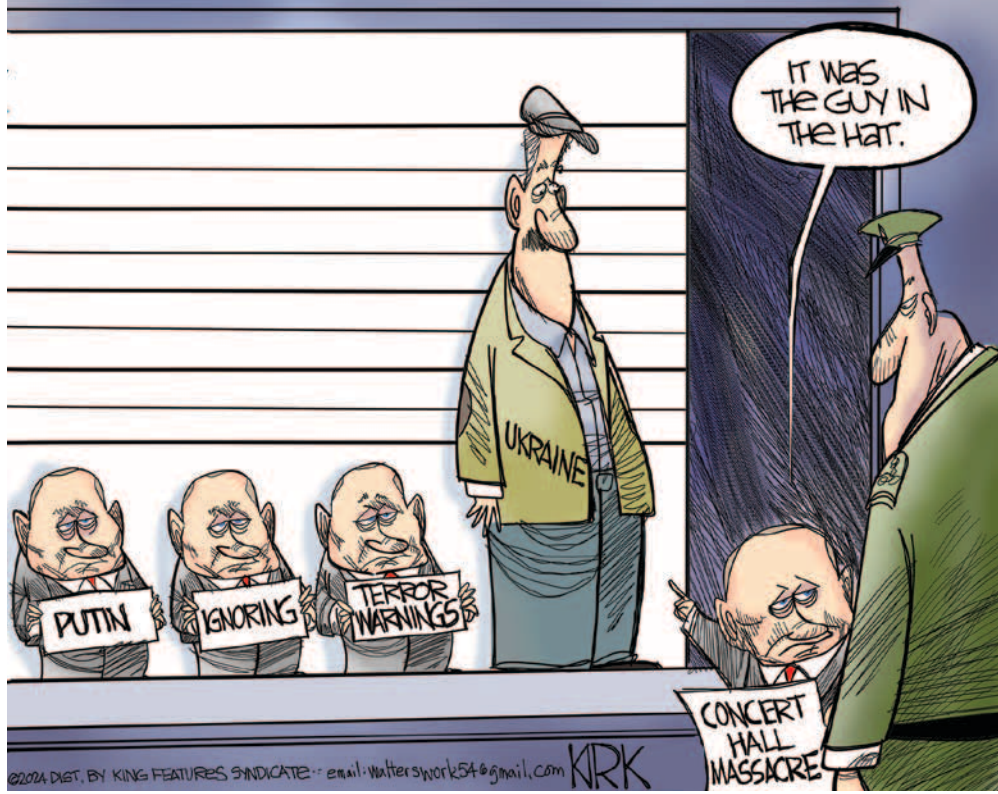
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The Week That Was - a look back through cartoonists' eyes...



AN OUT-OF-CONTROL CONTAINER SHIP COLLAPSES A BRIDGE.

Other Opinions

The House GOP majority that keeps shrinking

Democrats are lapping Republicans in this year's election fund-raising, and could that be because GOP donors are wondering what they get for their money? Donors, both small-dollar and large, helped Republicans retake the House in 2022, and all they've received in return is a majority that revels in operating like a functional minority.

Soon it may not even be a majority at all. Wisconsin Rep. Mike Gallagher, one of the GOP's best Members, has announced that he's resigning from the House on April 19. Colorado Rep. Ken

Buck's last day was March 22. You can criticize both for leaving early, but who can blame anyone sane for wanting to do something more useful with his life than serving in this House of horrors?

Their departures take the GOP majority down to 217-213, which means the party is a heart attack and absences or flipped votes away from putting Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries in charge. In some sense Mr. Jeffries already is in charge. Speaker Mike Johnson can't pass legislation the usual way through the Rules Committee and then onto the floor with a simple majority. Every sensible majority that wants to govern packs the Rules Committee with Speaker loyalists. Not this crowd.

The anti-governing wing of the House GOP insisted on three of their own for Rules as one price of voting for Kevin McCarthy as Speaker in January 2023. They refuse to vote for Mr. Johnson's inevitable compromises with Senate Democrats, so Mr. Johnson has to move legislation via the suspension calendar, which requires a two-thirds vote to pass anything. This means he needs Democratic votes, and a lot of them, because Republicans prefer to make futile gestures of opposition rather than vote to fund the government.

The practical effect is to reduce Republican leverage in a divided government and make it harder to achieve conservative policy victories. But then the same Members who undercut the majority boast on the House floor and social media that they are the only honest conservatives in Washington. They're posers masquerading as principled, and they're treating the voters at home like rubes.

Georgia Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene's motion Friday to oust Mr. Johnson as Speaker exposes the deception behind the coup against Mr. McCarthy. After we criticized that October coup as destructive and self-serving, Florida Rep. Matt Gaetz wrote us a letter saying that in electing Mr. Johnson the GOP now had a real conservative as leader.

So what's wrong with Mr. Johnson now? Apparently because he's not willing to indulge kamikaze acts like shutting down the government, Mr. Johnson is a sellout too.

Conservatives have long had a strong anti-Washington impulse, which is useful given the federal government's relentless drive to expand its own power. But breaking that drive, and rolling back that power, requires calculation and often incremental gains. All the more so in a divided government.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL  
Distributed by The Associated Press



Trump lawfare: The next stage begins

Donald Trump was first indicted nearly a year ago, on April 4, 2023, when Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg announced charges against the former president over a nondisclosure agreement Trump used to buy the silence of porn actress Stormy Daniels, with whom he had apparently had a brief sexual encounter. Bragg, an elected Democrat, won office by promising to go after Trump, and go after Trump he did.

Resurrecting an allegation that more responsible law enforcement agencies had declined to prosecute, Bragg came up with 34 felony counts against Trump, each of which carried a maximum sentence of four years in prison, which theoretically would result in 134 years behind bars for the former president. On Monday, Judge Juan Merchan announced that the trial will begin April 15.

The indictment was weak in a variety of ways. First, the main charge, that Trump falsified business records in 2016, was a misdemeanor with a two-year statute of limitations. Even if Bragg could somehow jack the charges into a felony, which carries a five-year statute of limitations, the time in which Trump could be charged had passed.

But wait — during the pandemic, when courts virtually shut down, New York, in a one-time-only move, extended its statute of limitations to six years, which allowed Bragg to get the Trump charges in right under the wire.

But only if he could charge Trump with a felony. So Bragg contended that Trump committed the misdemeanor of falsifying records in the act of committing another crime, which elevated the falsification charge to a felony. The problem was, Bragg has never clearly said what the other crime was. He appears to be relying on a dubious theory that Trump violated federal election law — a theory that didn't work when the feds used it against John Edwards — which Bragg, as a local prosecutor, does not have the authority to enforce.

Those are the legal defects of the case. Then there is its political import, which is heading into a new phase.

Before April 4, 2023, nobody knew how being indicted might affect Trump's candidacy for the Republican presidential nomination. Back then, Trump led GOP challenger Ron DeSantis by around 15 points. After Bragg's indictment, Trump's support shot up and DeSantis' support trended downward. A 15-point lead became a 30-point lead.

Subsequent indictments have either further increased Trump's support among Republican primary voters or had no effect at all. Those voters have processed the whole indictment issue, and many have

come to the conclusion that the charges are politically motivated attacks by elected Democrats, like Bragg or Fulton County, Georgia, District Attorney Fani Willis, or by the special counsel chosen by the Biden administration, Jack Smith.

In all, Trump, now the presumptive Republican nominee, is in a stronger place politically than he was before he was first indicted. As he said in an interview recently, "Who would have thought that?"

Now the indictments, or at least one indictment, will turn into a trial. A deep-blue Manhattan jury is likely to convict Trump on at least some of the charges. What might happen then?

That is the prospect that raises Democratic hopes, at least for now. They have seen a number of polls that show some portion of voters who are now open to voting for Trump say that they would not vote for him if he were a convicted felon.

From a campaign standpoint, that is the great promise of the Bragg indictment. It can turn Trump into a convicted felon before the election, even as the other criminal cases against Trump sputter with delay after delay. Bragg, some Democrats believe, could have the power to turn voters in Biden's direction.

Or perhaps not. There is another Trump conviction political scenario. Back when Bragg indicted the former president, some Democrats were uncomfortable with the fact that the first of several anticipated indictments against Trump was also the weakest case. Democrats know as well as anyone else that Bragg's case is a bad one, and some worried that by going first, the weakest case would cause some voters to dismiss all the Trump prosecutions as weak and politically motivated.

Now, what if the effect of a conviction in the Bragg case is to diminish the prosecution, and not the defendant? And then, by extension, to diminish all of the prosecutions against Trump? Not in the eyes of the Democratic base or many in the media, of course — nothing would diminish their opposition to Trump — but in the eyes of voters who might seriously be considering voting for Trump as the better of the binary choice with Biden.

I am not saying that will happen. But I am saying that so far, the Democratic lawfare campaign against Trump has had some unintended consequences, and there is no reason to believe that, once a trial begins, everything will finally start going according to the Democratic plan. There could be more surprises to come.



Byron York

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Today in History

**By The Associated Press**  
Today is Friday, March 29, the 89th day of 2024. There are 277 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On March 29, 1973, the last United States combat troops left South Vietnam, ending America's direct military involvement in the Vietnam War.

On this date: In 1861, President Abraham Lincoln ordered plans for a relief expedition to sail to South Carolina's Fort

Sumter, which was still in the hands of Union forces despite repeated demands by the Confederacy that it be turned over.

In 1867, Britain's Parliament passed, and Queen Victoria signed, the British North America Act creating the Dominion of Canada, which came into being the following July.

In 1943, World War II rationing of meat, fats and cheese began, limiting consumers to store purchases of an average of about two pounds a week

for beef, pork, lamb and mutton using a coupon system.

In 1951, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were convicted in New York of conspiracy to commit espionage for the Soviet Union. (They were executed in June 1953.)

In 1974, eight Ohio National Guardsmen were indicted on federal charges stemming from the shooting deaths of four students at Kent State University. (The charges were later dismissed.)

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# Mismatched marriage mindsets

Dear Annie: I'm having an issue with my partner of six years, "Alex." I love him deeply, and he's a truly amazing guy. But we have different views on marriage.

I've always dreamed of having a traditional wedding and starting a family. I think weddings are a beautiful way to show your commitment to each other. Alex, on the other hand, is hesitant about marriage due to his parents' messy divorce.

How do I navigate this situation without sacrificing my own desires or pressuring Alex into something he's not ready for? I want to respect his feelings while still honoring my own values. Any advice on finding common ground would be appreciated. — Torn Between Traditions

Dear Torn: Navigating differing views on marriage can be tricky, but communication is key. Sit down with Alex and have an open, honest conversation about your desires and your concerns. Listen to his perspective, too; what are his fears, exactly? Is there a way for him to overcome them?

Understanding where he's coming from might help you both find common ground. Maybe there's a compromise where you can honor your desire for commitment without the pressure of a traditional wedding. A couples counselor can help you two find common ground and create a plan for the future.

Dear Annie: I believe a family member of mine may have an untreated personality disorder. She either loves or hates people, but that can flip in an instant. She is vindictive and punishes people for even a perceived slight. Her punishment can be extremely cruel and calculated. She often dreams up ways to emotionally devastate people. She constantly has conflict at work and has no friends, yet she is extremely needy to those she feels close to. She and her spouse are verbally abusive toward each other and talk terribly about each other behind the other's back.

It's emotionally exhausting to be around, but I grew up with her. She

was essentially abandoned by her parents and our extended family took her in. We are a very tight-knit immigrant family. She recently physically attacked me. It was the last straw. I ceased contact. However, she reached out to make amends and apologized, blaming her behavior on stress at work. Unfortunately, I was duped. She's up to her old tricks, and she can be just as nasty and hateful as ever.

We are both "expected," like a typical tight immigrant family, to attend events together frequently. What can I do to keep from falling into this old habit of getting sucked into her whirlwind? Do I need to cease contact from my entire family to get away from her? Many in our family don't like her, but it is an unwritten rule that you don't turn your back on family no matter how badly they behave. — Tired of the Whirlwind

Dear Tired: What a toxic whirlwind you're in, indeed. I'm sorry you're experiencing both emotional and now physical abuse from this woman, both of which are unacceptable. Cutting off all contact with your whole family seems both drastic and unnecessary; it's unfair to you to let go of the loving and supportive people in your life just to avoid one bad seed. Start by setting boundaries; it's OK to decline invites to functions where you know she and her spouse will be in attendance. When seeing them is unavoidable, keep your interactions with them very brief. This woman clearly has deep-seated issues, and you can't fix them for her. Instead, focus on protecting your inner peace and not getting wrapped up in her drama.

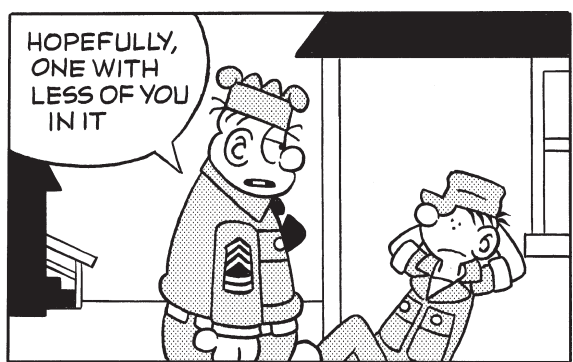
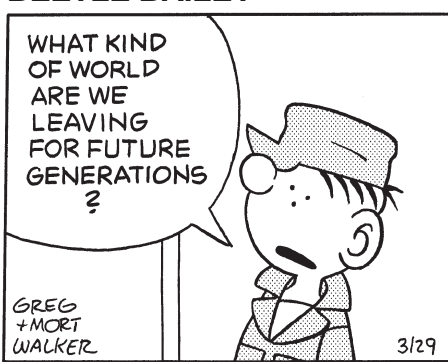
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## Dear Annie

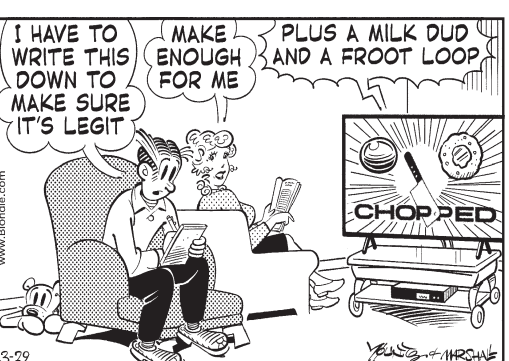
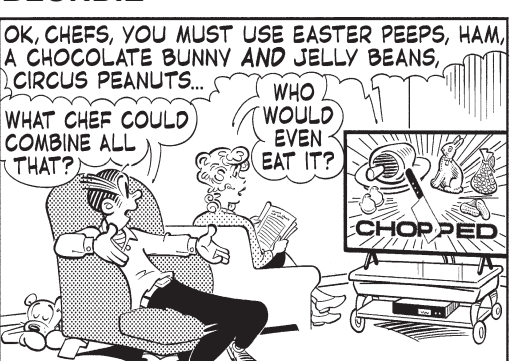
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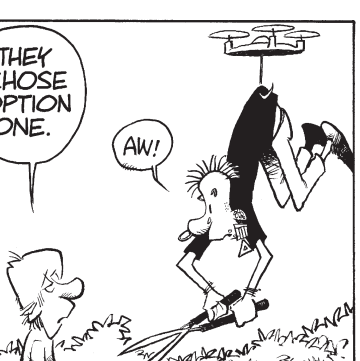
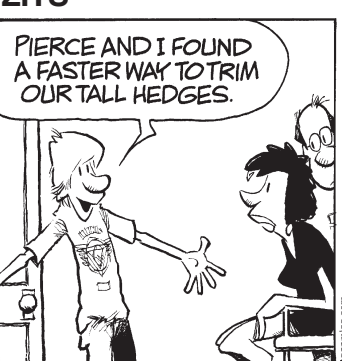
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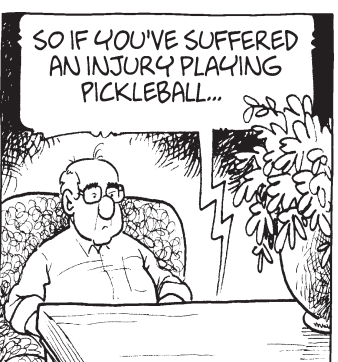
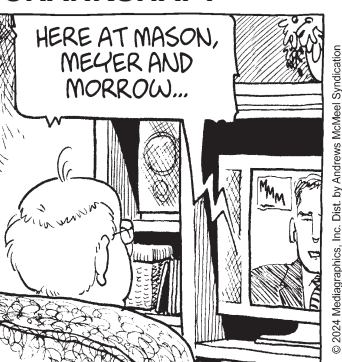
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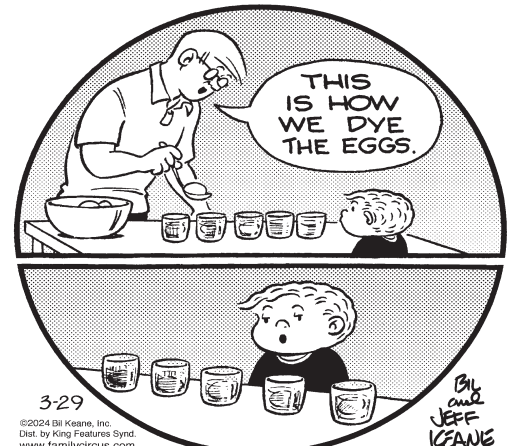


## CRANKSHAFT



## THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane



## The LOCKHORNS



## My Answer

By Dr. Billy Graham



# Hate knows no bounds. It is in motion at every level.

Question: Our society has become self-absorbed and filled with injustice. Hateful people are given enormous platforms by the media to spew their venom. Is this a sign of the times? — H.P.

Answer: Hate knows no bounds. It is in motion at every level. Looking out for number one has become the goal of many. To make good, they kick anyone who threatens their way of life, no matter how dark.

One of the reasons hatred abounds all over the world stems from jealousy. Satan's hatred of God was due to jealousy. At no time in history was hatred on display more than during the time of Jesus on Earth. Herod hated Him

because of fear that the baby Jesus would someday become King. Herod caused the slaughter of infant children in and around the village of Bethlehem so that the prophecy would not come to pass — that He came to seek and to save the lost.

We are living in a world that hates. We have even seen violence prompted by hatred within church buildings. Hatred is carried out against those who desire more than anything to preach the love of the Lord Jesus Christ and demonstrate compassion for those who suffer.

Hatred is a social cancer, which gnaws at the vitals of our people. It threatens the freedom of worshiping Jesus Christ as

witnessed on every continent. Hatred is rampant — a sign of the depravity of the human race. The Bible teaches hatred is sin.

The Bible also teaches that God is a God of love (see 1 John 4:8). Love is a basic part of God's nature. Whoever you are, whatever your circumstances — God loves you and He is waiting for you to come to Him in repentance of sin. Rejection of Christ is hatred of Him. Say an eternal yes to Christ and make Him the Lord of your life.

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

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TV schedule table with columns for time slots (5 PM to 12:30 AM) and rows for various channels (WJLA, WFLA, WTVT, etc.) listing programs like News, The Simpsons, and various reality shows.

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words. Includes a solution time of 25 mins and a grid of letters.

Table for 'Yesterday's answer 3-29' showing a grid of numbers and letters corresponding to the crossword puzzle.



## Norwell coach Eric Thornton named Bob King IBCA Coach of the Year award winner

Norwell girls' basketball coach Eric Thornton was awarded the District 1 Bob King Coach of the Year by the IBCA on Thursday.



Eric Thornton

2011-12 season.

Thornton recently led the Knights back to the state final for the first time

since 1977, compiling a 23-5 record and state runner-up in his 27th season.

This season, Thornton won the Northeast 8 Conference and racked up his 12th sectional championship trophy, his fourth regional and first semi-state crown.

The Coach of the Year award honors Bob King, who was the executive director for the IBCA for 10 years. He was inducted to the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame in 1986 after coaching Sacred Heart and Southridge, then serving the Purdue University athletic department. It has been awarded every year since 1972 for both the girls and boys.

Thornton will be recognized and receive a plaque for this achievement at the 2024 IBCA Clinic on April 25-26 at Mt. Vernon High School.

## Heim's 10th inning RBI walks off the Cubs on Opening Day

By STEPHEN HAWKINS

AP Baseball Writer

Jonah Heim hit a game-ending RBI single with two outs in the 10th inning as the World Series champion Texas Rangers opened the season with a 4-3 win over the Chicago Cubs on Thursday night.

Adolis García and Travis Jankowski homered for the Rangers, who

unfurled the franchise's first World Series championship banner from the rafters high above right field before the dramatic victory.

Drew Smyly, the Cubs' seventh pitcher, walked two to load the bases before Heim lined a sharp hit into right-center field and was mobbed by his teammates.

Jankowski led off the ninth with a tying pinch-hit homer after Chicago went ahead on a disputed play with two outs in the top half of the inning involving All-Star catcher Heim.

Michael Busch scored from second base on what Heim thought was a foul tip — and appeared to be on slow-motion replays, though that kind of play isn't subject to video review. José Leclerc, who had walked Busch, was charged with a wild pitch.

David Robertson, the veteran reliever Texas signed in free agency, worked the 10th for the win.

Cubs left-hander Justin Steele struck out six in his first career opening-day start before exiting with left hamstring tightness with two outs in the fifth inning. The first-time



All-Star last year, when he was 15-6 with a 3.06 ERA, got hurt while fielding a sacrifice bunt.

Nathan Eovaldi, the winner in World Series Game 5 at Arizona last Nov. 1 that clinched Texas' first championship, allowed two runs over six innings in the opener.

Texas had rookies Wyatt Langford and Evan Carter in the lineup with all six of its

All-Stars from last season, including Eovaldi. Carter made his debut at the end of last season, while Langford was the designated hitter and the first Rangers position player to make his MLB debut by starting on opening day since former shortstop Elvis Andrus in 2009.

Langford, the fourth overall pick in last summer's amateur draft, hit a tying sacrifice fly in the fourth. His first big league hit was an infield single right after Garcia homered in the sixth.

A month after slugger Cody Bellinger signed an \$80 million, three-year contract to stay with the Cubs, though he does have an opt-out after this season, the 2019 NL MVP hit an RBI double to put Chicago up 2-1 in the sixth.

The Cubs played their first game with Craig Counsell as the big league's highest-paid manager at five years worth more than \$40 million. His contract with budget-conscious Milwaukee had expired after three NL Central titles and five playoff appearances the past six years.

## Tarik Skubal leads Tigers to Opening Day win over White Sox

By ANDREW SELIGMAN

AP Sports Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — Tarik Skubal acknowledged feeling some jitters leading up to his first opening-day start. Once he stepped on the mound, they all seemed to go away.

Skubal pitched six innings of three-hit ball and the Detroit Tigers kicked off a promising season on a winning note, beating the Chicago White Sox 1-0 on Thursday.

Skubal and three relievers combined to retire the final 17 batters. The White Sox did not advance past first base and wasted a terrific start by Garrett Crochet.

Javier Báez singled and scored on Andy Ibáñez's sacrifice fly in the third. The Tigers finished with six hits.

Skubal (1-0) picked up right where he left off last year. The 27-year-old left-hander struck out six without a walk, after going 4-0 with a 0.90 ERA in his final five outings a year ago.

Skubal also made his major league debut for Detroit at Guaranteed Rate Field in 2020, with no fans in attendance because of the pandemic. Though he has pitched in Chicago a few times since then, he called it a "full circle" moment for him.

"To come back and be able to start open-

ing day kind of makes up for that in a way," he said.

A dominant start made it that much sweeter.

"He knows what he's got," Báez said. "He really worked hard for it. I think he can win a Cy Young if we've got a good plan, which we do."

Shelby Miller pitched a perfect seventh. Andrew Chafin got four outs before Jason Foley earned the save by striking out Yoán Moncada and Luis Robert Jr.

Crochet (0-1) tossed six sparkling innings in his first professional start, allowing five hits. The 24-year-old left-hander struck out eight and walked none.

Crochet, who has 72 career relief appearances for the White Sox, got the nod for the opener after former ace Dylan Cease was traded to San Diego two weeks ago.

"I've been in the big moment before — nothing, obviously, as great as this," Crochet said. "But it was nice to just give my team a fighting chance. I felt like as long as I was doing that, I was able to keep my emotions under control."

Deivi García worked the seventh. Michael Kopech pitched out of a bases-loaded jam in the eighth when he struck out Matt Vierling. But the White Sox opened on a familiar note coming off a 101-loss season.

## Opening Day recap: Reds rout Nationals, Cardinals fall to Dodgers

Cincinnati 8, Washington 2

CINCINNATI (AP) — Nick Martini said he felt a jolt in the Reds' opening day crowd when he lined his second homer of the afternoon 405 feet into the right-field stands.

The 33-year-old was in the lineup batting eighth as the designated hitter, the first opening-day start of his big league career. He responded with a two-run homer in the second inning and a three-run drive in the third as Cincinnati cruised to an 8-2 win over the Washington Nationals 8-2 on Thursday.

"I know it's only one game, but it feels good in front of that many fans and the city," said Martini, the first Reds player to hit two homers on opening day since Adam Dunn in 2007. "I kind of felt it, especially after the second one. I kind of just felt how loud it got. It was just awesome."

Frankie Montas pitched six shutout

innings in his Cincinnati debut.

Montas (1-0) joined with Reds with a \$16 million, one-year deal as a free agent and the 31-year-old right-hander allowed four hits in six innings, striking out four and walking none in his 100th career start. He had labrum surgery last Feb. 21 while with the New York Yankees and made his only big league appearance of the year on Sept. 30.

"I was just trying to go out there and have fun and just put in a good performance," Montas said. "I know what I can do when I'm healthy. People know what I can do when I'm healthy. This is a healthy Frankie Montas. This is a healthy version of me. So I'm just trying to enjoy every part of it."

Martini is playing with his fourth major league team since 2018 and got the opportunity Thursday because of spring training

(Continued on Page 7)

## Cavaliers' owner Dan Gilbert believes guard Donovan Mitchell will sign long-term extension

By LARRY LAGE

AP Sports Writer

DETROIT (AP) — Cavaliers owner Dan Gilbert believes All-Star guard Donovan Mitchell will sign a long-term contract to chase an NBA championship with Cleveland.

"We've been talking to him, sure, for the last couple of years about extending this contract," Gilbert said Thursday in an interview with The Associated Press. "We think he will extend. I think if you listen to him talk, he loves the city."

"He loves the situation in Cleveland because our players are very young and we're just kind of putting the core together that he's clearly the biggest part of."

Mitchell signed a five-year, \$163 million contract in 2020 with Utah and is under contract through the 2026 season. Based on the NBA's collective bargaining agreement, Mitchell is eligible to sign a four-year extension worth up to roughly \$200 million this summer.

Cleveland acquired him in a blockbuster trade shortly before the 2022-23 season. The team viewed him as perhaps the final piece to contend for an NBA championship by leading young stars Darius Garland, Evan Mobley and Jarrett Allen.

The 27-year-old Mitchell is averaging a team-high 27.4 points along with 6.1 assists and 5.3 rebounds while also leading Cavs off the court. However, he has been limited to 49 games due to injuries and hasn't played since March 16.

Mitchell missed his sixth straight game Wednesday night, a disappointing loss to lowly Charlotte, dropping the Cavs to 11-13 without him. He may return this week. The Cavs host Philadelphia on Friday.

Mitchell has often stated he likes play-

ing in Cleveland and sees potential in a team with flaws but plenty of promise.

Cleveland returned to the playoffs a year ago, but the Cavs were eliminated in the first round by the New York Knicks in five games. Adding to the defeat is that it came against the team Mitchell grew up rooting for and with whom he's been long linked.

Of course, the Cavs have gone down this path before with LeBron James, who left as a free agent in 2010 before returning after four seasons in Miami to lead Cleveland to the 2016 title — the first major championship for a Cleveland team since 1964.

Despite a rash of injuries to key players, the Cavs (44-29) have managed to stay among the East's top teams. But a recent slide has put them fourth in the standings and they're currently fourth, just 3 1/2 games out of a play-in spot with a rough schedule ahead.

Gilbert has been pleased with the team overall and praised coach J.B. Bickerstaff, who has been publicly criticized.

"We really compete with pretty much anybody in the East," Gilbert said, sitting in Gilly's Clubhouse and Rooftop in downtown Detroit, a venture inspired by his late son, Nick Gilbert.

"Boston has taken a huge lead, best team in the league. But if you look at the second, third, fourth seed and look at us, we can compete with anybody and we've proven that during the season."

Gilbert, who built much of his fortune through Detroit-based Rocket Mortgage, acquired the Cavaliers from Gordon Gund in 2005 for a reported \$375 million. Nearly three years ago, he bought Gund's remaining 15% minority share in the franchise.

The 62-year-old Gilbert had a stroke in 2019.

## High School Calendar

FRIDAY, MARCH 29

BASEBALL: Norwell at Brownstown Central, 1 p.m. and vs. Evansville Central at Bloomington South High School, 7:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, MARCH 30

BASEBALL: Norwell at Edgewood, 12:30 p.m.

MONDAY, APRIL 1

No events scheduled.

TUESDAY, APRIL 2

BASEBALL: Norwell at South Adams, 5 p.m.; Bluffton at New Haven, 5 p.m.; Southern Wells at Oak Hill, 5 p.m.

SOFTBALL: Bluffton at Eastbrook, 5:30 p.m. TRACK & FIELD (CO-ED): Eastbrook at Bluffton, 5:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3

SOFTBALL: Norwell at Southern Wells, 5 p.m.; Bellmont at Bluffton, 5 p.m. TRACK & FIELD: Eastbrook at Bluffton, 5:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, APRIL 4

BASEBALL: Bluffton at Blackford, 5 p.m.; Southern Wells at Liberty Christian, 5 p.m. GIRLS TENNIS: Norwell at Bluffton, 4:30 p.m.

SOFTBALL: Eastbrook at Norwell 5:30 p.m. TRACK & FIELD (CO-ED): Southern Wells/Madison-Grant at Daleville Invite, 5 p.m.

FRIDAY, APRIL 5

BASEBALL: Eastbrook at Norwell, 5 p.m.; Bluffton at Howard County Invitational vs. Rossville at Northwestern High School, 7:30 a.m.

SOFTBALL: Bluffton at Eastbrook, 5 p.m. SATURDAY, APRIL 6

BASEBALL: Bluffton at Howard County Invitational vs. TBD, 10 a.m.; Wes-Del at Southern Wells, 10 a.m. SOFTBALL: Bluffton at Central Noble, 12 p.m.; Southern Wells at Winchester, 11 a.m. TRACK & FIELD (CO-ED): Southern Wells at Muncie Burriss Owl Invite, 10 a.m.



## Ford still winless in 2024 through 5 races

By JIM VERTUNO

AP Sports Writer

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Five races into NASCAR's 2024 season and Ford is in a funk.

Make no mistake, the Ford cars have been fast, just not quite fast enough to produce any wins yet. At the race in Atlanta, the razor-thin margins at the finish meant 0.003 seconds was the difference between first and third.

But winning is what counts the most and Ford drivers are searching for answers to break the drought as NASCAR holds its first road race of the season Sunday at the Circuit of the Americas.

"Been close to a couple of (wins)," said last season's Cup series champion Ryan Blaney, who just missed out on the victory in Atlanta and has three top-five finishes. "I don't really get into panic mode too easily. Just understand it is a long year."

A Ford win in Austin would seem like a long shot in NASCAR's fourth run on a track built for Formula One. Road course specialists Tyler Reddick (Toyota), New Zealand's Shane van Gisbergen (Chevrolet) and Chase Elliott (Chevrolet) rate among the race favorites.

Chevrolet has three wins and Toyota has two this season, as Ford teams and drivers try to understand the nuances of the Mustang Dark Horse body style that was supposed to provide better handling and aerodynamics.

No Ford driver qualified in the top 10 for Sunday's race. And while it's still early, Ford drivers make up just three of the 16 available Cup playoff spots. Blaney tops that short list at fourth.

Ford drivers point to some solid statistics, even if the major results are lacking.

"I know it doesn't look good on paper when you say that we haven't had a Ford in Victory Lane yet," said RFK Racing driver Chris Buescher, who is currently 14th in the Cup standings.

"Look at our year and how competitive we've been. We've been able to lead in four of the five races at some point. And when we didn't lead any laps, we finished second. So to me, we've been very good. We've certainly had a little bit of rough luck," Buescher said.

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# News-Banner Scoreboard Opening Day recap

(Continued from Page 6)

**BASKETBALL**  
**High School**  
**Boys' Basketball State Final Saturday, March 30**  
**1A**  
 Bethesda 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 Scores Thursday, Mar. 28**  
**NCAA Tournament**  
 UConn 82, San Diego St. 52  
 Clemson 77, Arizona 72

**Women's Basketball Scores**  
 No Games

**NBA**  
**Wednesday's Games**  
 Charlotte 118, Cleveland 111  
 Golden State 101, Orlando 93  
 Brooklyn 122, Washington 119, OT  
 New York 145, Toronto 101  
 Atlanta 120, Portland 106  
 L.A. Clippers 108, Philadelphia 107  
 Minnesota 106, Detroit 91  
 Chicago 125, Indiana 99  
 L.A. Lakers 136, Memphis 124  
 Houston 132, Oklahoma City 126,  
 OT

San Antonio 118, Utah 111  
 Phoenix 104, Denver 97  
**Thursday's Games**  
 Atlanta 123, Boston 122, OT  
 Milwaukee at New Orleans, 8 p.m.  
**Friday's Games**  
 Detroit at Washington, 7 p.m.  
 Golden State at Charlotte, 7 p.m.  
 L.A. Clippers at Orlando, 7 p.m.  
 L.A. Lakers at Indiana, 7 p.m.  
 Chicago at Brooklyn, 7:30 p.m.  
 Philadelphia at Cleveland, 7:30 p.m.  
 New York at San Antonio, 8 p.m.  
 Phoenix at Oklahoma City, 8 p.m.  
 Portland at Miami, 8 p.m.  
 Minnesota at Denver, 9 p.m.  
 Houston at Utah, 9:30 p.m.  
 Dallas at Sacramento, 10 p.m.  
**Saturday's Games**  
 Boston at New Orleans, 5 p.m.  
 Memphis at Orlando, 7 p.m.

Milwaukee at Atlanta, 7:30 p.m.  
**Sunday's Games**  
 Cleveland at Denver, 3:30 p.m.  
 L.A. Clippers at Charlotte, 6 p.m.  
 L.A. Lakers at Brooklyn, 6 p.m.  
 Miami at Washington, 6 p.m.  
 Philadelphia at Toronto, 6 p.m.  
 Chicago at Minnesota, 7 p.m.  
 Dallas at Houston, 7 p.m.  
 Golden State at San Antonio, 7 p.m.  
 Oklahoma City at New York, 7 p.m.  
 Utah at Sacramento, 9 p.m.

## HOCKEY

**NHL**  
**Wednesday's Games**  
 Ottawa 6, Buffalo 2  
 Tampa Bay 3, Boston 1  
**Thursday's Games**  
 Ottawa 2, Chicago 0  
 Pittsburgh 3, Columbus 2  
 Toronto 5, Washington 1  
 N.Y. Islanders 3, Florida 2  
 Montreal 4, Philadelphia 1  
 Carolina 4, Detroit 0  
 St. Louis 5, Calgary 3  
 San Jose at Minnesota, 8 p.m.  
 Vegas 4, Winnipeg 1  
 Los Angeles at Edmonton, late  
 N.Y. Rangers at Colorado, late  
 Anaheim at Seattle, late  
 Dallas at Vancouver, late  
 Nashville at Arizona, late  
**Friday's Games**  
 New Jersey at Buffalo, 7 p.m.  
**Saturday's Games**  
 Detroit at Florida, 12:30 p.m.  
 Vegas at Minnesota, 3:30 p.m.  
 Anaheim at Edmonton, 4 p.m.  
 N.Y. Rangers at Arizona, 6 p.m.  
 Nashville at Colorado, 6 p.m.  
 Boston at Washington, 7 p.m.  
 Carolina at Montreal, 7 p.m.  
 Chicago at Philadelphia, 7 p.m.  
 N.Y. Islanders at Tampa Bay, 7 p.m.  
 Ottawa at Winnipeg, 7 p.m.  
 Pittsburgh at Columbus, 7 p.m.  
 Toronto at Buffalo, 7 p.m.  
 San Jose at St. Louis, 8 p.m.  
 Dallas at Seattle, 10 p.m.  
 Los Angeles at Calgary, 10 p.m.  
**Sunday's Games**  
 Anaheim at Vancouver, 3:30 p.m.

## BASEBALL

**MLB**  
**AMERICAN LEAGUE**  
**Wednesday's Games**  
 No games scheduled  
**Thursday's Games**  
 Cincinnati 8, Washington 2  
 L.A. Dodgers 7, St. Louis 1  
 San Diego 6, San Francisco 4  
 Pittsburgh 6, Miami 5, 12 innings  
 Texas 4, Chicago Cubs 3  
 Colorado at Arizona, late  
 Milwaukee at N.Y. Mets, ppd.  
 Atlanta at Philadelphia, ppd.  
**Friday's Games**  
 Milwaukee (Peralta 0-0) at N.Y. Mets (Quintana 0-0), 1:40 p.m.  
 Atlanta (Strider 0-0) at Philadelphia (Wheeler 0-0), 3:05 p.m.  
 Pittsburgh (Perez 0-0) at Miami (Puk 0-0), 7:10 p.m.  
 Colorado (Quattrill 0-0) at Arizona (Kelly 0-0), 9:40 p.m.  
 San Francisco (Harrison 0-0) at San Diego (Musgrove 0-0), 9:40 p.m.  
 St. Louis (Thompson 0-0) at L.A. Dodgers (Miller 0-0), 10:10 p.m.  
**Saturday's Games**  
 Milwaukee at N.Y. Mets, 1:40 p.m.  
 Pittsburgh at Miami, 4:10 p.m.  
 Washington at Cincinnati, 4:10 p.m.  
 Chicago Cubs at Texas, 7:05 p.m.  
 St. Louis at L.A. Dodgers, 9:10 p.m.

**NATIONAL LEAGUE**  
**Wednesday's Games**  
 No games scheduled  
**Thursday's Games**  
 Cincinnati 8, Washington 2  
 L.A. Dodgers 7, St. Louis 1  
 San Diego 6, San Francisco 4  
 Pittsburgh 6, Miami 5, 12 innings  
 Texas 4, Chicago Cubs 3  
 Colorado at Arizona, late  
 Milwaukee at N.Y. Mets, ppd.  
 Atlanta at Philadelphia, ppd.  
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 Pittsburgh at Miami, 4:10 p.m.  
 Washington at Cincinnati, 4:10 p.m.  
 Chicago Cubs at Texas, 7:05 p.m.  
 St. Louis at L.A. Dodgers, 9:10 p.m.

injuries to TJ Friedl and Matt McClain. He hit a first-pitch slider out to right in the second inning and lined a 2-1 cutter into the same neighborhood the next inning.

"We've known this guy can hit, so for it to all come out opening day and his first one, which is surprising or shocking when you think about it because this guy has been a good player for a long time," Reds manager David Bell said. "We saw a pretty good sample of what he is able to do and why he is good."

Spencer Steer had two hits and two RBIs for Cincinnati.

Josiah Gray (0-1) matched his career high by allowing seven runs, giving up eight hits in four innings with six strikeouts and two walks.

Eddie Rosario, making his Nationals debut after being added to the major league roster, hit a two-run homer in the seventh against Emilio Pagan.

"We need to come back strong," Nationals manager Dave Martinez said. "Opening day is always weird. A lot of adrenaline. We chased a lot of pitches. We didn't do that in the spring."

**Los Angeles Dodgers 7, St. Louis 1**  
 Shohei Ohtani reached three times in his home debut for the Dodgers, and Los Angeles beat the St. Louis Cardinals 7-1 in the Dodger Stadium opener to a season of sky-high expectations. Mookie Betts and Freddie Freeman homered in the third inning, and Tyler Glasnow pitched six innings of two-hit ball for the Dodgers. No offseason addition to the Dodgers' star-studded lineup was bigger than Ohtani, who showed no signs of distraction after a tumultuous week in which he emphatically denied betting on sports after the firing of his longtime interpreter, Ipei Mizuhara.

**New York Yankees 5, Houston 4**  
 Juan Soto threw out the potential tying run at the plate in the ninth inning of his Yankees debut after starting New York's comeback from a four-run deficit in a season-opening 5-4 win over the Houston Astros. Oswaldo Cabrera homered and Aaron Judge doubled and scored the go-ahead run in the seventh inning as the Yankees went ahead. Soto, an All-Star acquired from San Diego in a December trade, made a one-hop throw that prevented Mauricio Dubon from scoring the tying run on Kyle Tucker's single.

**Pittsburgh 6, Miami 5**  
 Jared Triolo hit an RBI single in the top of the 12th inning to finish the Pittsburgh Pirates' rally and beat the Miami Marlins 6-5 on opening day. Triolo's line drive single against Marlins reliever Declan Cronin scored automatic runner Ke'Bryan Hayes. Pirates reliever Jose Hernandez got the save, retiring 2023 NL batting champion Luis Arraez, Josh Bell and Bryan De La Cruz in his only inning of relief. Luis Ortiz recorded the win for the Pirates on Thursday. After Pirates starter Mitch Keller gave up seven hits over 5 2/3 innings, Pittsburgh's bullpen held the Marlins to just one hit.

**Minnesota 4, Kansas City 1**  
 Pablo Lopez pitched seven sparkling innings, Royce Lewis homered before leaving with an injury, and the Twins beat the Royals 4-1 to begin defense of their AL Central crown. Carlos Correa added three hits and two RBIs for Minnesota. That was plenty of support for Lopez, who gave up a homer to Maikel Garcia, the first batter he faced, but little else on a warm and sunny afternoon. He allowed four hits and struck out seven without a walk. Cole Ragans struck out nine, a Royals record for opening day, but still took the loss after pitching six strong innings.

# 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

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

Difficulty: ★★★★★ 3/29

## 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/](http://wellscounty.org/prosecutor/) for a more detailed description of this position. Send any resumes to the Wells County Prosecutor's Office, 102 West Market Street, Suite 405, Bluffton, IN 46714 or submit them by email to [prosecutor@wellscounty.org](mailto:prosecutor@wellscounty.org).



**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](mailto:dirk@holleytruckparts.com). For more information, call 260-478-7411.

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## Help Wanted

**THE CITY OF** Bluffton Street Department is accepting applications for a Laborer/Truck Driver. The minimum educational requirement is a high school diploma or equivalent. Applicants must possess and maintain a CDL License or obtain one within the time limit. The City utilizes E-Verify and follows EEOC guidelines. Applications may be obtained from the Clerk Treasurer's office, 128 East Market St, Bluffton, IN between 8:00 am and 4:30 pm Monday-Friday or at [www.blufftonindiana.net](http://www.blufftonindiana.net).

**WELLS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE** is currently seeking applicants for the position of Full Time Deputy Sheriff. Applicants must be a US Citizen, at least 21 years of age upon graduation from police academy, possess a high school diploma or equivalent as well as a valid Indiana Operators License. Applicant can't have any felony convictions. Applicants must pass all aspects of the hiring process including physical agility testing, written examination, background investigation, oral interview, polygraph and psychological evaluation. Selected applicant must be able to graduate from the Indiana Law Enforcement Academy. ILEA certified applicants do not have to attend the physical agility and written examination portion of the process. 20-year matrix salary range for a Deputy Sheriff (no rank) is \$56,600 - \$68,400. Years of service and experience will be honored for a starting salary up to five years in the pay matrix. Application can be found on our website at [www.wellscountysheriff.com](http://www.wellscountysheriff.com). Once application is completed, details on the testing date and location will be emailed to the applicant. The application must be completed by April 20, 2024.

## 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  
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**Receive a free garage sale kit when placing a three day line classified ad.**

## Public Notices

**NOTICE**  
 Annual meeting of the St. Paul Cemetery Association will be held Saturday, April 6 2024 at 10 a.m. at the Wells County Public Library.  
 nb 3/29  
 hspaxlp

### LEGAL NOTICE

**INDIANA MICHIGAN POWER COMPANY**  
**VEGETATION MANAGEMENT**  
 Public notice is hereby given to affected property owners pursuant to 170 IAC 4-9-4(f) that within two (2) to four (4) weeks of the date of this notice, weather permitting, vegetation management is to be performed by qualified utility line clearance tree workers on behalf of Indiana Michigan Power Company (I&M). This work is being performed in order to maintain and provide safe and reliable electric service. Vegetation management will be performed along all or portions of the following circuit: Adams-Linn Grove.

This circuit is located within or near Berne, IN, and in the county of Adams and Wells. The work area is roughly bounded by these major roads:  
 North: 500 S  
 East: 400 W  
 South: 850 N  
 West: 100 E

I&M customers served by this circuit have been issued a letter and brochure from I&M regarding vegetation management work. Property owners have been contacted by a forestry planner, either in person or through a door card that explains the nature of work to be performed. Specifics regarding vegetation management work on the property may be discussed at that time.

Work will begin on or about April 8, 2024. Customers or property owners with questions about vegetation management in this area may contact I&M by calling 1-800-311-4634 within two weeks of this notice. The date this notice is published initiates the two (2) week period for calculating implied consent by an affected property owner under 170 IAC 4-9. Please be sure to mention this legal notice and the circuit name referenced above.  
 nb 3/29  
 hspaxlp

**This Week's Garage Sales**  
 Clip & Save

**MOVING SALE** March 29, 30, 31: 9-5. 1010 W Wabash St. Furniture & antiques. 260-849-1844

**911 S OAK ST HUGE GARAGE SALE** Five families, Fri & Sat 8-5, 911 S. Oak St. Lots of clothes, women & mens. Name brands, Under Armour, Adidas, Buckle and Nike. Lots of bedding, lamps, sterling silver jewelry, pictures, shoes and lots of misc Apr. 03 8:00 AM-5:00 PM

**GIGANTIC GARAGE SALE** April 4 & 5, 9-5, April 6, 9-2, sack sale, Forgotten Children Worldwide, 650 N. Main Street, Bluffton. Avon collectibles, gently used clothes and shoes, toys, drop-leaf table, bar stools, flower girl dresses, luggage, crafts, home decor, double bed frame, jewelry, much more. Sale sponsored by AdamsWells Internet.

**ANNUAL MULTI FAMILY** garage sale, 614 Meadow Lane, Ossian, Fri., March 29, Fri., April 5, 6 a.m.-6 p.m., Sat., April 6, 6 a.m.-?

## SUDOKU ANSWER

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

## Public Sale Calendar

**MARCH 23-30 - (Online Only Auction) - The Estate of Sandra McCay and others, seller.** 2007 Dodge Caliber SXT sedan, 1999 Ford F250 with dump bed, 2013 12' utility trailer, primitives, Turn of the Century cast iron riding horse, quilts, large qty. of crocks, antique furniture, Fenton, Carnival and other glassware. Preview: March 21, March 28 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., 816 S. 11th Street, Decatur, IN. *The Steffen Group Inc.*, [www.steffengrp.com](http://www.steffengrp.com), 260-824-3006.

**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](http://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](http://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](http://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.*, 260-824-3006, [www.steffengrp.com](http://www.steffengrp.com).

**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](http://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.*, 260-824-3006, [www.steffengrp.com](http://www.steffengrp.com).

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# UN top court orders Israel to open more land crossings for aid into Gaza

**By MIKE CORDER and JOSEF FEDERMAN**  
**Associated Press**  
 THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — The top United Nations court on Thursday ordered Israel to take measures to improve the humanitarian situation in Gaza, including opening more land crossings to allow food, water, fuel and other supplies into the war-ravaged enclave.

The International Court of Justice issued two new so-called provisional measures in a case brought by South Africa accusing Israel of acts of genocide in its military campaign launched after the Oct. 7 attacks by Hamas. Israel denies it is committing genocide and accused South Africa of trying to “undermine Israel’s inherent right and obligation to defend its citizens.”

Thursday’s order came after South Africa sought more provisional measures, including a cease-fire, citing starvation in Gaza. Israel, which had urged the court not to issue new orders, said it places no limits on aid entering Gaza and vowed to “promote new initiatives” to bring in even more assistance.

In its legally binding order, the court told Israel to take measures “without delay” to ensure “the unhindered provision” of basic services and humanitarian assistance, including food, water, fuel and medical supplies.

It also ordered Israel to immediately ensure that its military does not take action that could harm Palestinians’ rights under the Genocide Convention, including by preventing the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

The court told Israel to report back in a month on its implementation of the orders.

Israel declared war in response to a bloody cross-border attack by Hamas on Oct. 7 in which 1,200 people were killed and 250 others were taken hostage. Israel responded with a campaign of airstrikes and a ground offensive that have left over 32,000 Palestinians dead, according to local health authorities.

The Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza does not differentiate between civilians and combatants, but say roughly two-thirds of the dead are women, children and teens. Israel says over one-third of the dead are militants, though

it has not provided evidence to support the claim, and it blames Hamas for civilian casualties because the group operates in residential areas.

The fighting has displaced over 80% of Gaza’s population, caused widespread damage and has sparked a humanitarian crisis. The U.N. and international aid agencies say virtually the entire Gaza population is struggling to get enough food, with hundreds of thousands of people on the brink of famine, especially in hard-hit northern Gaza.

South Africa welcomed Thursday’s decision, calling it “significant.”

“The fact that Palestinian deaths are not solely caused by bombardment and ground attacks, but also by disease and starvation, indicates a need to protect the group’s right to exist,” the South African president said in a statement.

Hamas, an Islamic militant group sworn to Israel’s destruction, said the ruling must be enforced by the international community.

“It must be implemented immediately, so that this decision does not remain a dead letter,” it said.

The Palestinian Foreign Ministry thanked South Africa, calling the case “a vital step in the global effort to hold Israel accountable for perpetrating genocide.”

After initially sealing Gaza’s borders in the early days of the war, Israel began to permit entry of humanitarian supplies. It says it places no restrictions on the amount of humanitarian aid allowed into Gaza and accuses the United Nations of failing to properly organize the deliveries. On Tuesday, the army said it inspected 258 aid trucks, but only 116 were distributed within Gaza by the U.N.

The U.N. and international aid groups say deliveries have been impeded by Israeli military restrictions, ongoing hostilities and the breakdown of public order.

The Israeli Foreign Ministry accused South Africa of making “cynical attempts” to exploit the world court to undermine Israel’s right to self-defense and to win the release of remaining hostages. Israel says Hamas continues to hold some 100 hostages and the remains of 30 others either killed on Oct. 7 or who died in captivity.

“Israel will continue to promote new initiatives, and to expand

existing ones, in order to enable and facilitate the flow of aid to the Gaza Strip ... despite the operational challenges on the ground and Hamas’ active and abhorrent efforts to commandeer, hoard and steal aid,” it added.

Israel has been working with international partners on a plan to soon begin deliveries of aid by sea.

Israel has repeatedly feuded with the United Nations, particularly UNRWA, the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees and main provider of aid in Gaza. Israel accuses the agency of tolerating and even cooperating with Hamas — a charge UNRWA denies.

The court said in its order that “Palestinians in Gaza are no longer facing only a risk of famine ... but that famine is setting in.” It cited a report from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs that said at least 31 people, including 27 children, have already died of malnutrition and dehydration.

The world court said earlier orders imposed on Israel after landmark hearings in South Africa’s case “do not fully address the consequences arising from the changes in the situation” in Gaza.

# Suspect charged with murder, attempted murder in deadly Rockford rampage

CHICAGO (AP) — A 22-year-old man has been charged with four counts of first-degree murder in a frenzied stabbing and beating rampage that left four people dead in a matter of minutes in a northern Illinois city, authorities said Thursday.

Christian Soto is also charged with seven counts of attempted murder and home invasion with a dangerous weapon following the attacks in Rockford on Wednesday. Seven people were injured.

Court and jail records show Soto appeared in court briefly Thursday afternoon and remains held without bond. He is next due in court Tuesday when a judge will determine if he stays in jail pending trial.

Rockford Mayor Tom McNamara, who was clearly shaken and struggled to hold back tears during a news conference Thursday, listed the victims as 63-year-old Romona Schupbach; 23-year-old Jacob Schupbach; 49-year-old Jay Larson; and 15-year-old Jenna Newcomb.

Three people remained hospitalized Thursday, officials said. The other four were treated and released,

Rockford Police Chief Carla Redd said.

Authorities have released little information about Soto, who was arrested Wednesday. A woman who identified herself as Soto’s sister declined to comment to The Associated Press.

Redd said Soto acted alone and that police do not know his motive for the attacks.

She said Soto and Jacob Schupbach had grown up together. Soto told police that the two were smoking marijuana at Schupbach’s home before the attack, Winnebago County State’s Attorney J. Hanley said.

“Soto said that he believes that drugs provided to him by Jacob were laced with an unknown narcotic,” Hanley said. “Soto said he became paranoid after the drug usage. He said he retrieved a knife from the kitchen ... and proceeded to stab” his friend and his friend’s mother to death.

Hanley provided details of the deadly attacks that quickly unfolded in a neighborhood of ranch-style homes soon after 1 p.m. on Wednesday. Redd said less than 20 minutes passed between the initial 911 call and Soto’s arrest.

Rockford police responded first to a home on Holmes Street, where they found the bodies of Jacob Schupbach and his mother, Romona.

Hanley said witnesses saw Jacob Schupbach being chased across the street, and that the attacker hit or stabbed him as he lay on the ground. They said the attacker then drove a pickup truck over Schupbach, who was able to make it inside the home. Witnesses said the attacker followed him but left soon after and drove away, Hanley said.

Hanley said officers next found Larson alive in a front yard on nearby Winnetka Drive, but he had been stabbed multiple times and died soon after in a hospital.

Ruth Mendonça, inspector-in-charge of the Chicago office of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, told reporters that Larson had been a mail carrier in the area for 25 years.

A witness said he heard a commotion and saw a man beating Larson on the grass near his home, Hanley said. The witness dialed 911 as the attacker walked toward his locked front door. The attacker retrieved a knife

from a black pickup and stabbed Larson before driving over him twice and running away.

Soto told police that he recalled “taking out the mailman,” Hanley said.

Around that time, police began receiving 911 calls about an attack on nearby Cleveland Avenue.

A woman and her adult son and daughter told officers that a man armed with

a knife forced his way into their home. The man stabbed the mother near her left eye as she opened the door to let their dog out, Hanley said. Her children fought with Soto and also were wounded. The son told police that the attacker ran away after he struck him with a syrup bottle.

Residents then flagged down first responders about another attack on the same

street, Hanley said.

Jenna Newcomb and a friend were watching a movie in her basement and Jenna’s sister was upstairs when Soto entered their house through an unlocked door. Hanley said one of the girls later told police Soto “was covered in blood. He beat all three teens with a baseball bat and Jenna died in the attack. The girls who survived are 14 and 15.

## Online Directory

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

<b>Genesis Pest Services</b> genesispestservices.com	<b>MR. KOOL</b> HEATING AND COOLING mrkoolheatingandair.com	<b>DAZEY'S SUPPLY</b> dazeys.com/bluffton-in
<b>INDIANA FARM BUREAU INSURANCE</b> Bluffton Office   (260) 824-2234 infarmbureau.com	<b>JC'S GARAGE DOOR SALES &amp; SERVICE</b> jcsgaragedoor.com	<b>Daniel's JEWELERS</b> daniels-jewelers.net
<b>WELLS COUNTY 4-H GROWS HERE</b> extension.purdue.edu/wells	<b>3 RIVERS</b> 3riversfcu.org	<b>Myers FUNERAL HOMES</b> myersfuneralhomes.com
<b>Goodwin-Cole &amp; Harmsid MEMORIAL CHAPEL</b> thegmcfamily.com	<b>RiverStone DENTAL</b> riverstonedental.net	<b>Bluffton Tire</b> blufftontire.com
<b>INNOVATIVE CONCEPTS</b> icav.us	<b>HIDAY AUTOMOTIVE GROUP</b> hidaymotors.com	<b>Edward Jones</b> EdwardJones.com
<b>Lengerich MEATS</b> lengerichmeats.com	<b>Jerry Flack &amp; Associates</b> jerryflackinsuranceandinvestments.com	<b>LaFontaine Center</b> lafontainecenter.org
<b>Still Waters FAMILY DENTISTRY</b> stillwatersfamilydentistry.com	<b>bi-countyservices.com</b> bi-countyservices.com	<b>Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home</b> thomarich.com
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